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SW 322S.01: Explorations in Gerontology

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**EXPLORATIONS IN GERONTOLOGY
SOCIAL WORK 322
FALL 2001
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to increase students' knowledge and understanding of developmental theories and processes of older adulthood. It will focus on the physical, cognitive, psychological, social, spiritual, and cultural influences on older persons. An ecological perspective on aging will be taken, including a social systems theoretical orientation to understanding the environment of aging.

Students will be given the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts, professional skills, and social work values in a service learning project. Using service learning as one of the primary pedagogical methods, and in collaboration with a local community partner, the instructors and students will participate in a service learning project in a nursing home designed to teach students communication skills with older adults.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the major theories of adult development
- Describe the major theories of aging
- Demonstrate an initial understanding of the normal and pathological changes in adulthood
- Understand issues related to death, dying and bereavement
- Develop an awareness of personal and societal attitudes and values related to adulthood (e.g. ageism, sexism, ambivalence, paternalism)
- Increase their sense of civic responsibility as a result of the service learning component of the course
- Integrate academic concepts with community based projects
- Reflect upon their service learning activities, thereby developing into beginning "reflective practitioners"
- Articulate societal implications of their classroom learning (e.g. organizational analysis, social policy analysis)
- Examine and clarify their own personal and professional values and ethics regarding the aging process

REQUIRED READINGS:

Tuesdays with Morrie, by Mitch Albom, Doubleday, 1997.

Aging in a Changing Society by James A. Thorson, Brunner-Mazul Publishing (University of Nebraska-Omaha), 2000.

Farewell, My Friend: An Interfaith Conversation on Caring at the End of Life, by Jackie Cohen, Missoula Demonstration Project: The Quality of Life's End.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

100 points	Attendance and Participation (Roll will be taken. Students are also to participate in discussions, come to class having completed assigned readings, demonstrate ability to integrate readings into discussion. Also included in this grading category is classroom participation in reflective activities focused on the service learning project.)
100 points	Examination 1 September 26
100 points	Reaction paper on <u>Tuesdays with Morrie</u> October 17
100 points	Examination 2 November 14
300 points	Service learning project in nursing home (Includes nursing home interviews, reflection paper, and journal) October 10, November 12, December 3 (Journal entries due) December 3 Reflection paper due
100 points	Examination 3 December 5

800 points total available

- A 720-800 points (90-100%)
- B 640-719 points (80-89%)
- C 560-639 points (70-79%)
- D 480-559 points (60-69%)
- F 0-479 points (0-59%)

TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

September 5	Introduction
September 10	Theories and Models of Adult Development and Aging

Albom, pp. 1-54
Chapter 1 "An Aging Population"

September 12	Positive Aging
September 17	Communicating with Older Persons Albom, pp. 55-113
September 19	Interviewing Older Persons / Service Learning
September 24	"Camilla" movie
September 26	Examination 1
October 1	Psychology of Aging Chapter 6 "Psychological Development" Albom, pp. 114-139
October 3	Mental Health Chapter 8 "Aging and Mental Health"
October 8	Biology of Aging Chapter 5 "The Aging Body"
October 10	Biology of Aging Albom, pp. 140-189
October 15	Spirituality and Aging Reaction paper on <u>Tuesdays with Morrie</u> due
October 17	Elder Abuse Chapter 12 "Abuse and Neglect"
October 22	Family and Caregiving Issues Chapter 3 "Older People and Their Families"
October 24	Diversity in Aging Chapter 4 "Minorities / Diversity"
October 29	Tour of Missoula facilities
October 31	Housing / Physical Environment
November 5	Death and Dying Chapter 10 "The End of Life"

"Farewell My Friend"

November 7	Work and Retirement Chapter 11 "Economics, Work, Retirement"
November 12	VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY
November 14	Examination 2
November 19	Health Issues Chapter 7 "Health and Illness in Later Life" Chapter 9 "Older People and the Health Care System"
November 21	Thanksgiving Vacation
November 26	Legal and Ethical Issues Chapter 13 "Older People and the Political World"
November 28	Services for Older Adults / Planning for the Future Chapter 14 "Programs and Services"
December 3	Service Learning Reports/Project
December 5	Examination 3