COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course prepares students for direct practice in a variety of settings serving older adults and their families, including institutions, health care organizations, and community-based programs. Theories of adult development and aging will be examined and their application to practice interventions will be considered. Emphasis will be placed on development of skills for work with older adults experiencing "normal" life transitions and challenges (e.g. retirement, sexuality), life crises (e.g. life-threatening or chronic illness, dependency, loss), and special problems (e.g. substance abuse, abuse and neglect, Alzheimer's disease). Particular attention will be given to the experiences of elderly women, minorities, and populations at risk. Ethical issues in gerontological practice will be considered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. understand normal adult development and aging, life transitions and crises faced by older adults, and issues particular to aging, as well as the impact of ethnicity, gender, class, culture, and other individual differences on these processes.

2. understand communication issues of older adults.

3. effectively engage older adult clients and perform accurate assessments, with attention to issues of gender, ethnicity, culture, and class.

4. demonstrate skills in assessment of issues relevant to aging, including dementia, depression, substance abuse, and abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation.
5. intervene effectively with older adults and their families in a variety of settings, demonstrating skills in advocacy, planning for life transitions, crisis intervention and brief counseling, group work, behavior management, and life review.

6. understand issues of pharmacology and medication compliance as they relate to older adults.

7. recognize issues relating to their own aging and mortality.

8. evaluate their own practice and identify areas for improvement.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Course Reader for SW857 (available at DuBois Bookstore).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to attend class each week, read the required readings, and participate in class discussion and activities. All written work will be graded for both content and style. Assignments are due on the dates specified in the course outline, and late assignments will not be accepted without prior permission from the instructor.

There will be three assignments for the course:

1) **Life review paper.** This assignment asks students to conduct a life review interview with an older adult, as explained in the readings for week 6. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

2) **Class presentation.** Students will work in small groups with the instructor to design and teach selected course content to the class. As part of this assignment, each small group will prepare a study guide related to that content. Each group will be graded as a group; this assignment is worth 30% of the final grade.

3) **Final exam.** The final exam will be given **June 4** and will be worth 40% of the final grade. The study guides prepared by student groups will be the primary source of questions for the exam.
COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1  Introduction to the course
3/26/01  Theories of adult development and aging

Week 2  Life transitions and crises in older adulthood
4/2/01  The impact of gender, ethnicity, class, and culture
Readings:  Text, Chapters 2, Health and illness in the later years: Range of normal and pathological Butler, Lewis, & Sunderland, Older people and their families, and Common emotional problems.  In Aging and Mental Health (pp. 27-53; 71-93).

Week 3  Engagement and communication with older adults
Levine, L.  1996. "Things were different then:" Counter-transference issues for younger female therapists working with older female clients. Social Work in Health Care, 22, 73-88.
Communicating with the person with Alzheimer's disease.

* Recommended reading.
Week 4  
Assessment  
4/16/01  
• The mini mental status exam  
• Depression and dementia  

Week 5  
Pharmacology and older adults  
4/23/01  
• Medication compliance  
• Substance abuse  
*Schonfeld & Dupree, Treatment alternatives for older alcohol abusers. In Older Adults' Misuse of Alcohol, Medicines, and Other Drugs (pp. 113-131).  
*Smith & Atkinson, Alcoholism and dementia. In Older Adults’ Misuse of Alcohol, Medicines, and Other Drugs (pp. 132-157).

Week 6  
Interventions at the end of life  
4/30/01  
• Advanced directives, decision-making, and ethical issues  
• Life review and narrative  
Readings: Text, Chapters 10, Tools for ethical reasoning in long-term care management; *12, Death, bereavement, loss, and growth: Two perspectives; & *Appendix, Client self-determination in end-of-life decisions: NASW Policy Statement  


Interventions with life course transitions
- Planning for retirement and life-style changes
- Leisure and learning opportunities
- Sexuality

Readings: *Text, Chapter 11, HIV/AIDS and the elderly.


Interventions with role transitions
- Grandparenting
- Widowhood


*Musil, C.M., Schrader, S. & Mutikani, J. Social support, stress, and special coping tasks of grandmother caregivers. In To Grandmother's House We Go and Stay (pp. 56-70).


*Cox, C.B. Empowering grandparents raising grandchildren. In To Grandmother's House We Go and Stay (pp. 253-267).

Week 7  5/7/01  Interventions with persons with dementia: behavior management and validation

Stages of disorientation (handouts)

Interventions with families
• Caregiver issues
• Blended families
Readings:  Text, Chapter 7, Working with traditional and non-traditional families of elderly people.

Week 8  5/14/01  Abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and exploitation

Readings:  Text, Chapter 9, Hidden problem of elder abuse: Clues and strategies for health care workers.
Quinn, M.J. & Tomita, S.K. 1997. Diagnosis phase: II. Assessment; Intervention phase: I. Considerations and crisis treatment; and
*Intervention phase: II. The many forms of treatment. In Elder Abuse and Neglect 2d ed. (pp. 150-254).

Week 9  5/21/01  Evaluating practice in gerontology

Reading:  Text, Chapter 15, A recapitulation of workplace guidelines.

Week 10  5/28/01  NO CLASS : MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

5/30/01  Life review paper due.

6/04/01  Final Exam.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


INTERNET SITES

Aging in Ohio
http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/%7Eseniors/index.html
Includes a directory of information for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Alzheimer's Association
http://www.alz.org

American Association of Retired Persons
http://www.aarp.org

American Society on Aging
http://www.asaging.org
Has on-line continuing education programs.

Elder Care Guide
http://www.eldercare.com/

Gerontological Society of America
http://www.geron.org

NASW Section on Aging
http://www.socialworkers.org/sections/aging/default.htm

National Center on Elder Abuse
http://www.elderabusecenter.org/

National Council on the Aging
http://www.ncoa.org/
An advocacy organization that publishes a journal, Innovations, on-line.

National Institute on Aging
http://www.nih.gov/nia/
Has links to health information, aging services, and the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR) : http://www.alzheimers.org/

Senior.com
http://www.senior.com/
An on-line community for seniors.

SeniorNet
http://www.seniornet.com/index.shtml
A group devoted to increasing access to informational technology for seniors.

U.S. Administration on Aging
http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/default.htm
Has a resource directory for older people as well as information for professionals