



MASTER SYLLABUS

SW 5720 SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE AGED (3 CREDIT HOURS)

I. Course Domain and Boundaries

This is an introductory course that focuses on social work practice with older adults; their families, partners and others in their support systems. This course will provide students an opportunity to explore attitudes toward older adults that may be based in ageism, racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism. Ethnicity, race, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status are addressed as contributors to the uniqueness of the aging process for each individual and family.

The multicultural perspective of this course will increase the student's awareness of the complexity of social and cultural factors, which influence psychological, spiritual, and physical well-being in late life and account for diversity in the aging experience. The course will then examine what services and resources are available to the older adult in their own homes, and in community and residential settings, and how policy at all levels influence the development and delivery of services.

The course will explore social work practice with older adults, building on the social work foundation courses of practice, policy, human behavior, cultural diversity and research. Significant issues related to practice with older clients will be examined as part of the course.

This course also examines the aging process, major theories of aging, and characteristics of successful aging. It treats aging as a developmental phenomenon which presents tasks that must be mastered by adults at each stage of the life span. Life stage challenges in old age are discussed concerning health, financial security, mental health, housing, retirement, and dying.

Liberal Arts Perspective

This course is linked to the liberal arts through mastering the course objectives gaining professional knowledge, skills and values. Student will appreciate diversity with the aging cohort and value relationships and interaction with older adults. This course draws upon knowledge in physical and social science as well as human behavior and development specific to old age.

Values and Ethics

Social Work values and ethics are reviewed in this course. The course begins with a values exercise to clarify personal values of age appropriate behavior in our culture. Videos and lecture introduce the value of intimacy and sexuality in later life. Ethical dilemmas such as the right to refuse treatment and the right to die are discussed.

Diversity

The course pays particular attention to older people of color and the needs of older women. There is a diversity research assignment required for the course.

Populations at Risk/ Social and Economic Justice

During this course, students become aware of groups within the aging cohort that are at risk. These populations include the poor, older women, those with chronic physical and mental illness, those with dementia, grandparents raising grandchildren and older gay men and lesbians. The course also analyzes age based vs. needs based social services for the elderly.

II. Specific Knowledge and skill Objectives:

Knowledge: upon successful completion of this course students will

1. Have a beginning understanding of the field of social gerontology and generalist practice social work in aging
2. Be able to identify populations at risk within the aging cohort including those with chronic physical and mental disability, cognitive loss and the economically disadvantaged.
3. Be aware of cultural diversity in the aging process and attitudes that effect accepting help.
4. Begin to value the contributions of Older Americans in our society.
5. Be able to clarify personal values as they relate to aging, death and dying, sexuality and productivity.
6. Gain and appreciation of the complex nature of culture and personal identity as it applies to variations in the aging process (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and economic status)
7. Understand the impact of physical, emotional, cognitive and social ageing on older adults.
8. Understand the use of the generalist model for practice with elderly populations.
9. Understand basic issues of social and economic justice in relationship to the aging process.
10. Appreciate the human diversity among elderly populations.
11. Appreciate the unique research methods employed in gerontological research (i.e. longitudinal methods).
12. Appreciate the meaning of “elderly” as a “population at risk.”

13. Appreciate how the NASW Code of Ethics is applied to practice with elderly populations.

Skill :

Upon completion of this course the student will

1. be able to apply wellness and prevention strategies and identify social services to empower older adults and their families.
2. be able to intervene with systems of all sizes on behalf of older adults particularly care-giving systems and kinship care.
3. demonstrate understanding of the relationship between existing programs, government, voluntary, and for profit-serving the older adult population and the gaps in the service delivery system.
4. apply professional social work values and practice principles, recognizing the diversity in working with older adults and their families.
5. be able to critically analyze those social forces that are part of the older person's environment (particularly older women, people of color, differently abled, gay/lesbian, etc), and be able to assess the impact of those forces on the client's level of functioning.
6. demonstrate one's knowledge of social work roles and tasks in working with the older adult population.
7. apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
8. practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
9. use appropriate academic and applied resources to assist elderly populations.
10. identify community resources that enhance the quality of life for older adults.

III. Performance Criteria:

Students are to demonstrate comprehension of the course content and acquisition of the expected knowledge and skill through a variety of assignments. Student are expected to develop their competence in oral and or written communications. Papers which do not adhere to the college-level standards for scholarly writing will be downgraded. Students are expected to utilize APA format including orderly presentation of ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, reducing bias in language, abbreviations, headings, subheadings, quotations, and referencing (in text as well as bibliographic). Students are expected to submit their own original work. The presentation of another's words as your own without giving credit to the source is regarded as plagiarism. Plagiarism is the same as lying and stealing.

IV. Grading and Assignments

Grading Policy: Student may pass the course with a grade of **D** but must maintain a **C** average during the junior and senior year. (See Undergraduate Bulletin, Wayne State University P. 443).

Grade distribution

100-95 A	94-90 A-	89-85 B+	84-80 B	79-75 B-	74-70 C+	69-65 C	64-60 C-	59-55 D+
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V. Texts and Required Material

Hooyman, Nancy R., & H. Asuman Kiyak (2005). *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective* (7th ed.) NY: Allyn and Bacon.

VI. Organization of the Course

The format will be varied and will include the use of lectures, discussion, problem-solving exercises and films or videos. Interactive discussion with an experiential basis will be encouraged. Guest speakers may be invited to address special topics.

VII. Role of the Student and Instructor

See University Statement of Obligation of Students and Faculty members of the teaching-learning process.

VIII. Course Outline

Session	Description
Session 1	
Session 2	
Session 3	
Session 4	
Session 5	
Session 6	
Session 7	
Session 8	
Session 9	
Session 10	
Session 11	
Session 12	
Session 13	
Session 14	
Session 15	

Typical Assignments

Aging Agency Visit

Select one agency in the area that provides services for older persons. Make arrangements to interview the agency administrator, a direct service worker, and one consumer of agency services (with permission of the agency administrator). In depth interviews should be planned so that the following information is obtained:

Agency Administrator:

- a. What is the Agency's mission and the nature and scope of its services?
- b. Who does the agency serve (target population)
- c. What are the agencies's funding sources?
- d. Does the Agency have formal linkages to other local agencies?
- e. What roles do social workers play in the agency? If none, is there a need for social work component?
- f. What is the administrator's assessment of the impact of the agency's services on the target population?
- g. What are the most critical problems facing older persons living in this community? How well are those problems being addressed by current programs and services available to community residents?
- h. What new services or additional resources are needed to provide for the unmet needs of older community residents?

Direct Service Worker:

- a. What are the worker's program, service, and/or treatment responsibilities?
- b. What types of client needs or problems does the worker deal with?
- c. What are the special challenges or issues encountered in working with older persons?
- d. How effective does the worker feel the agency's services are in meeting the needs of the target population?
- e. What are the most critical problems facing older persons living in this community? How well are those problems being met by current programs and services available to older community residents?
- f. What new services or additional resources are needed to provide for the unmet needs of older persons and their families?

Agency Client (Service Consumer)

Students are to stress to prospective agency client-respondents that participation in this interview is strictly voluntary and should carefully explain that all information obtained will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

- a. Why did the client originally seek agency services?
- b. Does the client know about or use other services available to older persons who live in the community?
- c. What does the client feel are the most critical problems affecting older persons living in this community?
- d. What new services or additional resources are needed to provide for the unmet needs of the community's older population?

Student Assessment of the Agency

Based upon your observations and the information that you have gained from your interviews, discuss your assessment of the Agency. In your opinion, what do you think are the agency's strengths and weaknesses? Are there additional programs or services that you think the agency should consider adding so that the needs of older persons in the community would be better served? If you were the administrator in charge of the agency are there aspects of the agency's administration, staffing or programming that you would change?

This assignment must be typewritten and is to be turned in to the instructor.

Practice Issues paper

Based on your individual interests, write a paper on a topic that reflects a service need, or a treatment, practice or service delivery approach or issue relevant to social work practice with older persons and their families. The paper must include a thorough literature review of your chosen topic and should be broad enough, in scope to allow you to discuss, compare and contrast, and evaluate, various treatment, practice, or service delivery approaches related to the service need or practice issue that is the subject of your paper. This paper will be presented in class. Papers must be written in a scholarly fashion utilizing refereed journals and textbooks. Paper should be between 15 and 20 typewritten pages double spaced and must include proper citations and a list of all references used. In preparing this paper, students must follow the style guidelines found in the Publications Manual of the American Psychological Association. As part of your in-class paper presentation, you are responsible for providing each member of the class with an outline of your paper and a complete list of your cited references.

Policy Papers

Describe the rationale, policy, history and problems with what is commonly called, Social Security. Describe the future of the program(s) if it is not changed. Briefly describe two proposals for change and briefly critique each proposal. Conclude from a social work values perspective whether Social Security should continue to exist. If not, why not? If so, what form should it take? OR (B) describe the rationale, policy history and problems with what is commonly called Medicare. Describe the future of the program. What will it look like with the prescription drug benefit? How will that benefit impact social workers and their clients from a practical and fundamentally from values perspective? Conclude from a social work values perspective whether Medicare should continue to exist. If not, why not? If so what form should it take?

Project journal in which students reflect their personal perceptions, ideas, and reactions to their intergenerational service-learning project.

Diversity Research assignment

This assignment explores the resiliency of elders of color and older women. Students will research the economic status, health, social supports, living situations of the population. They will also research specific cultural values and beliefs regarding life, acceptance of help and death. Students are encouraged to use reliable sources to gather information. Sources should be documented in APA style of referencing. Length is at least 8 typed pages.

Write a paper on the concept of successful aging; how it can be applied in social work; what are its strengths and limitations; how useful is the concept in social work and how well do social work values comport to it. OR (b) Identify the changes that baby boomers will bring to the concept of aging as they reach maturity. How will attitudes and skills of social workers have to change to accommodate the boomers? What social work values will frame the treatment of older boomers by social workers? What kind of services that do not exist now, may have to be developed for the particular needs of boomers? What services now existing may cease to exist by the time the peak of the boomers turn age 65?

Applied Research Exercise

Review the following articles:

Hyunsook, Y., Hendricks, J. *Asian ageing: Context of Change*. Ageing International spring 2003 28 (2) p. 115

Neufeld, A. et al Immigrant Women: making connections to community resources for support in family caregiving. *Qualitative Health Research* Jul. 2002. 12 (16) p. 751

Gudykunst, W. Lee, *An agenda for studying ethnicity and family communication Journal of Family communication* 2001 1, p. 75

Although much of the literature on elder care and care giving focuses on ethnic and national differences, there are many similarities as well. After reviewing the articles above and the discussion of aging among different ethnic minority groups in chapter 14, and across countries in Chapter 2, make a list of cultural values regarding aging and elder care that are similar across two or more ethnic or national groups. Then make a list of cultural values that differ across these same groups. To what extent do these values result in similar or different activities among families in these ethnic or national groups?

Exams

Bibliography

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- Bearon, L. (Ed.). (2001). *Serving older adults in rural North Carolina: meeting the challenge*. Chapel, NC: Institute on Aging.
- Bell, V. & Troxell, D. (1997). *The best friends approach to alzheimer's care*: Health Professional Press.
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- Mace, N. & Rabbins P., (1991). *The 36 hour day*. Boston: John Hopkins University Press.
- McInnis-Dittrich, K. (2002). *Elders: A biopsychosocial approach to intervention and treatment*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
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- Mezey, M.D. (Ed). (2001). *The encyclopedia of elder care*. NY: Springer.
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- Storm, R., & Shirley, K. (2002) *Intergenerational learning and family harmony*. *Educational Gerontology*. Apr/May 26 (3) 261.

Websites of interest:

www.raceandhealth.hhs.gov (Initiative to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic disparities in health)

www.cswe.org (Council on Social Work Education)

www.aarp.org (American Association for Retired Persons)

www.alz.org (Alzheimer's Association)

www.americangeriatrics.org (American Geriatric society)

www.geron.org (Gerontological Society of America)

www.asaging.org (American Society on Aging)

www.ncoa.org/ (National council on Aging)

www.naswdc.org (National association of Social Workers)

www.hcfa.gov (Health Care Financing Administration)

www.aoa.gov (U.S. Administration on Aging)

www.nih.gov/nia/ (National Institute on Aging)

www.census.gov/ (U.S. Census Bureau data)

www.culture.org (Cross Cultural Health Care)

www.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/stats/stapage.html (Administration on Aging – Statistical Information on Older Persons)

Relevant Journals:

The Gerontologist
Journal of Applied Gerontology
Journal of Aging and social Policy
Journal of Gerontological Social Work
Journal of Social Service Research
Research on Aging
Social Service Review
Social Work