Gerontology

College of Health and Human Services
Dean: Don Taylor

Gerontology Program
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Faculty

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Program

M.A. in Gerontology

Program Scope

Purpose: The Gerontology Program is administratively housed in the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), and enjoys close collaborative relationships with other units throughout the college, university, and with the communities it serves. The Master of Arts in Gerontology is an applied, professional program designed for students preparing for a career in the field of aging, or a related human service field, who wish to improve their knowledge and skills. Course work leading to the M.A. is designed to:

- emphasize the broad, interdisciplinary nature of issues which relate to and influence older adults;
- provide students with the academic background, professional experience, and research capabilities necessary to pursue advanced study at the doctoral level; and
- prepare students for professional practice and leadership positions in the public and private sectors where gerontological knowledge is required.

History and Philosophy: The Master of Arts in Gerontology at SF State was established in 1986 and is the first, and thus the oldest, graduate program in Gerontology in the California State University and the University of California systems.
The Gerontology Program is dedicated to the higher education of professionals using an interdisciplinary approach to serve the present and future needs of society in meeting the multiple challenges of an aging population; the conduct of applied research to increase the body of knowledge about issues and processes of aging; and the application of the discipline of gerontology in the community to advocate for improving the quality of care and quality of life for the aged.

The academic program adheres to the standards and guidelines established by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) for professional master's level programs. In addition, the program faculty advises active student organizations such as student chapters of the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA), Gerontological Society of America (GSA), and Sixty Plus (lifelong learning for students age 60 and over). The program provides a gerontology library and shared meeting place for student activities.

**Applied, Skill-Based Professional Education:** The Gerontology Program emphasizes an applied, skill-based approach to professional education. To do this, it draws upon the strengths of the university and community as well as the expertise of the faculty.

The program resides in a richly diverse, multicultural environment which provides a natural laboratory for understanding and developing competencies around the aging experiences of different ethnic groups.

Students obtain knowledge of the discipline and its theoretical foundations. Students are prepared with tools which allow them to use quantitative and qualitative methods in applied research for solving a variety of practical problems in the community.

Gerontology at SF State includes advocacy for the aged in the continuum of care and actively engages in activities through links with other professionals to provide a comprehensive model of consumer-driven health and human services. Students can participate in learning and service where skills of needs assessment, program development, implementation and evaluation directly contribute to the community’s well-being.

**Academic Auxiliaries:** Two freestanding academic auxiliary units associated with the Gerontology Program house development, research, and training projects. The Institute on Gerontology enjoys joint ventures with regional, national and international grants and contracts. The Health, Mobility, and Safety Lab is an academic auxiliary unit which provides on-going support in the areas of driver assessment, driver education, driver simulation, fall prevention, home safety, research and education for older adults. Students are encouraged to take full advantage of the clinical, direct service and research opportunities offered by these projects.

**Career Outlook:** Gerontology is one of the fastest growing disciplines within the field of Health and Human Services. Current demographic projections indicate that California will experience a doubling of the population over the age of 65 by the year 2020;
furthermore, of all age groups, the group over age 85, the oldest old, is increasing at the
greatest rate. Not only will there be greater numbers of older persons by 2020, they will
be increasingly single, female, and ethnically diverse. A Master of Arts in Gerontology
prepares the student for effective performance in a career of service to older Americans.
It also lays a firm academic foundation in applied gerontology for students who choose
to work toward a doctoral degree. Students have the opportunity to choose a number of
career paths in the field of aging within the public and private sectors.

Private and public Geriatric Care Managers (GCMs) are among the most highly sought
gerontological professionals in the United States. GCMs are hired by a variety of
community-based agencies, private care management organizations and many GCMs
are starting their own businesses. A GCM practice particularly lends itself to the
entrepreneur who wishes to begin a small business to serve the community need.
GCMs are certified and supported by the National Association of Professional Geriatric
Care Managers. This professional association provides an interactive web site that links
family members with certified care managers and offers high quality continuing
education.

Health, wellness and aging programs and services are examples of the frontiers of
applied research and recent federal funding via the Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention. Programs of health promotion are currently being created and funded in
both the private and public sectors and accumulating research describes a direct link
between health and wellness and life style choices. Senior centers, retirement
communities, long-term institutions and professional organizations serving older
persons now recognize the need for making wellness a priority in planning, programs
and services. Health and wellness are also new priorities for school children and adults
and students may explore career opportunities for intergenerational practice. Students
choosing a Gerontology emphasis in health, wellness and aging are prepared for
professional practice in local, state and federal government, the for-profit and not-for
profit sectors and organizations from AARP to the YMCA.

Long-term care administration is in a period of expansion and diversification.
Professional requirements vary widely depending on state and federal regulations for
the specific area of administration. Long-term care administrators manage and direct
the daily operations of long-term care facilities. Employment opportunities for long-term
care administrators are available and may be found in assisted living facilities, geriatric
care centers, home health care agencies, hospice facilities, hospital systems,
rehabilitation facilities, residential care facilities for the elderly, retirement communities,
Senior centers, skilled nursing facilities, and special population programs (AIDS and
mental health).

MASTER OF ARTS IN GERONTOLOGY
The Master of Arts in Gerontology consists of 33 units which includes ten required core courses and one elective course. The required internship (6 units), included in the core consists of student placement in an off-campus facility or organization. Numerous facilities and organizations collaborate with the graduate program in offering internships in clinical, community and institutional settings. The required culminating experience (3 units) also included in the core, consists of a culminating project course integrating bodies of knowledge from the required courses. This usually translates into a two-year academic program.

Admission to Program

A prospective student must fulfill the general university requirements as stated in the section of the Graduate and Post-baccalaureate Admissions of this Bulletin. To be considered for unconditional admission to the MA in Gerontology, a student must have completed an undergraduate major in an appropriate field with a minimum of grade point average of 3.0. Students whose undergraduate major did not include gerontology courses should consult the graduate coordinator about prerequisite courses in gerontology. If the student’s undergraduate record meets the basic requirements and gives promise of a successful pursuit of graduate work, the program will recommend that the student be admitted to graduate classified status or graduate conditionally classified status specifying the conditions and time limit within which they must be met.

Students will be expected to meet the following criteria:

- Meet the admissions standards of the university.
- Have an earned undergraduate grade point average of 3.0.
- Have completed an introductory course in gerontology or its equivalent.
- Have documented experience or competence in interpersonal/group communication skills as demonstrated in a personal interview with the admissions committee, letters of recommendation, or course work.
- Have completed a course in statistics with a grade of C or better.
- Three letters of recommendation from faculty and/or employers.

Written English Proficiency Requirement

Level One Preadmission: indicate the ability to write in a proficient manner by satisfactorily completing the GRE with a passing score of at least 4.0. Prospective students will also be required to submit a written statement of purpose for pursuing the graduate degree in gerontology. Applicants who do not pass the GRE, or who do not submit a well-written statement of purpose, will be advised to enhance their writing proficiency by taking a prerequisite course through the College of Extended Learning or elsewhere, and then reapply to the program. Level Two: indicate the ability to write in a scholarly manner in the discipline by satisfactorily completing GRN 890 for the culminating experience requirement.
Requirements for Graduation

- Meet all general requirements for submission of the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) form.
- Successfully complete core and elective courses.
- Successfully complete GRN 838/839, and GRN 890, the culminating project or culminating experience. If necessary, students must maintain continuous enrollment in HHS 499 (through CEL), until they have completed their culminating experience requirements.
- Maintain a 3.0 grade point average in graduate study.
- With the assistance of a gerontology program graduate adviser, choose a faculty committee that will be responsible for evaluating the oral presentation and written paper in the integrative seminar.

On-line course descriptions are available.

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRN 705</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging in a Multidimensional Context</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRN 710</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging Processes: Health and Human Services</td>
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<td>GRN 715</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging and Social Policy Analysis</td>
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<td>GRN 725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging and Diversity</td>
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<td>GRN 735</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical and Legal Issues in Aging and Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRN 760</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Methods in Gerontology</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRN 765</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aging and the Continuum of Care</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>GRN 838</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerontology Seminar</td>
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<td>GRN 839</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerontology Internship</td>
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<td>GRN 890</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative Seminar</td>
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<td><strong>Elective:</strong></td>
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<td>Elective course may be chosen from various graduate programs, including Consumer &amp; Family Studies/Dietetics; Counseling; Health Education; Kinesiology; Nursing; Recreation, Parks and Tourism; Management; Public Administration; and Social Work.</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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