

Course Syllabus

GERO 540 ONLINE: Social Policy and Aging

Leonard Davis School of Gerontology
University of Southern California
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We at the Andrus Gerontology Center have been working hard to develop an exciting, state-of-the-art course for you, both in terms of gerontological content and the utilization of the latest web technology. For example, we have placed important articles on Electronic Reserve for you at the USC library. (These reading assignments are included along with selections from your text books at the beginning of each lecture.) And, while most of us probably won't meet each other face-to-face, we will get to know each other very well on line. You will be communicating with me and your fellow students each week in Cyberclass Discussions, which allow us to share and explore ideas.

Please study this syllabus carefully. It contains important information about accessing the Electronic Reserves and Cyberclass Discussions. You will also find out about the course requirements, logistics and grading.

Introduction

This is an important time to study aging policy. The number of elderly Americans increased by 107 percent between 1960 and 1998. Their numbers are expected to more than double again between 1995 and 2050. No one can predict exactly how the society will be affected by this aging of the population, however it is likely that public and private costs will increase. Meanwhile policy makers, faced with a growing emphasis on cost containment, are being asked to re-examine the nature and scope of government's social welfare role. What policy course should they chart to meet the challenges of an aging society? And how will the various options affect current and future generations of older adults, their families and the professionals serving them? This course will introduce theoretical models of the policy process, and examine the history and development of policies for older persons. It is anticipated that students will develop the critical thinking skills required to evaluate existing age-based policies and proposals for change.

Course Objectives

- Introduce students to social, political, and economic issues and changes resulting from the aging of society
- Describe the historical development and content of key legislative and governmental programs developed for older adults, including Social Security Act, Older Americans Act, Medicare, etc.
- Help students examine different points of view and develop skills in critical thinking through which they can analyze policies and policy making to form their own perspectives
- Help students develop ability to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and trade-offs inherent in current age-based policy
- Provide students experience accessing, evaluating and using online sources of policy materials.

Reading Assignments

Readings are usually assigned at the beginning of the sessions for students to get a deeper understanding of the issue to be discussed. Reading assignments are intended to help stimulate Discussions in the Cyberclass Discussion. The required readings provide students with an overview of programs developed for older persons and the needs and the problems these programs are intended to address.

Books are available for purchase at USC's [Pertusati Bookstore](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), or online at [Amazon.com](#).

Additional required readings are on electronic reserve at [USC Leavey Library](#)

Required Books:

- Moody, H.R. (1998). Aging: Concepts and controversies. Fourth Edition.
- Torres-Gil, F. (1992). The new aging: Politics and change in America.
- Kingdon, J.W. (1995). Agendas, alternatives, and public policies. Second Edition.
- Steckenrider, J.S. & Parrot, T.M. (1998). New directions in old age policies.

Recommended Books:

Gelfand, D.E. (1991). The Aging Network. Fifth Edition. Redman, E. (1972). The Dance of Legislation Johnson, H. and Broder, D.S. (1996). The System.

Assignments and Grading

Your course grade is based on attaining the maximum points possible. Course assignments, due dates and their value toward your final grade are summarized below. Please note that points will be subtracted for assignments that are turned in late.

1. E-mail assignments

Four short e-mail assignments (2-4 pages) will be assigned during the course of the semester. They will encourage students to review and analyze the materials presented in the lectures. The assignments are due the Thursday following their assignment. For example, E-mail exercise 1 will be assigned on August 26 (by noon) and must be turned in by September 2 (by noon).

2. Cyberclass Discussions

Each week students will participate in Discussions on the topics relevant to the lecture using a Discussion group site. This component of the class is important and your participation is required. You will find a set of prompting questions meant to highlight important issues and 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 the prompting questions or joining the conversation in progress. I also encourage you to pursue issues that interest you but neither I nor your fellow students have raised. The Cyberclass Discussions will be structured so that all responses will remain accessible to participants during the entire course. You may log-in anytime during the day.

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.

3. Final Research Paper

There will be one final research paper. You should submit 1-2 page proposal of your project by Oct. 7 (by noon). The final paper will be due on December 2 (by noon). It should be typed, grammatically correct, clearly written, and structurally sound. Paper should be double-spaced and spell checked.

4. Interactive exercises (not graded)

A number of interactive exercises are built into the lectures to provide students with opportunities to explore websites related to the course and to strengthen their understanding of the information they learn through useful applications. Students are encouraged, but not required to enrich their learning experience using these exercises.

Grade Breakdown

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage Value</u>
E-mail Assignment (10 points each)	40%
Cyberclass Discussion Participation	15%
Final Research Paper Proposal	5%
Final Research Paper	40%
TOTAL	100%

Academic Integrity [VERY IMPORTANT]

I will strictly adhere to the University Student Conduct Code's established expectations of academic honesty. This means students' work should be submitted with the respect for the intellectual property rights of others; the ideas and wordings of another write must be acknowledged and appropriately used.

According to SCAMPUS University Governance sections 11.00 and 11.11, plagiarism is the unacknowledged and inappropriate use of others' works. It includes:

- "the submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether the material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near verbatim form;"
- "the submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style;" and
- "Improper acknowledgement of sources in essays or papers." [1]

Plagiarism is serious student misconduct. If such behavior is found, the instructor has the responsibility to report to the Office of Student Conduct and may apply appropriate sanctions to students who violate principles of academic integrity.

Disabilities Services and Programs

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Review

Your program is unique and innovative in that it is delivered via computer and is entirely web based. The material covered will be the same as that delivered in the traditional, on-campus course. An additional, significant difference is that students will also be required to utilize the immense resources available on the World Wide Web (WWW). The Internet and the WWW are changing not only how courses are taught but also transforming the volume, structure and content of the information delivered. Because this class will not meet in the traditional fashion (but will, in the virtual sense), additional student responsibilities are required.

Every student...For example, if your first week began on Thursday 8/26 at 12 pm, then it must be completed by Thursday 9/2 at 12 pm (All times are Pacific Standard). However, you may log-on to the site at any time you choose during the week. You will have access to your professor and classmates via e-mail and the Cyberclass Discussions.

Each week of this course consists of readings from required texts as well as electronic reserves, a lecture, interactive exercises to further enhance your understanding of the subject matter, and a Cyberclass Discussion. Note that as you read through the lecture, you will come upon various interactive exercises, charts, graphs, or figures that will enlarge when you click on the link. These activities are designed to further explain and illustrate the lecture's major concepts. During the course, you are expected to keep pace with assignments and deliver them on schedule to the instructor.

It is strongly suggested that in order to keep up with the course, you schedule a specific time each week to read the required text and supplemental materials, "attend" the lecture, view the interactive exercises, and participate in the Cyberclass Discussion. It is also necessary to check e-mail at least every other day for messages from your professor and fellow classmates. Note: Supplemental readings for each course are available on-line (Electronic Reserve) and may also be purchased as a hardcopy through the University Bookstore. I recommend that each of you purchase the hard copy of these readings from the bookstore. This will allow you to write notes on the readings. Additionally, it is important that each of you begin to build your own gerontology library.

Finally, I would like to learn more about your specific interests in gerontology and experience or concerns as a graduate student taking online courses. Please feel free to e-mail or call me, especially if you have questions or comments about any of the course requirements.