Introduction to Gerontology
EDHD 400
Fall 2013
Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-2:00 p.m.; Tuesday 10:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m or after class. Additional hours by appointment.
Class meeting time: Tuesday 3:30 – 6:15 p.m.
Room: ASY 2203

Textbook:
ISBN 0205763138

Catalog Course Description:
Multidisciplinary survey of the processes of aging. Physiological changes, cultural forces, and self processes that bear on the quality of life in the later years. Survey of intervention programs, institutions for the elderly, elderly individuals and their families and care providers.

Course Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course, a student will:
1. Have acquired an understanding of the major theories of adult development and aging and a broad base of knowledge in terms of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and self processes.
2. Be familiar with environmental factors that influence adult development and aging including family variables (e.g., family structure, siblings, birth order) and socio-cultural variables (e.g., social class, poverty, ethnicity, gender, and media).
3. Have acquired an understanding of the nature of individual differences, including differences in developmental competence, physical and mental abilities, and self-regulation.
4. Have engaged in self-exploration to understand factors that are related to successful aging and to increase awareness as a participant in the aging process.
Course Requirements:

Class preparation and participation (11%)
Each student is expected:
1. To attend class and to complete all assigned reading and other activities in preparation for class.
2. To raise questions about the assigned readings and to be an active participant in class discussions and activities. Your participation will enhance your understanding of the course content. Some material which will be discussed in class is not covered in your textbook but will be included on exams. Thus, make a point to attend all lectures and presentations.

On-line Discussion (25%)
Each student will be assigned to a discussion group. Beginning the week of September 11th, students will respond to discussion questions which reflect the week's assigned reading and applications of that information. These discussion questions will be posted on ELMS. During the following week, each student will post three substantive comments to these discussion questions. "Substantive" may be defined as contributing factual information, introducing a new variable for consideration, or suggesting a different perspective for consideration in the ongoing discussion. One of the 3 required responses must be a response to another group member's posting. Responses to discussion questions must be posted no later than 11:59 p.m. on the following TUESDAY.

Requirements for Discussion Group posts:
Make a total of THREE substantive posts
1. Answer ALL of the discussion questions in ONE post.
2. The second post MUST be a comment on one of your discussion group members' posts.
3. The third post may be:
   i. A comment on another discussion group member's post
   ii. A relevant question posed to the group
   iii. An additional comment with reference to the discussion questions, a comment on a newspaper article, a pertinent online article, or a journal article
# Grading Rubric for Discussion Group Posts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| 3     | Made at least three posts  
• Each post was substantive  
AND  
• Followed all requirements, e.g. one post was a comment to a discussion group member’s post |
| 2     | Made at least three posts but  
• only 2 posts were substantive  
OR  
• Did not comment on group member’s post  
OR  
Made only two substantive posts |
| 1     | Made at least three posts  
• None were substantive  
AND  
• Did not meet any requirements  
OR  
Made only one substantive post |
| 0     | Did not submit/completes the assignment |

## Class Activities (24%)  
To promote appreciation of various aging issues, each student will complete five assignments. The results of these activities should be posted to ELMS as noted. Other students will not be able to access your postings of the results of these exercises.

1. **Life Expectancy Questionnaires. (Due Tuesday, September 10th, 2013)**  
Please complete both of the life expectancy questionnaires which you will find at the following websites.

   [www.livingto100.com](http://www.livingto100.com)  

   [http://gosset.wharton.upenn.edu/mortality](http://gosset.wharton.upenn.edu/mortality)  

   *(Please use the longer version of the life calculator.)*

Using the information that you gathered from these life expectancy questionnaires, what
was your personal projected life expectancy? Please identify the questionnaire associated with each projected life expectancy.

What are some of the genetic factors and life style/health habits that affected your projected life expectancy?

What changes might you consider to increase your projected life expectancy?

Please post your answers to ELMS no later than 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10th, 2013.

2. **Health Calculator Quizzes** (Due Tuesday, September 24th, 2013)

(a) Using the following website, answer the questionnaire items honestly.

http://www.healthcalculators.org

Please answer the questionnaires for Asthma, Bladder Control, Cholesterol Reduction, Depression, Diabetes, Heart Disease Risk, HIV Risk, Nicotine Dependency, and Stress. In addition, please answer the questionnaires concerning your nutritional status/habits: Body Mass Index, Carbohydrate, Cholesterol Reduction, Fat Intake, Fiber, Calories Burned, Protein, and Waist-Hip Ratio.

Summarize your risk factors for these various diseases/conditions

(b) Use the following website to assess your risk for cancer, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and stroke.

www.yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu

Please summarize your risk for the respective diseases/conditions addressed by these questionnaires. Please also note the reasons that you may be at risk.

In addition to noting your current, assessed risk, also please consider the implications of these results for your quality of life in old age. If you are at risk for these diseases/conditions currently, the risk will be carried with you as you age unless there is appropriate treatment available and you comply fully with the intervention.

Please submit the results of your health calculator quizzes to ELMS no later than 11:59 p.m. on September 24th, 2013.

3. **Personality Inventory** (Due Tuesday, October 8th, 2013)

Following is the website for the 300-item version (the long form) of the IPIP-NEO, an objective, standardized measure of five factors of personality. Save your answers to each item as well as the summary of test results compiled for your profile. You will need to retain this information for your final examination. Measurement error, misunderstandings, carelessness, and mischievous responding can invalidate the report.
In what ways do you believe that your personality characteristics affect your cognitive appraisal of your life experiences, your choice of coping responses, and ultimately your experience of aging?

Do you believe that these data provide an accurate description of your personality characteristics?

Did you answer the questions honestly or were your answers influenced by social desirability bias?

How do your personality characteristics affect your adaptation and adjustment to life events?

Please post the interpretive summary for each of these questionnaires and the answers to the posed questions to ELMS by 11:59 p.m. on October 8th, 2013.

4. **Filial Responsibility Questionnaire** (Due Tuesday, October 22nd, 2013)

Parents expect different things from their children. I am interested in your views regarding adult children's responsibility for the care of elderly parents. Please underline the response that best represents your choice.

1. Adult children should live close to their aging parents.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

2. Adult children should take care of their sick parents.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

3. Adult children should give their aging parents financial support.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

4. Adult children who live nearby should visit their aging parents at least once a week.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

5. Adult children should phone their parents on a regular basis.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

6. Adult children should feel responsible for their aging parents.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

7. Children and parents should be together on special occasions, such as Christmas and weddings.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

8. Parents should be able to talk to their adult children about matters of personal importance, which affect their elderly parents' lives.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree

9. Adult children should provide emotional support for their aging parents.
   - Totally disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neither agree or disagree
   - Agree
   - Totally agree
10. Adult children should be willing to give up their free time for their aging parents.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

11. In emergencies, adult children should make room for their aging parents in their home.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

12. Adult children should offer advice to their aging parents.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

13. Adult children should adjust their work situation in order to help their parents, e.g., by working less overtime or by temporarily working fewer hours.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

14. Adult children should monitor the quality of care given to their aging parents.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

15. Adult children should adjust their situation at home in order to help their parents, e.g., assign activities to others or put activities aside temporarily.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

16. Adult children should familiarize their aging parents with health care services.
   Totally disagree  Disagree  Neither agree or disagree  Agree  Totally agree

Please post your answers for this questionnaire and for the following questions to ELMS no later than 11:59 p.m. on October 22nd, 2013.

What socio-cultural factors (gender, number of siblings, financial well-being, generational equity, etc.) might influence an individual's responses to the filial responsibility questionnaire?

To what extent are views regarding filial responsibility an important issue in the daily social interaction with one's partner and children?

5. **Lumosity Exercise** (Due Tuesday, November 5th, 2013).
   Since most aging individuals readily acknowledge that they have observed decrements in various aspects of their cognitive performance, researchers are exploring ways to remediate these changes. With the influx of the Baby Boomers into the ranks of the elderly, I believe that such cognitive intervention programs will become increasingly popular.

Please explore material on the website, [www.lumosity.com](http://www.lumosity.com). Complete the self-assessment information, and participate in the suggested cognitive training exercises. Please continue the cognitive training exercises for several days (as long as they are free) noting your scores on the various components over time. (Initially, it is free to explore this site. It is NOT a class requirement to continue these exercises if you need to pay for these services.) However, please note the cost if one decided to continue to participate in the Lumosity cognitive training program.
What is your view regarding the efficacy of cognitive intervention programs for elderly individuals? Do you believe that participation in such programs would improve the cognitive performance of older individuals? Do you believe that such programs would be equally effective for all normal elderly individuals including the oldest-old? Is an individual's level of formal education a factor in the effect of the training? Do you believe that participation in such programs would benefit individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease or other dementias?

How do you assess the cost of this program (Lumosity)? Reasonably priced? Expensive? Relative to the cost of caring for an individual with age-related cognitive decrements, do you believe that cognitive maintenance or remediation programs are cost effective?

6. Advance Directives (Due Tuesday, November 19th, 2013)

Look at the websites for the U.S. Living Will Registry that are posted on ELMS.

http://www.uslivingwillregistry.com

Click on the link For Individuals and Families.
On the Individuals tab, click on The Forms
In the list of Advance Directive forms, click on the link for your home state.
Read the instructions to complete an Advance Directive for the state that is appropriate for your permanent residence.
Please submit the completed form to ELMS by 11:59 p.m. on November 19th, 2013.

Examinations (20%)
There will be two in-class examinations on Tuesday, October 15th, 2013 and on Tuesday, December 3rd, 2013. I will provide a study guide for these examinations. For the first quiz, the multiple choice and short answer questions will cover the material from the first six weeks of class. The second quiz will cover material from weeks 7 - 12.

Final Examination (20%)
As required by the University, there will be a final examination in this course. It is a take-home examination that will cover course material from readings, lectures, class discussions, and presentations. Throughout the semester, through various exercises, you will collect information that you will need to answer the questions on the final examination. The final examination will be due no later than 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17th, 2013.

CLASS POLICIES

Academic integrity: The University of Maryland, College Park has a student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student
you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. The code prohibits students from cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Instances of this include submitting someone else’s work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without permission, or failing to properly cite information other than your own (found in journals, books, online, or otherwise). Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and any sign of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate University officials.

Special needs: If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please see the instructor so necessary arrangements can be made. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the University, please contact Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (301.314.7682, or 301.405.7683 TTD) as soon as possible.

Religious observances: The University of Maryland policy on religious observances states that students not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. Students shall be allowed, whenever possible, to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. However, they must contact the instructor before the absence with a written notification of the projected absence, and arrangements will be made for make-up work or examinations.

Course evaluations: As a member of our academic community, students have a number of important responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to submit course evaluations each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to CourseEvalUM is confidential. Campus will notify you when CourseEvalUM is open for you to complete your evaluations for fall semester courses. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online, at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Missed single class due to illness: Once during a semester, a student’s self-authored note will be accepted as an excuse for missing a minor scheduled grading event in a single class session if the note documents the date of the illness, acknowledgement from the student that information provided in the note is correct, and a statement that the student understands that providing false information is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected to attempt to inform the instructor of the illness prior to the date of the missed class.*

Major scheduled grading events: Major Scheduled Grading Events (MSGE) are indicated on the syllabus. The conditions for accepting a self-signed note do not apply to these events. Written, signed documentation by a health care professional, or other professional in the case of non-medical reasons (see below) of a University-approved excuse for the student’s absence must be supplied. This documentation must include verification of treatment dates and the time period for which the student was unable to meet course requirements. Providers should not include diagnostic information. Without
this documentation, opportunities to make up missed assignments or assessments will not be provided.

**Non-consecutive, medically necessitated absences from multiple class sessions:**
Students who throughout the semester miss multiple, non-consecutive class sessions due to medical problems must provide written documentation from a health care professional that their attendance on those days was prohibited for medical reasons.

**Non-medical excused absences:** According to University policy, non-medical excused absences for missed assignments or assessments may include illness of a dependent, religious observance, involvement in University activities at the request of University officials, or circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. Students asking for excused absence for any of those reasons must also supply appropriate written documentation of the cause and make every attempt to inform the instructor prior to the date of the missed class.

**Students in distress:** Services for students in various forms of distress are offered by the CounselingCenter([counseling.umd.edu](http://counseling.umd.edu)) and the Mental Health Service in the Health Center ([health.umd.edu/mentalhealth](http://health.umd.edu/mentalhealth)). During evenings and weekends, the student peer-counseling hotline is available (4-HELP or 4-4357). Faculty who wish to consult with professionals may call 4-7651 for immediate assistance. For non-emergency issues, faculty may call the Warmline (4-7653). A therapist will respond within a few hours. In addition, a resource guide is available to assist faculty to identify and to respond to students who may be having problems related to depression, test anxiety, future career plans, etc. This guide is available on the web at ([counseling.umd.edu/infodata/HSID.pdf](http://counseling.umd.edu/infodata/HSID.pdf))

**Tentative Course Schedule**

| Sept. | 3 | Introduction to Social Gerontology: Person-Environment Interaction |
| Sept. | 10 | Ch. 1 The Growth of Social Gerontology: The Demographic Imperative |
| | | SUBMIT RESULTS OF LIFE EXPECTANCY QUIZZES TO ELMS |
| Sept. | 17 | Ch. 3 The Social Consequences of Physical Aging |
| Sept. | 24 | Ch. 4 Managing Chronic Diseases and Promoting Well-Being in Old Age |
| | | SUBMIT RESULTS OF HEALTH STATUS QUIZZES TO ELMS |
| Oct. | 1 | Ch. 2 & 8 Cultural Issues/Social Theories. |
| Oct. | 8 | Ch.6 Personality, Mental Health and Aging |
| | | SUBMIT RESULTS OF PERSONALITY TESTS TO ELMS |
| Oct. | 15 | EXAMINATION 1 |
| Oct. | 22 | Ch. 7, 9 and 10 Social Support |
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SUBMIT FILIAL RESPONSIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Oct. 29   Ch. 5 Cognition: Normal Aging

Nov. 5     Ch. 5 Cognition: Dementia

SUBMIT RESULTS OF LUMOSITY EXERCISE

Nov. 12    Ch. 11 & 12  Living Arrangements and Activities

Nov. 19    Ch. 13  Death, Dying, Bereavement and Widowhood

SUBMIT ADVANCE DIRECTIVES MATERIAL TO ELMS

Nov. 26    Ch. 14 & 15 Resilience of Elders of Color and Older Women

Dec. 3      QUIZ 2

Dec. 10     Ch. 16 & 17 Social Policy and Social Programs

Dec. 17    LAST DAY TO SUBMIT TAKE HOME FINAL EXAMINATION