UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
SW422: Problems of Aging and Old Age  
Fall 2008

Instructor: Mary Paulauskis, MSSW  
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Office Hr: Wednesdays @ 9:00am, 208 Social Work or by appointment

Lecture Day: Wednesday  
Lecture Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm  
Lecture Location: 106 Social Work

Catalog Description:
Comparison of aging and the role of elders in various societies; age-grading and age-norms; the changing life cycle; factors that account for the changed position of the aged in our society; problems of the aged and proposed solutions.

Course Overview:
The purpose of this course is to give students an understanding of the nature of social problems of older adults and their families in the United States and to acquaint students with some of the programs and services that have been developed for older adults. This is a course that draws on knowledge from social work, sociology and psychology as they help shed light on the origins, scope and dynamics of the social problems of older adults.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the semester, students will be able to:
1. Articulate at least three social issues that affect older adults
2. Articulate understanding of intersecting oppressions linked to age, race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability and other marginalized statuses
3. Understand how historical events influence the perspective of older adults
4. Acknowledge personal experiences that may affect attitudes toward older adults
5. Experientially understand the losses associated with aging
6. Identify programs/strategies to serve at risk populations in Dane County that support older adults
7. Define wrap-around services
8. Apply NASW Code of Ethics to multi-faceted ethical dilemmas
9. Articulate importance of person-in-environment, person-centered and family systems practices
10. Demonstrate knowledge/skills to combat discrimination, oppression, and economic deprivation and to promote social and economic justice in the pursuit of nondiscriminatory social and economic systems
Course Content:

**Week 1: Wednesday, September 3**
Topics: Overview of course, syllabus & grading

**Week 2: Wednesday, September 10**
Topics: Definition/Sources of Ageism
Facts on Aging
Responses to Ageism
Film: See Me

Required Reading:
Chapter 1 (pages 2-23): Novak, *Issues in Aging*

**Week 3: Wednesday, September 17**
Topics: Who are Minority Elderly?
Demographic Characteristics of Dominant and Minority Group Elders
Theories of Minority Group Aging
Native American, Asian American, Hispanic American and African American Aging

Required Reading:
Chapter 7 (pages 164-194): Novak, *Issues in Aging*

**Week 4: Wednesday, September 24**
Topics: LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) Elders

Guest Speaker: Chris Rode, LCSW

Film: *Ruthie and Connie: Every Room in the House*

Required Readings:


**Week 5: Wednesday, October 1**
Topics: Aging and disability, physical changes and losses associated with aging, service provision to ethnically and racially diverse populations with disabilities.

Required Readings:


**Week 6: Wednesday, October 8**
**Topics:** Elders and the Health Care System

**Required Readings:**
Chapter 8 (pages 197-225): Novak, *Issues in Aging*

**Week 7: Wednesday, October 15**
**READING REACTION PAPER DUE**
**Topics:** Late Life Depression
Substance Abuse, Suicidal Rates
Ageism in Mental Health Service Provision

**Required Readings:**
Pages 153-162, Novak, *Issues in Aging*

**Week 8: Wednesday, October 22**
**Topics:** Family Life, Marriage and Widowhood
Supports for Older Adults
Minority Differences in Social Supports
Caregiving

**Required Readings:**
Week 9: Wednesday, October 29
Topics: Dementia and Elders

Required Readings:
Novak, Issues in Aging, pgs. 150-153

Week 10: Wednesday, November 5
MID-TERM EXAMINATION ON WEEKS 2-8
COMMUNITY RESOURCE PAPER DUE
Topics: Dane County Resources for an Aging Population

Required Readings: Community Resources used by social workers in the aging field will be distributed to you at Week 8’s class or earlier.

Week 11: Wednesday, November 12
Completion of Presentations of Community Resource Paper

Week 12: Wednesday, November 19
Topics: Elder Abuse, Ethical Issues
Guest Speaker: Jane Raymond

Required Readings:
Pgs. 370-373, Novak, Issues in Aging

Week 13: Wednesday, November 26
Topics: Social Work Advocacy
Panel: Social Workers from the Community working with Elders
--HospiceCare
--Alzheimer’s Association
--Eldercare
--South Madison Coalition

Required Readings: Handouts from community agencies will be distributed to you at Week 11’s class.
Week 14: Wednesday, December 3
SELF-REFLECTION PAPER ASSIGNMENT DUE
Topics:  Theories of Biological Aging
         Coping with Physical Change
         Successful Aging
         Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
         Self care
Speaker:  Kate Edwards, BSW, Meditation Teacher

Required Readings:
  Chapter 13 (pages 339-375): Novak, Issues in Aging

Week 15: Wednesday, December 10
Topics:  Death and Dying
         Hospice Care/Palliative Care
         Ethics
         Advance Directives
         Bereavement

Required Readings:
  Botsford, A. (2004). Status of end of life care in organizations providing services for
  older people with a developmental disability. American Journal on Mental Retardation, 109(5),
  421-428.
  of the American Medical Association, 286(23), 2993-3001.

Final Exam:
Final examination covers weeks 9-15; this exam is not comprehensive

Texts and Reading Materials for the course:
Required text:

The text can be purchased at A Room of One's Own Book Store, 307 W. Johnson Street (257-7888).

Required Reader:
The reading packet can be purchased from Bob's Copy Shop, 1401 University Avenue. A
copy of the reading packet is also on reserve in the Social Work Library.
Evaluation of Student Outcomes: Assignments, Grading and Methods

1. Attendance & Class Participation Policy
   In order for you and your fellow classmates to benefit from this course, attendance and active participation are expected. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. The instructor will note your level of participation. You can earn up to 8 points for attending class regularly, and for actively participating in discussions and activities.

2. Reading Reaction Paper:
   You are required to write a reading reaction paper this semester based on a reading from Weeks 2-7. The paper is due no later than at the beginning of Week 7's class on October 15. You can earn up to 16 points for this paper.

   In this paper, you should formally and critically evaluate (not summarize) what you have read and respond by discussing the following:

   1. What important point(s) arise from the reading?
   2. Can these important points be generalized to individuals of diverse backgrounds (with respect to gender, ethnicity, culture, spirituality or sexual orientation)? If so, how? If not, why not?
   3. What question(s) do you feel the reading should have addressed, but did not?
   4. Overall, what do you, not the author(s) feel are the reading’s implications for social work practice with elders? Be specific.

   This reaction paper is to be not less than three pages in length and not more than four pages. Be sure that you adhere to the Writing Assignment Policy presented below. Papers (hard copies only) are due at the beginning of class.

3. Community Resource Paper/Presentation:
   A very important component of the tasks of social work is that of referral to resources. Not all communities have identical resources but there are similarities in services to an aging population. Understanding what is available here in Dane County will help train you for what to look for in communities in which you will eventually practice. Write a one page overview of one of the services you read about in the resources which you have been provided. Study this resource via a website or phone call to the organization and answer the following questions:
   1. What is the age range for recipients of this service?
   2. What is the service and how do elders/families access it?
   3. Why is this service important to elders?
   4. Does this service provide culturally competent services to clients?
   5. How would knowing this service is available be useful to you in your work with elders?

   Be prepared to make a five minute presentation to your classmates about this service. Hand in your paper at the end of class (Week 10, Wednesday, November 5). All papers will be compiled into a resource manual to be distributed to you and your classmates. This paper is worth 6 points.
4. Self-Reflection Paper:
   Social Problems of Aging and Old Age is a foundation social work course that provides you with information necessary for working with elders in the social work profession. This course requires you to gain a deeper understanding of your own development; values and beliefs resulting from your development; and how these values and beliefs influence your assessment of others’ behavior and/or situations.
   To assist in this understanding, you are expected to write a self-reflection paper this semester that will be worth 20 points. Your paper should include thoughts on the following: 1) the values and beliefs you hold as a result of your own development; 2) how you feel these values and beliefs might impact your assessment of others’ behavior and situations; and 3) the ethical dilemmas you might face as a result of value and belief differences (e.g., client populations with whom you may find difficult to work; decisions made by clients that are not in agreement with your beliefs).
   This paper is to be not less than four full pages in length and not more than five pages. Be sure that you adhere to the Writing Assignment Policy presented below. Papers (hard copies only) are due at the beginning of class on December 3.

5. Examinations:
   • Two examinations will be given during the semester covering material from the readings, class lectures, videos and class discussions. These exams will consist of multiple choice and true-false questions, and each is worth 25 points.
   • The mid-term examination will be held on Week 10 (November 5) and cover the material for Weeks 2-8. This exam will be given within the first hour of the class period in which it is scheduled, and begin promptly at 10:00 am.
   • The final examination will cover Weeks 9-15, and be held on the scheduled final examination date: Saturday, December 20, 10:05am – 12:05pm. The final examination will not be comprehensive.

A total of 100 points is possible and final grades will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Number of Possible Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Class Participation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reaction Paper</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Resource Paper/Presentation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection Paper</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examinations (25 points each)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding, surpasses expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-93</td>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>Surpasses expectations in many areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Meets expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-81</td>
<td>B/C</td>
<td>Meets expectations in some areas, below in others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Below expectations in most areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expectations in all areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;64</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Fails to meet minimal expectations in all areas, not acceptable work</td>
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Policies:
Reading Assignments: you are expected to have read all assigned material prior to the class date under which the readings are listed. Reading and critically evaluating what you have read is necessary so that you can learn, actively participate in class discussions, and successfully complete written assignments.

Written Assignment Policy: All written assignments are to be either typed or computer-generated. Please format these assignments using one-inch margins, double-spacing, and a Times Roman 12-inch font. Always include a cover sheet (not counted as one of the required pages) with the title of the paper, your name, the date turned into the instructor, course number, and course title. All assignments should be checked thoroughly for correct spelling and grammar.

Late Assignment Policy: The assignments listed above are due at the beginning of the class period on the date specified. Students who believe they have a legitimate reason for turning in a late assignment should contact the instructor prior to the due date. Unapproved late assignments will be marked down three points for each day they are late.

Student Behavior Policy: Please respect your fellow students’ opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. If you have a concern that needs to be brought to the class’s attention, please speak with the instructor. Remember to keep confidential all issues discussed in class of a personal or professional nature.