Sociology 230: Introduction to Gerontology  
Syllabus—Winter 2003—CRN16052  
Class Meetings: 6:30-9:20, Thursday evenings, SS102

Instructor Contact Information: Jan AbuShakrah  
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Website: http://spot.pcc.edu/~jabushak  Please note that the syllabus, all assignments and any class notices are posted on this website.  
Office: Sylvania Campus, SS215-C18.  Hours: I am usually available Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and before class on Thursday. Please feel free to contact me at any time by phone or email.

Course Description:  
This course introduces the current theories, policies, and practices in gerontology and explores professional opportunities in the field. Our discussions will focus on the concerns of practitioners, and current directions in service delivery, programs, and policy.

Intended Learning Outcomes:  
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:  
• Assess practices, programs, and policies in the field of gerontology, using sociological theories and multidisciplinary perspectives on aging and elders.  
• Plan and implement appropriate and effective programs, policies, or social change strategies for and with elders within the professional field of gerontology.  
• Work with confidence as a professional in the developing field of gerontology.

Assessment Tasks:  
Students will demonstrate these learning outcomes by these tasks conducted individually and in cooperation with other students:  
• Response papers: Write seven short papers in response to the week’s topics and assigned reading in preparation for class discussion and debates on controversial issues.  
• Participation: Attend and participate in class activities and discussions.  
• Connecting With Our Elders: Establish a service-relationship with one or more elders, or work in an institution or program for a minimum of 12 hours.  
[Note: If you are volunteering or have paid employment in the field, you may want to register for Cooperative Education credits (Soc280A), which are required for the Gerontology Certificate or Degree Program. You can earn 1 credit hour for every 30 hours you work.]
• **Reflection on Service-Learning:** Keep a journal of your “Connecting With Our Elders” experience, and write a final reflective essay on the experience.

• **Informational Interview with a Professional in the Field of Gerontology:** You will select a person who holds a position that interests you to gain some insight into professional preparation, quality of work, and day-to-day routine.

• **Term Project:** Write an analysis of a gerontological issue, based on research, and develop a proposal for an appropriate program, policy, or change strategy in response. The Project includes a presentation, a professional review, and a self-evaluation.

• **Portfolios:** Students seeking a Certificate or Degree in Gerontology will have the opportunity to work on developing their portfolios and receive professional review.

*Guidelines and assessment criteria for these tasks will be discussed in class.*

**Course Content**

**Concepts, themes, and issues:** We will focus on concepts, themes, and issues related to the following issues:

- Health, longevity, and healthcare
- Care of elders in families and institutions
- Housing and living arrangements for elders
- Dying, death, and bereavement
- Economics of aging
- Inequalities and aging
- Welfare state policies related to the aged
- Politics of aging, including social policy issues and social movements
- Elder abuse and neglect

Other concepts, themes, and issues in the field of gerontology will be examined according to student interest.

**Process Skills:** These are some of the skills you should develop by doing the assignments and participating in class:

1. Interpretation and application of gerontological research on the aging and elders.
2. Critical analysis of gerontological issues, programs, and policies.
3. Assessment of professional opportunities in the field and preparation for them.
4. Appropriate application of gerontological theories, practices, programs, and policies to diverse aging populations.
5. Program and social change strategy planning and implementation.
6. Clear and effective communication on these issues, in written and oral form.
7. Effective group work.
8. Reflection on service-learning experiences.
Learning Resources

The field of gerontology is developing rapidly, so we need to use diverse and emerging resources. The text I selected provides a good, general introduction to aging and gerontology that presents the latest developments in research, practice, and policy. I also wrote the Instructor’s Manual for this edition of the text, which acquainted me with many useful resources. This text, and the other resources I will make available to you, should provide an adequate basis for you to learn and explore issues on your own. I hope that you will also share resources you encounter in your reading and work. Aging and the Life Course can be purchased in the bookstore. The same text will be used for Soc223: Sociology of Aging and Soc230: Introduction to Gerontology for the next two years.


Additional Resources: Aging and the Life Course cites extensive references to supplemental articles, books, films, and Internet resources, and I will introduce some new resources in class. You can also draw upon your service-learning experience, and any other contacts and experience you have had in the field. Additional resources, in the form of films, guests, and written materials, will be made available in class.

Instructor: I encourage you to contact me with any concerns or questions regarding this course and your work that are not addressed in class. You can contact me immediately before or after class, call me at my campus phone/voice mail: 503-977-4077, fax me at 503-977-4959, or email me at jabushak@pcc.edu.

Assessment and Grading

I will provide you guidelines for assignments, and indicate the criteria by which they will be assessed. We will discuss these criteria and make sure that we know what “good” response papers, reflections, interviews, and term projects look like. At the end of the course, I will use the same criteria to determine your grade. Letter grades will be based on standard grading practices: 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% - D, and 59% or lower = F.

In your final grade, the tasks will have the following weight:

- Response papers/Discussion preparation (7 x 20 point each) 140
- Connecting With Our Elders (service-learning) 110
- Reflections on service-learning (journal entries and report)
  6 journal entries (15 points each) and 1 final report (20 points) 110
- Attendance & participation (10 each session) 120
- Informational Interview 180
- Term Project 340
  Prospectus (20)
  Presentation (30)
  Professional Review (30)
  Self-evaluation (20)
  Paper: Analysis and Proposal (240)

Total Course Points 1,000 points
Credit Hours and Transferability:
The three credit hours earned in this course are transferable to Oregon state colleges, universities, and community colleges. Generally, there should be no problem regarding transfer credit to any college or university. If transferability is a concern, especially to a private college, you should consult the receiving institution before enrolling in this course. This course is required for the Gerontology Certificate and Degree (See catalog).

Student Resource Information:
As a registered PCC student, you have many resources available to enhance your learning experience. Get a copy of the Student Handbook for a list of services and contact information. Use the Learning Resource Center services, which you can contact in person, by telephone, by fax, by computer/modem, and from the Internet (see www.pcc.edu/library). As a PCC student, you have access to Ebscohost and Portals (all college, university, and county libraries in the Portland Metro area). You can also use the Computer Resource Center, College Center 206, for Internet access, word-processing, virus scan, and printing. You need to go through a 5-minute orientation, and present your current PCC ID card, Student Identification Number, and current PCC registration.

Students with Disabilities: I encourage students who have disabilities to contact the office for Students With Disabilities for assistance in requesting accommodations. Their number is 503 977-4341. Please meet or talk with me to discuss any special considerations or problems that may affect your participation or performance in this course.

Withdrawal From the Course: When you register for a course at PCC, you assume the responsibility for completing the course. If you need to withdraw from the course, you must contact PCC’s Registration Office (503 977-4620) or go through the withdrawal procedures on the secured student website. Depending upon when you withdraw, you may be entitled to full, partial, or no tuition reimbursement. While it is not required, I recommend that you let me know if you plan to withdraw. It may be possible to arrange for you to complete the course requirements.

Other Course Issues: Please contact me if you are having any problems with the assignments or this course. In most cases, we should be able to reach an accommodation. You also need to inform me by the end of the 8th week of classes if you wish to receive audit or pass/no pass credit. That is also the last week to obtain a Withdrawal from the course (without tuition reimbursement).

I hope you have a great term. I look forward to what should be a great learning experience for all of us!
Course Schedule
This schedule is subject to change, depending on your interests. We will also have some guest speakers and may want to adjust our schedule to fit their availability. Any changes will be discussed in class. The focus of the last two class sessions is left open to provide you an opportunity to work on your projects and to explore topics of interest to you. I will prepare options and background materials for those sessions once we decide on your issues.

In Class Learning Focus | Things To Do
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**Week 1: January 9th**  
Introduction to course and field  
Goal-setting | Review syllabus and course resources  
Explore service-learning opportunities  
Discuss topics and issues of special interest

**Week 2: January 16th**  
Health, Longevity, and Health Care  
Issue: Should We Ration Health Care for Older People? | Response paper #1  
Report: “Connecting with our Elders” plan  
Read: ALC, Chapter 12: Health and Health Care

**Week 3: January 23rd**  
Caring for Our Elders  
Issue: Resources and Options for Caretakers | Response paper #2/Journal Entry #1  
Read: ALC, Chapter 13: Caring for the Frail Elderly

**Week 4: January 30th**  
Dying, Death, and Bereavement  
Issue: Hospice and End-of-Life Care | Response paper #3/Journal Entry #2  
Read: ALC, Chapter 14: Dying, Death, and Bereavement

**Week 5: February 6th**  
The Economics of Aging: Part 1  
Issue: Should Age or Need Be the Basis for Entitlement? How should needs be met? | Response paper #4/Journal Entry #3  
Read: ALC, Chapter 4: Old Age and the Welfare State; Chapter 15: The Economics of Aging

**Week 6: February 13th**  
The Economics of Aging: Part 2  
Issue: What is the Future of Social Security? | Response paper #5/Journal Entry #4  
Read: ALC, Chapter 16: Aging and Inequality & resources of Social Security

**Week 7: February 20th**  
Living Arrangements and Housing | Response paper #6/Journal Entry #5  
Read: ALC, Chapter 10: Living Arrangements

**Week 8: February 27th**  
The Politics of Aging  
Issue: Elder Lobbies and Movements | Response paper #7/Journal Entry #6  
Read: ALC Chapter 17: The Politics of Aging and selected readings

**Week 9: March 6th**  
Special Issues  
Work on Projects | Informational Interview Due  
Work on Projects in Library. Submit Project Proposal

**Week 10: March 13th**  
Work on Projects. | Service-Learning Log & Summary Report (#7) Due

**Week 11: March 20th**  
Term Projects, Assessment, Food & Fun | Presentations of Term Projects, with outside review.  
Course & Self-Assessment

- Bring a self-addressed, stamped envelop to the Final Meeting if you want your final project (with my feedback) returned.