

Gero 513 – Stress, Health and Aging - Spring 2006 Online Class - Syllabus

Leonard Davis School of Gerontology
University of Southern California
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Welcome

Hello and welcome to Gerontology 513: Stress, Health and Aging. Many of you are new to this way of learning and so before I get started, I thought I should go over several things. If you are already familiar with how this course is taught you can begin with the first lecture.

This course was developed with state-of-the-art-knowledge and interesting lectures that use the latest in web technology to help you learn. Please study this syllabus carefully and refer to it during the semester. It contains important information about accessing the Electronic Reserves and Cyber Classrooms, as well as course requirements, logistics and grading. I hope you will find it exciting to learn this way and I look forward to seeing you online!

About the Professor

Edward Schneider, M.D.

Emeritus Dean of the Andrus Gerontology Center; Professor of Gerontology, Medicine, and Biological Science, Demographics and Health Care.

Edward Schneider, M.D. is a Professor of Gerontology at the Andrus Gerontology Center and a Professor of Medicine at the USC School of Medicine, with a joint appointment in Biological Sciences and Molecular Biology. Dr. Schneider received his undergraduate training at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and went on to graduate cum laude from the Boston University School of Medicine, from which he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in May, 1990. Before coming to USC in 1986, Dr. Schneider was the Deputy Director of the National Institute on Aging and the Chief of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics, Gerontology Research Center, National Institute on Aging. Dr. Schneider's research interests include: molecular genetic aspects of cellular aging, DNA damage and repair with aging, and health care costs of an aging population. Dr. Schneider sits on the editorial boards of more than half a dozen journals and was the first recipient of the William and Sylvia Kugel Chair of Gerontology.

Course Description

This course is an interdisciplinary introductory course in geriatrics which examines the processes of normal human aging as well as the common diseases and disorders that affect older adults. Lectures reflect the knowledge and contributions of geriatric experts from the fields of medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, and social work. Particular attention is given to preventive strategies that maximize function to help more individuals achieve a healthy old age. As an introduction to the field, it does not attempt to cover all the possible areas in geriatrics. Instead it will highlight areas of importance and interest to those who will be working with older adults.

The course is divided into four sections: Aging and Health, Health Promotion and Lifestyle, Diseases and Disorders of Aging, and Issues Affecting Health and Function. The first section examines the concepts and issues of healthy aging including epidemiology and normal physiological changes. The next section identifies health promoting behaviors (e.g., nutrition, fitness, smoking cessation) that can prevent chronic illness and disability. The third section presents the major age-related diseases and disorders with their risk factors, symptoms, and treatment. In the final section I will consider some of the other issues that affect health including polypharmacy, oral health, and mental health.

This course is delivered via computer and is entirely web based. The material covered is the same as what would be taught in a traditional classroom. However, in this web based course you will be able to use the immense resources available on the World Wide Web (WWW) to enhance their learning experience.

Since this class does not meet in the traditional fashion (but will, in the virtual sense), additional student responsibilities are required. Every student must have access to a computer with a modem and a printer as well as a word processing program. Each of the 12 weeks of the course will be conducted asynchronously in one week blocks of time. However, you may log-on to the site at any time you choose during the duration of the week. You will have access via e-mail and cyber class me at the Andrus Gerontology Center.

Each week of this course consists of the following components:

- Required Readings from the Course Reader/Electronic Reserve
- A Web Lecture
- Self-Quizzes
- Web Navigation Exercises
- Discussion in a Cyber Classroom
- A Weekly Critical Thinking Exercise
- Access to an outstanding Glossary

At the beginning of each lecture, you are required to read the articles in the Course Reader which are also available on Electronic Reserve. As you read through the web lecture there will be interactive exercises, charts, graphs, or figures that will enlarge when you click on them. If you click on words that are underlined in the text, they will take you to the glossary. You can click on the icon for self-quizzes to test your understanding of the material. These activities are designed to further explain and illustrate the major concepts of the lecture. Additionally, each week we will be interacting with each other via the Cyber Classroom where our debates and other interactive discussion will occur. The Weekly Exercise you are required to write at the end of some week's

lesson will generally be a 1 page paper (300-500 words) that integrates the week's material. During the duration of this course, you are expected to deliver your assignments to me within the scheduled 7 day period. When you compose the weekly essay, you should write using a word processing program (i.e., MS Word or Word Perfect) and then attach it in an e-mail message. Before you send the completed assignment be sure to save the file for your own records. These weekly exercises/short essay assignments will be reviewed, commented on, graded and returned to you by mail.

In order to keep up with the course, you should schedule a specific time each week to read the required articles, "attend" the lecture, participate in the Cyber Classroom, and complete the weekly exercise. You should also plan to check e-mail at least every other day for messages from professor, T.A., and fellow classmates. (Note: Readings for each course are available on-line (Electronic Reserve) and a Course Reader (bound copy of the articles) which can be purchased and sent to you from the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology. The text for the course is Rowe, J. W., and Kahn, R. L., (1998). *Successful Aging*, Pantheon Books: New York and should be purchased by each student.

It is important for me to get to know you and your interests. Please arrange a time to talk with me about the class and your interest in gerontology. If you have any questions about your work, the course requirements, or are having other problems, please e-mail me, make an appointment and visit my office if you can, or call me.

What are Cyber Classrooms?

Each student is required to participate meaningfully in on-line discussions which occur in cyber classrooms. These cyber classrooms are a virtual space for us to meet to discuss the readings, lecture and assignments. Please contact [Technical Support](#) if you have any problem.

The cyber classrooms are also a perfect place to raise questions you may have. There are 12 cyber classrooms that correspond with a specific week. Within each cyber classroom, you will find a set of prompting questions meant to highlight issues I think are important and to stimulate discussion. Depending on when you log-in to the classroom, you may also find a conversation in progress. Feel free to jump in at any level: taking up one of my prompting questions or joining the conversation in progress. I also encourage you to introduce issues that interest you that have not been raised.

Students are required to participate in the cyber classrooms each week. The cyber classrooms will be structured so that all responses will remain accessible to participants during the entire course (i.e., you will be able to read all of what has been contributed to the point where you log-in). However, you may log-in anytime during the day. Remember, input into the cyber classroom stops at the end of the assigned week.

Note: AgeWorks also has a separate bulletin board for general program comments, technical questions and helpful hints you may want to post. Feel free to post messages to this board anytime. It is located on the AgeWorks Home Page.

Required Texts

- Course Reader: Stress, Health and Aging. University Microforms International (1999) Electronic Text
- Rowe, J.W. & Kahn, R.L. (1998). Successful Aging. Pantheon Books: New York.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student will:

1. Recognize lifestyle practices that promote health and prevent disease and/or disability.
2. Know the physiologic changes associated with normal aging versus changes associated with age-related disease.
3. Recognize the risk factors, symptoms, and treatment of common chronic conditions associated with aging.
4. Understand other issues that affect health and function including polypharmacy, oral health, and mental health.
5. Appreciate the roles of the professionals comprising the interdisciplinary geriatric team in the care of older adults.
6. Apply knowledge of geriatrics to "real-life" patient studies to prevent disease and promote healthy aging.

Course Requirements

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

6 Weekly Exercises	25%
Participation in Cyberclass discussions	10%
Site Visit	15%
Interview Assignment	15%
Final Paper	35%

Weekly Exercises, Assignments, Final Exam

All material must be your own. Direct quotes posted from material on the web or references, and simple summaries from articles are not acceptable in assignments or in e-mail comments. Any material that is not your own will receive zero points and cannot be redone. Regular participation is essential to this course and you are expected to participate in the cyber classroom discussions each week.