GERONTOLOGICAL STUDIES PROGRAM

226 Mather Memorial
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Dale Dannefer (dale.dannefer@case.edu) and Gary Deimling (gary.deimling@case.edu), Program Co-Directors

The Gerontological Studies Program is a multidisciplinary program designed to integrate research and theory about human aging and human development over the life course.

Rapidly occurring social change is compelling social scientists, policymakers, human service professionals, and others to focus on aging as both an individual and global force. Beyond the rapid graying of the world's population, other frontiers of change include knowledge developments in the biosocial domain (epigenetic and other types of gene-environment interaction), powerful trends in the political and economic spheres (e.g., cumulative dis/advantage, pension policy, generational equity), and cultural changes (e.g., the development of forward-thinking institutional arrangements and the growth of the anti-aging industry).

Courses are drawn from three departments: Anthropology, Psychological Sciences, and Sociology. Students may choose from a variety of courses according to their own interests. Some approved elective courses are not specifically gerontology courses but cover topics that contribute to the understanding of aging and the life course. The perspectives gained in the core courses will provide the student with the background needed to relate the material in the more general courses to gerontological issues. The program is firmly grounded in the liberal arts and thus provides the student with the challenge to think and communicate effectively and to integrate diverse information, theories, and practice.

Gerontological Studies is an appropriate second major or minor for students with a wide variety of career goals. Persons with baccalaureate degrees in this field are eligible for entry-level positions in organizations that provide health and social services to older people and that formulate policy related to aging and older adults. For those whose careers will require professional or graduate training, this program can be valuable preparation. This includes pre-health students, especially those with an interest in geriatrics or family practice. It is also excellent preparation for those who are working toward careers in social work, family law, and financial planning. Students planning to pursue these professional degrees will find that an increasing number of their clients or patients will be older adults and that problems with which they must deal are related to aging.

Gerontological Studies faculty members are engaged in a variety of funded research projects. These include studies of Alzheimer’s disease; cancer survivorship; health disparities and cumulative dis/advantage over the life course; patterns of care for the elderly; visual perception changes that accompany aging; the impact of high levels of physical activity on the biological aging process; grandparent-grandchild relationships; and stress, coping, and adaptation among institutionalized older adults and elderly residents of urban communities.

Program Faculty

Dale Dannefer, PhD
(Rutgers University)

Selah Chamberlain Professor of Sociology and Chair, Department of Sociology; Co-Director, Gerontological Studies Program

Aging and the life course; theory; work and family; research methods

Gary T. Deimling, PhD
(Bowling Green State University)

Professor, Department of Sociology; Co-Director, Gerontological Studies Program

Medical sociology; sociology of aging; family sociology

Atwood Gaines, PhD
(University of California), MPH (Berkeley)

Professor, Department of Anthropology

Medical and psychiatric anthropology; cultural studies of science and medicine; cultural bioethics; religion; aging and dementia; social identity and health

Brian Gran, PhD
(Northwestern University), JD (Indiana University-Bloomington)

Professor, Department of Sociology

Sociology of law; comparative sociology; health care policy; human rights

Eva Kahana, PhD
(University of Chicago)

Distinguished University Professor and Pierce T. and Elizabeth D. Robson Professor of the Humanities, Department of Sociology

Sociology of aging; medical sociology; social factors in stress and coping

Jessica Kelley, PhD
(Purdue University)

Professor, Department of Sociology

Health disparities; sociology of disability; sociology of the life course; race/ethnicity

Undergraduate Programs

Major

The interdisciplinary program in Gerontological Studies offers a major as part of the Bachelor of Arts degree. Gerontological Studies may be selected only as a second major, since the primary major must be based in a traditional academic department. The major consists of a minimum of 30 credits; 9 are in required core courses and 21 are in approved elective courses.

Required core courses:

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<tr>
<td>COSI 345</td>
<td>Communication and Aging</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSCL 369</td>
<td>Adult Development and Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCI 361</td>
<td>The Life Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or SOCI 369/469</td>
<td>Aging in American Society</td>
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Additional courses that will bring the major total to 30 can include any of the courses listed below plus those that are approved by one of the co-directors of Gerontological Studies.

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<tr>
<td>ANTH 215</td>
<td>Health, Culture, and Disease: An Introduction to Medical Anthropology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCI 311</td>
<td>Health, Illness, and Social Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCI 313</td>
<td>Sociology of Stress and Coping</td>
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Minor

Students may also elect a minor in Gerontological Studies. The minor requires a minimum of 15 credit hours, including at least two of the following four courses.

At least two of the following * 6

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* The remaining nine hours needed to fulfill the minor requirement may consist of any combination of the approved electives and core courses listed for the Gerontological Studies major.

Total Units 15

Course

GERO 498. Seminar in Gerontological Studies. 3 Units.

Major themes in gerontology. Seminar members choose a problem area, explore the relevant literature from a multi-disciplinary perspective, and develop a research project using knowledge gained through community observation and library exploration.