

University of California at Berkeley
Department of Health and Medical Science
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HMS 150
INTRODUCTION TO AGING and AGING PROFESSIONS

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Both population changes related to aging the “baby boom” generation and advances in medical technology and research have changed the demographic profile of our nation. These changes have a ripple effect: they are felt not only in the aging generation, but also in the “sandwich” and younger generations. Laws, policies, medical care and allocation issues, research priorities, housing and employment, social security, and many other issues affect each one of us, now and in the future. They raise serious questions involving personal values and concepts of social justice that challenge us both individually and as a nation. Awareness of aging-related issues and concepts help us to be informed citizens and consumers of services.

Aging is a natural part of the life cycle, a life transition through which, barring unforeseen circumstances, we must all pass. As in every stage of our lives, aging poses special challenges which we must meet in order to have a successful, meaningful, and fulfilling life experience. Successful aging is not the attainment of a specific end point; rather, it is an on-going process. The experience of aging is affected by many factors, such as health, access to goods and services, social class, education, gender, and racial and cultural affiliations. To understand the process of aging, we must consider biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual issues.

This course is designed to introduce the student to the field of aging. Through lecture, discussion, and invited professional speakers, we will learn about the aging process from diverse perspectives. We will consider what constitutes successful aging, and how we can both recognize and enhance this experience for others. We will also think about impediments to a meaningful life in older age, and the way in which society can support or negatively affect an individual’s aging experience. We will explore some of the major controversies and consider the difficult choices our society must make in regard to issues such as healthcare, end-of-life treatment, income support, and care of the frail elderly.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this course is to enhance the student’s understanding and appreciation of aging and of the societal issues that impact older Americans.

a. Knowledge Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will know:

1. the major policy and legal issues that impact older adults
2. national programs designed to provide support for older adults over the course of aging

3. some of the major biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual challenges and issues facing aging adults.
4. controversial issues that affect older adults
5. the role of professionals in various disciplines in helping older adults to achieve a meaningful and successful aging process

b. Skill Objectives:

Upon completion of this course students will be able:

1. to analyze some of the controversial issues in aging and present major arguments on both sides of an issue
2. to recognize adults who are aging successfully and to identify some of the processes that have contributed to success
3. to identify an appropriate professional who might be able to assist an aging adult with specific problems
4. to identify specific programs that address common needs of the aging adult.
5. to research an issue in the field of aging and present major concepts in a clear and cohesive manner
6. to interview an aging adult with empathy and respect in order to gain insight into the person's aging experience

c. Affective Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able:

1. to understand the aging process and life as a continuum in terms of their own lives and the lives of others
2. to understand the impact of personal and societal values on policies and programs
3. to recognize the major factors that, for themselves personally, can contribute to successful and meaningful aging.
4. to understand that each person's life experience is unique, and will affect goals and outcomes in the aging process.

3. REQUIRED TEXT:

Moody, Harry R.(2002), *Aging: Concepts and Controversies* 4th Ed.Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press

4. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Students are expected attend class, to complete the assigned reading weekly, and to come to class prepared to discuss issues addressed in the text. There are four course assignments:

a. Goals For My 75th Year

An important part of personal growth is a recognition of aging as a part of one's personal life process. Understanding one's personal values and goals can be very helpful in developing a meaningful and successful aging process. Using the values exercises we have done in class,

develop a picture of how you would like your life to be when you are 75 years old. You can include interests and activities, health issues, lifestyle, relationships, and any other concepts you consider relevant to your own life process. The paper should be three pages in length.

Due Class Four

b. Interview of an Aging Adult

Using the understanding of the aging process and of issues and concepts that impact people as they age, interview an older adult regarding their feelings about aging, the major issues that affect them, their goals and aspirations, and some of the problems they are facing as they age. An interview guide will be provided.

Using the information gathered, write a five page paper describing the adult you interviewed and the things that you learned. How did the interview help you to understand aging? Did it change some of your ideas about old age? In what way?

You may interview any adult over 70 years of age. A grandparent, other relative, family friend, or neighbor would be appropriate for this assignment. The paper should be 3 pages in length.

Due Class Eight

c. Issue in Aging Project

Select an issue in aging that is of interest to you. You may use one of the issues addressed in the course, or one that is of special interest or relevance to you. Examples: allocation of health care dollars, meeting social needs in later life, depression and aging, living with arthritis, cognitive losses in aging, Alzheimer's disease, driver's licenses and the aging process, end-of-life decisions, employment issues for older adults, stereotypes and age discrimination, Medicare, Social Security, family caregiving, cultural issues in aging, successful aging, poverty among older adults, international approaches to an issue in aging, etc.

Learn everything that you can about your issue. This process should include library and internet research, but should also include some "living" research - consultation with professionals, and/or discussions with older adults and with others impacted by your issue. (You may also discuss your issue with the older adult you interview, though the two assignments should be kept separate in your writing)

In an 8-10 page paper, present your issue, why you have selected it, and what you have learned through your research. What do you feel would be the most effective and appropriate way to address the issue? What are the reasons for your approach? Who would be impacted positively? Who negatively? (a cost-benefit analysis)

Due Class Fourteen

d. Project Presentation

Prepare and give a ten-minute presentation on your issue for your classmates. Allow time for questions and discussion as needed.

As Scheduled

5. GRADING

Grades will be assigned using these percentages of 100.

Goals For My 75 th Year Paper	10
Interview of an Aging Adult	30
Issue in Aging Project	40
Project Presentation	10
Attendance and Participation	10

6. COURSE OUTLINE

1/26/09 Class One: Introduction to Aging Personal Values, Social Justice and Decisionmaking

Required Reading:

Moody, Prologue: America as an Aging Society

UNIT ONE: THE AGING ADULT

2/2/09 Class Two: Aging as a Life-Course Process Biology and Stereotypes of Aging

Guest Speaker: Susan Londerville, MD, Medical Director
Salem Lutheran Home

Required Reading:

Moody, Basic Concepts I: A Life Course Perspective on Aging, p. 2-26

Moody, Controversy 1: Why do we Grow Old? p. 27-74

2/9/09 Class Three: The Meaning of Life over the Life Course

Guest Speaker: Patsy Harvey, O.D., Clinical Professor
School of Optometry

Required Reading:

Moody, Controversy 3: Does Old Age Have Meaning? p. 109-133

2/16/09 Academic Holiday - No Classes

2/23/09 Class Four: Retirement and the Meaning of Life

Guest Speaker: Joyce Polhamus, Architect
Smith Group, San Francisco

GOALS FOR MY 75TH YEAR ASSIGNMENT DUE

Required Reading:

Moody: Controversy 6, : Is Retirement Obsolete? p. 231-266

3/2/09 Class Five: Creativity and the Life Course

Guest Speaker: Sharon Gorman, PT, MS, GCS, Assistant Professor
Department of Physical Therapy
Samuel Merritt College

Required Reading: Controversy 2: Does Creativity Decline with Old Age? p. 75-106

UNIT TWO: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING IN OLD AGE

3/9/09 Class Six: Policy in an Aging Society

Guest Speaker: Nancy Rasch, Attorney at Law
Elderlaw Attorney

Required Reading:

Moody: Basic Concepts II: Social and Economic Outlook for an Aging Society,
p. 133-162

3/16/09 Class Seven: Distributive Justice: The Grounds for Entitlement

Guest Speaker: Liz Macera, PhD, RN, ANP-C, Assistant Clinical Professor
Co-Director, Gerontology Program - UCSF School of Nursing

Required Reading:

Moody, Controversy 4: Should Age or Need be the Basis for Entitlement?
p. 163-195

3/23/09 Spring Recess - No Classes

3/30/09 Class Eight: Social Responsibility: The Social Security Program

Guest Speaker: Eliza Chavez, DDS, Clinical Assistant Professor

Center for Oral Health - People with Special Needs
School of Dentistry - U.O.P.

INTERVIEW OF AGING ADULT ASSIGNMENT DUE

Required Reading

Moody, Controversy 5: What is the Future of Social Security? p 215-250

4/6/09 Class Nine: Family Responsibility: The American Family

Guest Speaker: Kate Hayner, Ed.D. OTR/L, Chair, Dept of Occupational Therapy, Samuel Merritt College

Required Reading:

Moody, Controversy 8: Should Families Provide for their Own? p. 329-360

HEALTHCARE AND HEALTHCARE DECISIONMAKING

4/13/09 Class Ten: Aging, Healthcare Resources, and Rationing

Guest Speaker: Jackie Wong, MSW, Gerontological Social Worker
On Lok Senior Services

Required Reading: Basic Concepts Three: Aging, Healthcare, and Society, p. 267-298
Controversy 7: Should we Ration Healthcare for Older People? p. 299-326

4/20/09 Class Eleven: Competence and Vulnerability in Old Age

Required Reading: Controversy 9: Should Older People Be Protected from Bad Choices?
p. 363-385

4/27/09 Class Twelve: End-of-Life Decisions and Advance Directives

Required Reading: Controversy 10: Should People Have the Choice to End their Lives? p. 389-415

5/4/09 Class Thirteen: Presentation of Student Projects

5/11/09 Class Fourteen: Course Summary and Evaluation

ISSUE IN AGING PROJECT DUE