

# Department of Gerontology

## Double Major (Gerontology and a Second Major Subject)

The Gerontology Major is designed as a Double Majors program. Students majoring in gerontology must also satisfy the requirements for a Major in another liberal arts subject.

1. Students who wish to Major in Gerontology are expected to complete GERO 1013 and 1023. (Prior to March 2013, the courses were numbered GERO 2013 and GERO 2023)
2. Gerontology Majors students are required to complete a 3 credit-hour course in research design or statistics. Examples of approved courses include PSYC 2023 or SOCI 2013, 2023. Other courses may be approved at the time of registration.
3. Students who Major in Gerontology are required to have completed 50 hours of volunteer or employment activities in the field of aging prior to undertaking GERO 4013 & 4023. It is normally the responsibility of the student to arrange this activity and to have it approved by the Department Chair. However, students may check with the Chair as to available opportunities to complete this requirement.

## Major in Gerontology

Gerontology Majors are expected to complete 36 credit hours. Beyond those 36 credit hours of gerontology courses, they are also required to take 3 credit hours in research methods.

### *Introductory requirements*

GERO 1013	Introduction to Gerontology
GERO 1023	Multidisciplinary Issues in Aging

### *Required core courses*

GERO/PSYC 2673	Adult Development and Aging
GERO 2113/SOCI 2523	Sociology of Aging
GERO 3023	Aging and Health
GERO 4013	Seminar in Gerontology
GERO 4023	Advanced Seminar in Gerontology

### *Electives*

GERO/PSYC 2643	Adult Psychopathology
GERO/PSYC 3673	Challenges to Adult Development and Aging
GERO/RELG 2273	Death and Dying
GERO 3033	Aging and Spirituality
GERO 3043	Recreation, Leisure and Aging
GERO 3053	Qualitative Research Methods
GERO 3063	Aging and Biography
GERO 3073	Narrative Gerontology
GERO 3083	Gender and Aging
GERO 3093	Images of Aging in Film
GERO 3103	Special Topics

GERO 3123	Counselling Older Adults
GERO 3213	Older Adults as Learners
GERO 3223	Family Ties in Aging
GERO 3233	Aging and Tai Chi
GERO/SCWK 3733	Social Work and Aging
GERO 3743	Critical Approaches to Nursing Homes
GERO 4003	Mental Health and Aging
GERO 4033-6	Independent Study

## Minor in Gerontology

Students wishing to pursue a Minor in Gerontology must complete 18 credit hours, composed of any courses which they have the required prerequisites.

Subject to the approval of the Chair and the University registrar, students may be able to substitute other courses at St. Thomas University or the University of New Brunswick for the electives listed above.

Gerontology is a multidisciplinary field that studies the process of aging across the lifespan. Gerontologists draw on research from a variety of fields that include anthropology, economics, philosophy, physiology, psychology, and sociology, among others. The courses listed below are concerned with issues that concern older persons themselves and range from an examination of health-care needs to the understanding of wisdom. Some courses look at the impact of the way we choose to organize society and define aging socially and how individuals actually experience and understand their own later years. Gerontology uses a variety of theoretical perspectives that shed light on the social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual nature of being human as a background for the investigation of a wide variety of topics.

### **GERO-1013. Introduction to Gerontology**

This introductory course is multidisciplinary in nature and considers selected basic information about aging and older persons that derives from biology, psychology, sociology, demography, and the humanities. In addition to relating this information and scientific findings about aging, an attempt will be made to discuss the difficulties involved in establishing facts about aging and older persons.

### **GERO-1023. Multidisciplinary Issues in Aging**

This course will consider the complexity and interrelatedness of various dimensions of adult development and aging, and what this state of affairs suggests for research and practice. Topics of discussion will include selected theories of adult intelligence, personality, and social aging. Further, the multidisciplinary nature of intervention will also be considered in relation to such areas as health care, death and dying, and work and retirement.

### **GERO-2113. Sociology of Aging**

This course will explore the comparative situation of older women and men in different cultures and different historical periods within western societies. The cultural and social-structural determinants of their changing status will be examined through alternative theoretical perspectives within sociology. The social construction of 'elderly' as a status will be explored through how older people are perceived, described, talked about, and interacted with within everyday behaviour, and how these relations may be 'negotiated' by the elderly

themselves. The political economy of aging focuses upon disparities of income, and the determinants and effects of poverty on the lives of older people. Prerequisite: GERO 2013 or SOCI 1003.

### **GERO-2273. Death and Dying**

This course explores a wide range of topics in the area of death and dying. As a fundamental issue for human beings, these phenomena require investigation from a variety of perspectives. The course considers aspects of death and dying that are religious, philosophical, psychological, and sociological in nature. Further, the course is concerned with both practical and theoretical issues that arise from the relationship between aging, and death and dying.

### **GERO-2643. Adult Psychopathology**

This course examines issues in the diagnosis and treatment of the most common psychological disorders in adulthood. Students are introduced to the history of psychopathology, from primitive to modern times, which traces the development of biological, psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive, and sociocultural models of abnormality. Possible topics include: anxiety disorders, mood disorders, schizophrenia, and personality disorders.

### **GERO-2673. Adult Development and Aging**

The course provides an introduction to psychological aspects of aging faced by middle and old aged persons as they adapt to life events. Topics of study include: demographical studies, theories and models of aging, psychological assessment of elderly persons, personality in adulthood, changes in vision and audition, memory processing, learning, and intellectual functioning. Prerequisite: GERO 2013/ PSYC 1013.

### **GERO-3023. Aging and Health**

Various aspects of aging and health will be addressed in this course. Important topics to be considered are: normal vs. pathological changes with age, principles of survival and the preservation of quality of life, and antecedents to physical, mental, social and spiritual health. The course will also analyze current conceptions of health and health care in an aging population, including ethical implications of these approaches. Prerequisite: GERO 2013 + 2023.

### **GERO-3033. Aging and Spirituality**

This lecture-seminar course examines the process of aging and human development from a spiritual perspective. This objective is carried out by means of an exploration of: (a) an emerging theoretical and empirical literature which focuses on spiritual aspects of aging and which originates in diverse traditions, (b) the practical and ethical issues that arise from an explicit acknowledgement of human spirituality in research and practice in gerontology, and (c) the importance of considering one's personal images and stereotypes of both aging and spirituality. In this regard, the course includes an experiential, dialogical dimension.

### **GERO-3043. Recreation, Leisure and Aging**

This lecture-seminar course will explore the meaning of leisure and the role it plays in the lives of older adults. It is designed to familiarize students with the process of aging as related to leisure, recreation, and lifestyle. The theoretical aspects of aging and their implications for leisure will be the primary focus, while the practical aspects of recreation program development, delivery, and facilitation for both community-based and institutional-based older persons will also be examined. Prerequisite: GERO 2013.

**GERO-3053. Qualitative Research Methods (HMRT) (SOCl) (RELG) (PSYC)**

This course is intended for third-year Honours students who are considering using qualitative analysis in the research for their Honours thesis. It will address theoretical foundations of qualitative analysis, research ethics for qualitative researchers, and provide hands-on experience in developing a research question and collecting and analyzing data using basic qualitative techniques including observation, in-depth interviewing, and unobtrusive measures.

**GERO-3063. Aging and Biography**

This lecture-seminar course explores theoretical, methodological, and intervention issues centering on the use of life stories or biographical materials in gerontology. The course considers selected research from the humanities and social sciences that deals with the significance of biography for understanding human aging. In addition, students engage in an autobiographical exercise which provides a personal dimension to the course.

**GERO-3073. Narrative Gerontology**

This seminar-style course considers the theoretical and practical implications for gerontology of the narrative root metaphor, or life as story. Against the background of the narrative turn in the human sciences generally, and of specific practices in geriatric care like life review and reminiscence, the course will use basic story elements such as plot, character, point of view, genre, and style to explore the dynamics of continuity and change in the course of autobiographical aging. Through assignments and classroom activities, students will be encouraged to apply such elements to understanding their own development and to their involvement in the storytelling-storylistening exchange that is part of their work as care givers to seniors.

**GERO-3083. Gender and Aging (GEND)**

This course examines issues involving how one's gender affects one's experience of aging. It looks at how the field of gerontology has traditionally dealt with the concept of gender as well as the feminization of old age, and how this has affected both women's and men's experiences of aging.

**GERO-3093. Images of Aging in Film (GEND)**

This course explores popular views of the elderly using motion pictures. It looks at the impact of stereotypes on older people's expectations for later life. As a result of this course, students should be able to look at films more critically and identify images communicated through the media. Prerequisite: GERO-1013.

**GERO-3123. Counselling Older Adults**

This course considers several important aspects of counselling as they impact specifically on work with older adults. Topics include an overview of counselling and a review of counselling theories. These theories are then applied to contemporary issues in aging such as: changing adult lifestyles and societal expectations, stress factors in modern society, and living longer and healthier. This course involves extensive student participation and is most relevant to educators and professionals in the field of aging. Limited enrolment. Prerequisite: GERO 1013 and 1023.

**GERO-3213. Older Adults as Learners**

This course will explore how humans use geographic, racial, and cultural categories to understand themselves and others. It is particularly concerned with how individuals define themselves as belonging to, distinct from, or in conflict with particular nations, cultures, or

peoples. Students will explore themes such as nationalism, colonialism, exile, racism, slavery, and globalization. Texts may include *Exodus*, Shakespeare's *Othello*, Behn's *Oroonoko*, Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, Sears' *Harlem Duet*, and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*.

### **GERO-3223. Family Ties and Aging (GEND)**

This course examines a variety of issues regarding aging and the family. It considers historical and demographic trends as well as theoretical frameworks in family gerontology. The course covers a number of relationships including those of couples, siblings, and grandparents and grandchildren. It also looks at late-life transitions such as retirement, widowhood, and divorce, that affect family structures and relationships.

### **GERO-3233. Aging and Tai Chi: Theory, Research, and Practice**

Tai Chi is a mind-body-spirit intervention that contributes to the maximization of quality of life for both frail and well adults. This course explores the philosophy and principles that form the basis of the art of Tai Chi. The course will also review research that demonstrates a range of health benefits of Tai Chi to adults of all ages, physical and psychological. Participants in the course will learn basic Tai Chi movements, and be introduced to guidelines for designing a program based on Tai Chi, for implementation in a variety of settings. The course will be of interest to students contemplating a career in gerontology, recreation, social work, education, or fine arts. The course is introductory and does not assume any experience on the part of the students.

### **GERO-3673. Challenges to Adult Development and Aging**

The course investigates both normal and abnormal influences that pose challenges to the individual and social functioning of middle-aged and older adults. Topics of study include such relatively common events and transitions as menopause, retirement, relocation, loss of spouse, caring for an ailing parent or spouse, as well as pathological changes such as depression, substance abuse, terminal illness, and dementia. Emphasis is placed on changes in response to these influences and on the individual's coping strategies.

### **GERO-3733. Social Work and Aging**

An examination of present services to the elderly population in New Brunswick and elsewhere, and identification of unmet needs. The course also provides an analysis of knowledge and principles developed in the field of gerontological practice.

### **GERO-3743. Critical Approaches to Nursing Homes**

This seminar course will examine the phenomenon of nursing homes from an ethnographic and critical point of view and will include both sociological and anthropological perspectives. Prerequisite: GERO 1013.

### **GERO-3973. Introduction to Narrative and Narrative Analysis (SCWK)**

Framed around three key approaches to narrative this course will provide students with the basis on which to develop their understanding of narrative and their skills in narrative analysis. The three approaches are: the narrative study of lives; the narrative analysis of texts; and, the analysis of narrative dynamics. Through these approaches students will be introduced to the work of key narrative thinkers. The course, in content and delivery, reflects the inter-disciplinary nature of narrative.

### **GERO-4003. Mental Health and Aging**

This course explores the range of factors affecting mental health in the elderly, from age-related organic brain disease, depression, and the other functional psychiatric disorders, to

failure of adjustment induced by psychological, social, and environmental factors. Issues covered include the recognition of mental-health problems, their prevalence and dynamics; the cost to individual older people, their families, the health and community-care systems, and society; and the adequacy of current provisions and interventions. Prerequisites: GERO 1013, GERO 1023 and GERO 2673.

#### **GERO-4013. Seminar in Gerontology**

This seminar course consists of an in-depth analysis of a specific problem or issue in the field of aging. Students have their chosen topic area approved and supervised by the course instructor. The purpose of this course is to integrate a student's theoretical and practical understanding of a specific area by way of a combination of a major paper, presentations, and/or other research. Prerequisites: GERO 1013 and 1023 and 50 hours of work and/or volunteer experience with older persons.

#### **GERO-4023. Advanced Seminar in Gerontology**

This course is intended for students in the final semester of the program. It will consist of a multidisciplinary lecture-seminar format. Selected topics in aging research and intervention will be discussed. The purpose of this course is to ensure that students have a comprehensive background in the field of aging, including an understanding of ethics. Prerequisites: GERO 1013, 1023 and 4013.

#### **GERO-4033. Independent Study**

A course of independent study, under supervision of the Chair in Gerontology, which affords the student the opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of an area of interest through special reading or research projects. Arrangements may be made by agreement with members of the staff, and approval of the Chair. Prerequisites: GERO 1013 and 1023.

#### **GERO-4036. Independent Study**

A course of independent study, under supervision of the Chair in Gerontology, which affords the student the opportunity to pursue an in-depth study of an area of interest through special reading or research projects. Arrangements may be made by agreement with members of the staff, and approval of the Chair. Prerequisites: GERO 1013 and 1023.

*NOTE: Not all courses listed are offered each year. Please consult with the Department Chair for more information about current and planned course offerings.*