SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY
SWK 6686
Fall 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The world population is growing older at an unprecedented pace. In the U.S. alone close to 35 million persons are 65 years or older. By 2030, as the baby boomers age, it is anticipated that 20 percent of the US population, or one out of every five individuals will be old. This demographic trend represents enormous challenges and opportunities for older adults, their families, communities and professionals of all disciplines.

Demands for new health and social service programs, policies and living arrangements have been growing substantially. Social workers are already encountering older adults at risk and their families in numerous settings, from long term care, health and mental health agencies to child welfare and the workplace. Working with four of five generational families from diverse cultural background is the wave of the future. We must find creative ways to tap into the wisdom and life experience of seniors and to solve current social problems; this calls for leadership and competencies which social workers can and must provide in the twenty-first century.

This is an elective course open to students in either the foundation or advanced years. The course introduces students to the field of aging providing an overview as preparation for the dramatic demographic shifts facing our society and profession. The course builds upon knowledge of biology, and psychosocial development taught in the Human Behavior and Social Environment course. It also explores the contemporary manifestations of ageism taught from a historical perspective in the social welfare organization course. The course highlights the unique challenges confronting aging women, GLBT groups and ethnic and racial minorities who have had to cope with multiple levels of oppression, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination throughout their lifespan.

Students are encouraged and expected to apply practice principles learned in foundation and advanced practice courses to such life-altering phenomena as retirement, successful aging, chronic illness, depression, social isolation in old age, nursing home placement, suicide, elder abuse and active parenting by grandparents. Strengths based practice with aging women will be taught, recognizing that older women constitute the majority of older adults and have a high rate of poverty.

COMPETENCIES
At the conclusion of this course, students will demonstrate:

1) Increased knowledge about the demography and diversity of aging and their economic, social and psychological implications.

2) Familiarity with the basic biological and social theories of aging
PLAGIARISM
Students should remember that the School will not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else's work as his or her own work is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another's work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another's work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as your own. It is not plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept as a reaction to someone else's work; however, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of any assignment in this course will automatically **FAIL** the course and will be referred to the Associate Dean for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

HIPAA ALERT
In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Given the nature of classroom discussion and the presentation of case materials and at times personal revelation in class, students are reminded that the same commitment to confidentiality with clients extends to classmates. What is shared in class stays in class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

E-RES (Electronic Reserve)
Most of the articles mentioned in the curriculum are available on electronic reserve [E-RES]. You can access the full text articles from your home or from a university computer at no charge.

**How do I Use E-RES?**
1. Go to the library’s online resources page: [http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp](http://www.yu.edu/libraries/online_resources.asp)
2. Click on E-RES. If you are off-campus, at this point you will be prompted for your Off Campus Access Service login and password.
3. Click on “Search E-RES” or on “Course Index,” and search by instructor's name, department, course name, course number, document title, or document author. [all Foundations courses will be listed under Bendor the sequence chair]
4. Click on the link to your course.
5. Enter the password given to you by your instructor.

6. Locate and click on the item you wish to view. Titles beginning with "A", "An", or "The" are alphabetized under "A" and "T" respectively.

7. When the article text or book record appears on the screen, you can print, email, or save it to disk.

To view documents that are in pdf format, the computer you are using must have Adobe Acrobat Reader software. You can download it FREE at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

TEACHING METHODS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION
A combination of lecture and class discussion, films and experiential learning methodologies will be used in this course. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, and exercises.

It is expected that each student will keep up with the required readings in the course outline. Books and articles listed as recommended are designed to enhance or complement the required text. Students are urged to take advantage of the supplementary readings which are on reserve at the library. Time will be set aside during each class to answer questions related to readings or assignments. The instructor is available by appointment for individual student conferences.

Familiarity with readings should be reflected both in written assignments and classroom discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Required text:


Recommended texts:


ASSIGNMENTS
There will be two written assignments during the semester. Classroom attendance and class participation will also be factored into the overall grade.

**First paper:** Due date to be decided by the professor.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the student with an opportunity to research and explore in depth a specific topic of interest in social work practice in gerontology. This paper should focus on a medical, psychosocial or political condition that affects the aging population or specific groups within that population. The policies and programs formulated to address the condition should be identified and the role of social workers in dealing with this condition should be explored.

Select a topic of interest from the course outline or from ideas stimulated by films or discussions in the classroom or by your personal experience. **The choice of topic needs to be approved by the instructor to make sure that not everyone writes on the same topic.**

Use the following outline as a guide for your paper:

I. **Introduction of topic.**

Provide a brief presentation of the purpose of this paper including why it is of interest to you.

II. **The medical, psychosocial, social or political condition.**

Provide a description of an existing condition affecting the well being of older adults or a specific group within the aged population. Who is affected and how are they affected?

An analysis of the factors contributing to this condition and their consequences on those affected directly and indirectly. Why did this come about and what will happen if it is left unaddressed? For example, if you are writing about aging prisoners, or any other group, use statistics and projections in this section.

III. **Social Policy and Programs**

A description of the policies and programs formulated to address this condition. Identify specific policies, programs and resources. If few or none exist, describe why. What are the policies and programs main goals and main provisions?

Give a brief analysis of the personal, professional and societal values underlying the policies and programs, or their absence.

IV. **The Role of Social Work**

A description of the role that social workers play in addressing the condition you are describing in terms of:

- Direct practice-- what do social workers do with client systems that are affected by this condition in terms of identification, assessment, intervention, education.

- Advocacy and Empowerment-- what efforts are being made on behalf of and with affected populations? What more is needed?
* Research and Education-- What have social workers contributed to the research and knowledge base in this area? What else is needed?

* Ethical Issues-- How do social workers justify their interventions in this area? What are some of the ethical dilemmas that need to be addressed?

V. Conclusion and Summary

Based on your work on this paper discuss your personal recommendations about how this particular Psychosocial or medical or political condition should be addressed in schools of social work and in society at large. Give reasons for your recommendations.

All papers must be typed double spaced with appropriate use of APA-6th edition for scholarly documentation. Late papers are not accepted. If there are circumstances that interfere with your ability to submit this assignment on the due date, you must discuss with the professor at least a week before. At the discretion of the professor, a new date may be given. The responsibility for this belongs to you.

Second paper- Using the same topic identified in your first paper, explore the issue from a more global perspective. The issue related to aging can then be discussed in depth as viewed in a particular country. This global perspective should include (1) demographics, (2) prevailing views in the country and culture about aging, (3) what does the issue related to aging look like in this country and (4) does social work have a role in providing care and service to the elderly and what theories may be most helpful in providing service?

Papers must be typed double spaced with appropriate use of APA 6th edition for scholarly documentation. The same rules regarding tardiness applies to this assignment.

[Due date and further instructions will be given by the professor.]

GRADING CRITERIA
The following criteria will be used for grading written assignments: Completeness and timeliness of the assignment; clarity of thought and communication; correctness of language; ability to apply course content and reading to the assignments; appropriateness and fullness of documentation; evidence of interest in learning from written assignments and classroom discussions. The course grade will be based on the following components: each written assignment and classroom participation.
Session 1: Introduction and overview of the course: Review of instructor and student expectations and responsibilities. Definition of social gerontology

Required Reading


Required Reading:


Suggested Reading


Required Reading:


http://www.aoa.gov/aoa/stats/profile/highlights.html

**Suggested Reading:**


**Suggested Reading**


**Session 4: Diversity and Older Adults: Multiculturalism in America and the Vital Importance of**
social support. Older Women: Economic and Social Status; the Minority elderly; Cross cultural Social work practice and the impact of these issues on the aging process.

Required Reading:


Suggested readings:


Wells, M. (2010). Resilience in Older Adults living in Rural, Suburban and Urban Areas. Online *Journal of Rural Nursing: Health Care*. Fall 2010


**Session 5: Older adults in prison**

**Required Reading**

Corrections + Health Care (1-21-04).pdf


Old Behind Bars, _Human Rights Watch_.html


Osborne Aging_whitepaper.pdf

US numbers of aging prisoners soaring _Human Rights Watch_.html.


**Session 6: The Social Challenges of Aging: changing roles, retirement, widowhood.**

**Required reading:**


**Suggested reading:**


S140.


Session 7: Elder Abuse

Required Reading:

Hooyman Chapter 9 & 10, Opportunities and stress of informal caregiving.


Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 40 (1/2), 83-101
Suggested reading:


**Session 8: The Psychological Challenges of Aging**

Multiple losses, mental disorders, depression, dementia, personality disorders, the concepts of prevention in mental health: barriers to effective treatment.

Required reading:


Suggested reading:


Hooymen, & Kiyak. Chapter 5, cognitive changes with aging, chapter 6, personality and mental health in aging. Chapter 13, Death, dying and bereavement


**Session 9: The evolution of health and social policies affecting older people; a critique**

**Required reading:**


**Suggested reading:**


Project 2015. The Future of Aging in NYS. Articles and Briefs are online: \url{http://www.aging.state.ny.us}.


\textbf{Session 10: The spectrum of policies and services available to the elderly, from pre-retirement counseling to hospice.}

\textbf{Required reading:}


\textbf{Suggested reading}


website.


Session 11: Care-giving formal and informal, trends and challenges.

**Required reading:**


**Suggested reading**


**Session 12: Ethical Issues and value conflicts in gerontology. Intergenerational value conflicts, resource allocation, end of life decision making, bioethics**

**Required Reading:**


**Suggested Reading**


**Session 13**: The use of medical and psychosocial research for social work practice with the elderly. 
Course evaluation and a Call to Action: Advocacy agenda in the field of gerontology.

**Required reading**


Bhalotra, S.M., & Mutschler, P.H. (2002). Primary Prevention for Older Adults: No Longer a Paradox.
Journal of Aging & Social Policy, 12(2), 5-22.


Research on Aging 22(6), 589-599


Strategies for Active Aging Interventions. Social Work 30(2) 135-145
Bibliography


Social Work Practice in Gerontology


**Cultural Issues/Diversity**


**Ethics and Values**


**Caregiving**


**Aging and Social Policy**


Kane, R.I., Kane, R.A. & Finch et al. (1997). SHMOs, the second generation: building on the experience of the first social health maintenance organization demonstrations. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 45(1)*, 101-110.


**Websites**

Administration on Aging  [http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov](http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov)

AARP  [http://aarp.org](http://aarp.org)

Alzheimer Association  [http://www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

Center for Medicare and Medicaid  [http://www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)

Gerontological Society of America  [http://www.geron.org](http://www.geron.org)

Family Caregiver Alliance  [http://www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

International Longevity Center  [http://www.ilcusa.org](http://www.ilcusa.org)

National Academy on an Aging Society  [http://www.aging.org](http://www.aging.org)

National Caregivers Association  [http://www.nfcacares.org](http://www.nfcacares.org)


NYS Office for the Aging  [http://aging.state.ny.us](http://aging.state.ny.us)

Senior Action in a Gay Environment  [http://www.sageusa.org](http://www.sageusa.org)

US Census  [http://www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
Addendum

NASW 2012 Conference
Susan J. Bendor DSW bendor@yu.edu
Yeshiva University, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, New York

Selected References for “Don’t Be Afraid of the Looking Glass: Strengths-based Practice with Aging Women
Bergin, L. & S. Walsh 2005 The role of hope in psychotherapy with older adults Aging and Mental Health (1) 7-15


Tong, Min (2001). The Client centered integrative strengths-based approach: ending the longstanding conflict between social work values and practice. Canadian Social Gerontology and Geriatrics 32

