GEY 2000 – Introduction to Gerontology
School of Aging Studies
College of Behavioral and Community Sciences
University of South Florida

Instructor: Chantelle Sharpe
Class Location: MHF 100
Class Meetings: Thursdays, 6:20-9:05pm
Office Location: MHC 1352 in the School of Aging Studies
Telephone: 813-974-7916 - Office number
Email: csharpe@mail.usf.edu (best way to reach me)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am-12pm, also by appointment

This course is part of the University of South Florida’s Foundations of Knowledge and Learning (FKL) Core Curriculum. It is certified for all Majors as a Social and Behavioral Sciences course and for the following Dimensions: Critical Thinking, Inquiry-Based Learning, Human & Cultural Diversity, and Inter-Relationships among Disciplines. Students enrolled in this course will be asked to participate in the USF General Education Assessment effort. This might involve submitting copies of writing assignments for review, responding to surveys, or participating in other measurements designed to assess the FKL Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes.

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Blackboard, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It’s the responsibility of the student to monitor Blackboard site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USF, College, and department websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

Course Description

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the field of gerontology including biological, psychological and social aspects of aging. This course is appropriate for students from all majors who are interested in learning more about the process of aging, and will also provide a basis for more advanced course work in the field of aging. In addition to theory and research on aging, we will discuss practical issues as it pertains to the aging process.

One of the major themes to be explored throughout the course is that of diversity.
The experience of aging is not the same for everyone. The aging process varies greatly in relation to such factors as gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and health. We will examine how these factors influence retirement, widowhood, coping with chronic illness, family care giving sexuality, interpersonal relationships, and mental health.

Course Objectives

Objectives include:
- Ensure that the students engage in analytical, reflective, and critical thought through active class discussion of issues; Encourage students to develop the ability to question received knowledge, structures and policies, through debate and challenge by Instructor;
- Appreciate the historical context and racial/ethnic/cultural context in which the field of aging studies has developed; and
- Gain an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of aging studies, specifically links to such fields as physical health, psychology, public policy and others.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to:
- Demonstrate knowledge of physical and psychological processes of aging.
- Make the distinction between normal and pathological aging,
- Have a basic knowledge of social and health care policies for older adults, including acute and chronic health care, disparities in health care, and socioeconomic policies, and
- Demonstrate critical thinking and inquiry skills through discussions.

Required Text

ISBN-10: 0-205-76835-0

Syllabus, Class Notes, and Blackboard

The syllabus, some class materials, and grades will be posted on Blackboard. It is important that you have access to and are familiar with this site. If you have any questions about using this site, here is a link providing step-by-step information to the many resources available through Blackboard
[http://www.it.usf.edu/services/bb](http://www.it.usf.edu/services/bb).

The class materials will be posted in Blackboard Microsoft PowerPoint format. Please note that class materials available for you in Blackboard are posted for your convenience and to reduce the amount of writing during class, not as a blueprint for every bit of information you will be learning over the semester. Please expect that we will expand upon the provided notes in class. You are responsible for all
information, and regular attendance ensures you will get the information you need for success.

Assignments & Grading

**Major Assignments:**

**Exams (350 points):** There will be 3 tests during the regular semester and a final exam. Test 1 (worth 50 points) will be worth less than all other tests (worth 100 points). The tests will contain a variety of test questions, which could include short answer, essay, multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, etc. Please note that the final exam will be given during finals week according to the USF final examination schedule, so please consult it and make your end of semester plans with that in mind. Each test will assess critical thinking, inquiry-based learning, human and cultural diversity, and inter-relationships among disciplines.

**What kind of 85-year old do you want to be? (100 points):** This essay assignment (3-4 pages) encourages you to consider factors that may affect your experience of aging. You will write an essay that answers the question: What kind of 85-year old do you want to be? You will be using material from class lectures and the textbook. This exercise assesses critical thinking, inquiry-based learning, and inter-relations among disciplines.

**Class participation (50 points):** Class participation comes in many forms. You can earn these points through assignments, coming to class, asking questions, making comments and generally being a good citizen in the course.

**Grading**

Grades will be given via points earned (see below).

A = 500-440  
B = 439-380  
C = 379-320  
D = 319-260  
F = 259 & less
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>Syllabus Review, In-class Activity, What is Gerontology?</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Social Consequences of Physical Aging, Managing Chronic Disease &amp; Promoting Well-Being</td>
<td>Chapters 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Monday January 21st - USF closed, Martin Luther King Jr. Day</td>
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<td>January 24</td>
<td>Cognitive Changes with Aging</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 3, 4, &amp; 5)</strong></td>
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<td>February 7</td>
<td>Personality and Mental Health</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
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<td>February 14</td>
<td>Love, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Old Age</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
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<td>February 21</td>
<td>Importance of Social Support</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
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<td>February 28</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2 (Chapters 6, 7, &amp; 9)</strong></td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Caregiving</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>Hand out provided for Essay assignment</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td><strong>No Class - Spring Break</strong></td>
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<td>March 11-16</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Living Arrangements</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
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<td>March 28</td>
<td>Death, Dying, Bereavement, and Widowhood</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td><strong>Essay assignment DUE</strong></td>
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<td>April 4</td>
<td><strong>Exam 3 (Chapters 10, 11, &amp; 13)</strong></td>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td>Resilience of Elders of Color</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>Resilience of Older Women</td>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>Social Policies</td>
<td>Chapter 16</td>
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<td>Possible Guest Lecture</td>
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**Final Exam** - *(Chapters 14, 15, & 16)*

*TBA (as listed in USF Final Exam Schedule)*