

GERO 100 700 & 701: Introduction to the Aging Experience
Spring 2024 Syllabus
Course Policies and Evaluation Criteria

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GERO 100 qualifies for credit as a General Education Course in Section C "Social and Behavioral Sciences" and also as a Colonnade Exploration Course, Category, Behavioral and Social Science.

Readings will familiarize you with key facts, theories and concepts in gerontology, and to help you reflect on the most important topics confronting our aging society. GERO 100's ultimate goal is to build a knowledge base that will help you work toward resolving these important issues in a well-reasoned and argued manner on *both a societal and personal level*.

Assignments include practical and personal applications, e.g., when we study longevity, you will learn ways to evaluate your own life expectancy; the topic of health and aging will include a simulation designed to create a better understanding of some common age-related ailments.

IMPORTANT: GERO 100's online course site uses the ULTRA Experience within Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the social, psychological, and physical dimensions of aging. We will examine the aging process experienced by the individual and how the aging of the population affects our society as a whole. As a result, you will be able to:

1. Identify stereotypes and myths about aging and describe how these misconceptions shape attitudes and policy toward older adults. Understand the benefits, as well as the challenges, of growing older.
2. Discuss the theoretical perspectives that explain the biological, psychological, and social aspects of aging.
3. Describe demographic changes occurring in the U.S. and other countries and explain the implications of those changes for society.
4. Recognize diversity in the aging experience, and describe the impact of gender identity, race, sexual orientation, culture, and socioeconomic status on older people.
5. Describe common physiological, psychological, sexual, and social age-related changes.
6. Identify current issues affecting older adults and describe existing policies and programs that address these.

TWO REQUIRED TEXTS (Both required texts are included in the BIG RED BACKPACK program.)

1. Gawande, Atul. (2014). *Being Mortal*, Henry Holt and Company. REQUIRED.
2. Novak, Mark (2018). *Issues in Aging* (4th edition), Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. REQUIRED.
3. All other required study materials will be available free through Blackboard ULTRA.

OTHER REQUIRED ITEMS

- Microsoft Word or other software that saves files in .doc, .docx, or .rtf file format
- Adobe Acrobat Reader (a free download from Adobe.com)

COURSE WEBSITE

IMPORTANT: This course site uses the ULTRA Experience within Blackboard. As a result, the course site may look different from what you are accustomed to in other courses. Before starting any coursework, please review the [Introduction to Blackboard Learn with the ULTRA Experience for Students video](#). I will open the course site several days before the start of the term to allow time for you to explore.

All course documents, e.g., syllabus, readings, assignments, will be available on the course Blackboard ULTRA website. You will also use the Blackboard ULTRA website to submit your Introduction Exercise & Essay on Family Life, take your Quizzes and Final Exam, and view your grades. You are expected to check Blackboard ULTRA each Tuesday morning for new announcements about assignments, supplemental readings, and additional information.

EVALUATION

Please note that in this course there is a very strict late policy, and you will have an assignment due every week on Tuesday at NOON. Your final course grade will be determined based on the following:

- One Introduction Exercise worth **70 points**.
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- Fourteen (14) open-book Quizzes, worth between 20 and 80 points each depending on the topic, for a total of **730 points**. *Note: Many quizzes include short answer questions that require critical thinking about the topics and activities included in the Module.*
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- One (1) Essay on Family Life worth 100 points for a total of **100 points**. Points will be assigned according to quality of content as determined by a posted Rubric.
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- One closed-book, comprehensive Final Exam worth a total of **100 points**. *However, students with a score of 837 or more points of the total 900 possible prior to the Final Exam (i.e., a grade of 93% or greater after completing all assignments other than the Final) may request to opt out of the final exam.*

DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS/TESTS

1. **Quizzes:** Quizzes include multiple choice, true/false, matching and short answer questions. The quizzes are designed to give you a solid base of gerontology terms and general knowledge. Quizzes are 'open-book,' i.e., *you may refer to all course materials while taking each quiz*. Even though they are open book, it is very doubtful that you will do well on the Quizzes if you fail to read/view all the assigned materials before beginning the Quiz. They are timed and must be completed in one sitting.
2. **Essay on Family Life:** Your Essay will focus on family dynamics, personal reactions to various living situations, and the relationship between patient and doctor. It is seen only by the Instructor and submitter – not other students – and therefore offers a more private interaction. However, some topics in gerontology may be considered sensitive by some people, e.g., death and dying, sexuality and aging, elder abuse. The Essay format will provide confidentiality for discussion, but if you find these types of topics too distressing, you should speak with your Advisor about replacing GERO 100 with a different elective. The Essay should reflect a student's personal opinions *backed up by documented facts/information, i.e., citations, from assigned readings and videos*.
3. **Final Exam:** There will be one comprehensive online exam at the end of the semester which covers all the materials in the course. It will be a mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. It is a timed test and is not open book. A study guide will be made available a few days before the exam.

COURSE GRADE SUMMARY

ASSIGNMENTS:
Intro Exercise (x 1 = 70 points)
Essay on Family Life (x 1 at 100 points = 100 points)
Weekly Quizzes (x 14 at 20 to 80 points each = 730 points)
Final Exam (x 1 = 100 points)
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 1,000 points
GRADING SCALE:
Final grades are determined by dividing total points by 10 and applying the following scale: A (90 - 100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (< 60).

LATE POLICY

Students must submit all assignments via Blackboard ULTRA no later than their due dates and times. You may, of course, submit the assignment any time before its due date.

With the exception of the Final Exam, **ALL** due dates/times are **Tuesdays, NOON CST**. An assignment is considered late if it is submitted even one minute after the due time.

However, a request for a one-or-two-day extension, *emailed before any due date/time except the final exam*, will be granted regardless of the reason requested. No extensions are allowed for the final exam. **Without an emailed request before the due date/time, a zero is automatically assigned for late submission**. After a due date, the zero will only be removed if you submit a valid excuse with documentation.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Academic Integrity

All students taking this course are expected to have read university policies regarding Academic Integrity. To read policies regarding [Academic Integrity](#) go to the [WKU Student Code of Conduct](#) at www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php

The penalty for cheating on assignments is an automatic “0” for the assignment or an “F” in the course. This applies to all assignments including discussion board posts and short answers in quizzes.

All students taking this course are expected to have read and understand university policies regarding Plagiarism. To read definitions regarding [Plagiarism](#) go to <https://libguides.wku.edu/c.php?g=904979&p=6514298> Student work may be checked using plagiarism software. The penalty for plagiarism may be a zero for the assignment *or an “F” in the course*. This applies to all tests, quizzes and assignments including discussion board posts and short answers in quizzes.

Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted for any type of work in this class. If you choose to use these tools, your actions will be considered academically dishonest and a violation of the [WKU Student Code of Conduct](#).

Regular And Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction (RSI) between students and faculty. For more information, visit the WKU [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Weekly Faculty participation in ongoing discussion boards,
- Weekly announcements, and
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments, provided within one week of submission.

Student Accessibility Resource Center (SARC)

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the [Student Accessibility Resource Center](#) located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a Faculty Notification Letter (FNL) from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.

ALLY on Blackboard ULTRA makes course content accessible for students under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A tool called ALLY has been enabled within our course site which means that students will have access to different formats of course files such as HTML, readable PDF, electronic braille, ePub, and audio (mp3). **Please review the [ALLY for Students in Blackboard Learn](#) video to learn how to access these alternative formats.**

Extended Campus Library Services

For students taking online courses, this office will copy citation and pull library books, sending them through the mail at no cost to the student. Students must return the library books themselves. They also have a courier service to the extended campuses. For more information on [Extended Campus Library Services](#) go to www.wku.edu/library/dlps/extended_campus/index.php

Writing Center Assistance

The Writing Center on the Bowling Green campus will have writing tutors available to offer advice to current WKU students on any stage of their writing projects. In-person tutoring is available in Cherry Hall 123 from 10-4 Monday through Friday and in the Cravens Commons (at the horseshoe-shaped reference desk) from 5-9 on Sunday through Thursday evenings. WKU students may also request feedback on their writing via email or arrange a real-time Zoom conference to discuss a paper. See instructions and how-to videos on the website (www.wku.edu/writingcenter) for making appointments. Walk-in feedback is available unless

we are booked up. Students may also get short writing questions answered via email; just put “Quick question” in the subject line to (writingcenter@wku.edu).

The WKU START Centers will be offering writing tutoring sessions via Zoom as well as in person in their Glasgow and Elizabethtown locations. More information on how to make appointments and what to expect from your appointment will continue to be posted at (<https://www.wku.edu/startcenter/>).

The Learning Center (TLC) Peer Tutoring Services

The Learning Center (TLC) provides free tutoring services that empower students to achieve academic success. Trained peer tutors are available to review course content, answer questions, and demonstrate effective study strategies. TLC offers individual appointments and group sessions (PASS) for hundreds of undergraduate courses. For more information or to make an appointment, visit [The Learning Center website](http://www.wku.edu/tlc) at www.wku.edu/tlc

Title IX

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

Pregnant & Parenting Students

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its educational programs or activities, including classes or extracurricular activities, on the basis of pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related conditions such as, but not limited to, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom. Students who seek pregnancy or pregnancy-related accommodations should make their requests as soon as possible via WKU’s Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/ under the heading, “Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions.” Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867 to request accommodations or seek assistance. We encourage students and faculty to work together to establish a plan that

allows the student to complete the class and coursework without jeopardizing academic integrity and course standards. The Title IX Coordinator can help facilitate conversations between students and faculty regarding appropriate and reasonable accommodations. If you are a WKU student and believe that you have experienced an incident(s) of discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy (or pregnancy related conditions or issues), please report it to the Title IX Coordinator via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867. Additional resources for pregnant and parenting students can be found on WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This is an online course where **all required work is to be completed online through the use of Blackboard ULTRA (Bb ULTRA) and the Internet**. If you have not used Blackboard ULTRA before, and/or if this is your first online class, **I highly recommend watching at least the first six short videos on the Blackboard ULTRA Student User Tutorials list before beginning GERO 100**. Go to [Blackboard Learn with the Ultra Experience Tutorials - Students](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLontYaReEU1vndBOA5qA-u_Gwyh9xk8U3) at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLontYaReEU1vndBOA5qA-u_Gwyh9xk8U3 to view them.

Blackboard ULTRA Help/WKU IT Help Desk: 270-745-7000

WKU Distance Learning Student Resource Center

You may also want to visit the [Online Student Resource Portal](http://www.wku.edu/online/srp/) at <http://www.wku.edu/online/srp/>