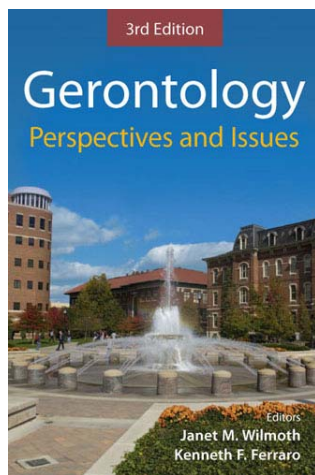


**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH-**  
**GERONTOLOGY INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM**  
INTMD 7035 Fourth-Year Geriatric Medicine/Gerontology Elective

Didactic Coursework  
Graduate Certificate in Gerontology upon Completion

### Course Syllabus and Outline

**Textbook:**



Gerontology: Perspectives and Issues, Third Edition  
Editors: Janet Wilmoth, PhD; Kenneth Ferraro, PhD

Springer Publishing

- **What is Gerontology?**
- **How Does Aging Affect the Mind and the Body?**
- **How Does Social Context Influence Aging and Life Course Development?**
- **What are the Needs and Interests of an Older Population?**

These questions are sparking the most important research in gerontology and the third edition of the perennial text brings the research and its resulting theories from across the various disciplines into one broad overview of gerontology. This interdisciplinary approach is key to developing a strong "gerontological imagination," a necessary base for the study of gerontology.

#### **OVERVIEW OF CONTENT**

This online course is designed for students in internal medicine geriatrics training during their fourth year. The course will examine the developmental and interactional transitions associated with the aging individual using an ecological conceptual model. Topics will be analyzed from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The ecological conceptual model used in this class will be a modification of Urie Bronfenbrenner's model which includes: the chronosystem (time); ontogenic (the individual); microsystem (family); mesosystem (community); and macrosystem (social/cultural) levels. The goal is to understand and assess the aging individual (typically with acute-on-chronic care needs) in the context of various environmental systems in which the person is embedded.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) to develop an appreciation and understanding of an ecological conceptual model as it applies to the aging individual and in the practice of geriatrics
- 2) to understand how aging transitions and intergenerational issues and various contexts are interconnected
- 3) to apply course concepts to two term projects:
  - a) a case study with older consultant
  - b) projects relating to ecological model
- 4) to develop and appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of the field of gerontology

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- 1) Assigned textbook readings (Wilmoth & Ferraro)
- 2) Projects (4) related to ecological model
- 3) Case study project (interview) with older consultant
- 4) Journal readings – Using AGELINE database

### **Specific Course Requirements-Four Projects Related to the Ecological Model:**

Each project corresponds to a level associated with the ECOLOGICAL MODEL (which is the conceptual foundation for this course). There are technically FIVE levels to the ecological model (including the CHRONOSYSTEM), but we will focus mainly on the ONTOGENIC (individual level), MICROSYSTEM (the family), MESOSYSTEM (the community, neighborhood, environments), and the MACROSYSTEM (socio-cultural, cohort group-effect, time). Each project will supplement class assignments for each level.

## **WEEK ONE – Issues of Ageism**

### **Complete the *Facts on Aging* Quiz – Discuss implications of results and findings Introduction and Overview**

The Ecological Model of Aging

Kurt Lewin and Urie Bronfenbrenner

Aging is a function of personal and environmental factors over time.

$$A = f(P, Es)^t$$

A (Aging)

### **Part I. Aging Scholarship (A)**

1. The Fountain of Gerontological Discovery, *Janet M. Wilmoth and Kenneth F. Ferraro*
2. The Evolution of Gerontology as a Field of Scientific Inquiry, *Kenneth F. Ferraro*

## **WEEK TWO – Ontogenic level (The Aging Individual)**

Investigate and learn more about the factors associated with increasing life expectancy in the United States. Discuss the implications of living longer as an individual in terms of economic, social and psychological factors. How many years are considered “good enough” for you... and why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of living longer? What are the ethical issues? Learn more about DHEA, melatonin and other so-called life extenders; What do you think about research and technology to extend life (3 pages minimum).

CHRONOSYSTEM (t)

ONTOGENIC SYSTEM (P)

3. Demographic Perspectives on Aging, *Janet M. Wilmoth and Charles F. Longino, Jr.*

## **Part II. Physical Aspects of Aging**

4. Cellular and Organismal Aspects of Senescence and Longevity, *David J. Waters*
5. Cognitive Aging, *Aimee M. Surprenant and Ian Neath*
6. Disability Concepts and Measurement: Contributions of the Epidemiology of Disability to Gerontological Inquiry, *Fredric D. Wolinsky and Douglas K. Miller*
7. The Role of Nutrition in the Older Individual, *Dorothy M. Morre*
8. Exercise and Aging, *Michael G. Flynn*

## **WEEK THREE Microsystems Level (Family gerontology)**

Aging Individual + family

Design and draw YOUR family map indicating at least THREE (3) generations in your family “tree”. Use colors and symbols to represent maternal/paternal side of the family, to represent quality or level of contact or emotional ties; use G1, G2, G3 (or more) as labels for generations (individuals can be alive or dead). Be creative and innovative.

## **WEEK THREE (continued) Mesosystem level (Community networks)**

Individual + family + community

Identify one community service that would assist adults and families with aging issues (preference for Salt Lake Metro area). Visit a service site (do not call for information) and collect documentation about the service. Talk to a representative and learn more about the service. What does it do? How does it help and assist adults? How much do services cost? How are the services financed? Who is eligible? What do you think of the service? What would families do IF this service was NOT provided? How does it affect adult transitions? (3 pages minimum)

MICROSYSTEM, EXO, MACROSYSTEM (E)

**Part III. Social Aspects of Aging (E)**

1. Socioemotional Aspects of Aging, *Karen L. Fingerman and Brooke N. Baker*
2. Age Structures, Aging, and the Life Course, *Linda K. George*
3. Social Forces, Life-Course Consequences: Cumulative Disadvantage and "Getting Alzheimer's," *Kathryn Z. Douthit and Dale Dannefer*
4. Humanist Gerontology and the Meaning(s) of Ageing, *Thomas R. Cole and Michelle Sierpina*

**WEEK FOUR Macrosystem level (Socio-cultural)**

Individual + family = community + socio-cultural

Choose one of the following options:

- A. Choose one historical MAJOR event between 1920 – 1980 that has a NATIONAL impact on Americans and their lives. Read more about that event and its psychological effect on individuals. What happened? How does the event correspond to a COHORT EFFECT? What outcomes do you think this event had on the majority of individuals who experienced the event? How did (or does) the event affect adult transitions across the life course? (3 pages minimum)

OR

- B. Write a paper about the implications of a rapidly growing aging population in the U.S. Discuss the economic, political, social, or environmental implications of “an aging society”. Discuss implications of demographic changes for adult transitions. Use at least 2 scholarly references to support your paper (cite references at the end of your paper). (3 pages minimum)

MACROSYSTEM

**Part IV. Public Policy (E)**

Retirement and Financial Security: An Economist Thinks Out Loud, *Timothy M. Smeeding*

1. Social Lives in Later Life, *Christine L. Himes and Ying Fang*
2. Politics and Policy in the Lives of Older Americans, *Robert B. Hudson*
3. Afterword: The Gerontological Imagination, *Kenneth F. Ferraro*

## **COURSE PROJECT (WEEK ONE – WEEK FOUR)**

### Case Study Project and Requirements

- 1) Meet for at least **one hour** each week with your older consultant (for a minimum of **four weeks**)
- 2) Keep a log of these meetings including date, time and place. Following each meeting record subjects discussed, information gained, ideas or hypotheses about the adult individual and their ecological contexts (e.g. spouse, family, community, society) stimulated by the conversation, etc. This can be in outline form.
- 3) Your goal is **to use one or two** individual, family and contextual **concepts** from the textbook and readings to interpret and analyze your consultant's life history. Do not "psychoanalyze" or "diagnose" your consultant; learn from him or her. In your case study paper analyze the information gained in the meetings with them. Your paper should reveal an understanding of the person's life history in relation to one or two of the concepts presented in the course content and/or textbook, and/or readings. It should be a minimum of 6 front, double-spaced typewritten pages in length; your log is to be included as an appendix.

### Guidelines for writing up your analysis of the case study:

1. Develop a framework, an organizational scheme in which to present the information you have collected. Facts by themselves are useless. It is only when facts are related to one another in some way that they acquire meaning. Adult transition and family concepts or theories presented in textbook, readings and discussions should provide the organizational framework. Use theory and research to support your analysis.
2. Show specifically how class materials and/or readings apply to your understanding of the information gained from your consultant.
3. Do additional reading to understand the special experiences of your consultant. For example if a divorce occurred in your consultant's life, you would want to read literature on divorce and remarriage and apply this material to an understanding of your consultant's experience.

### Suggestions for meeting with your consultant:

1. Discuss with your consultant the reason you are visiting with him or her.
2. Get to know your consultant as a person and let him/her know you. Try to make the meetings an enjoyable, informal exchange between new friends, not a stiff and formal interviewing situation.
3. Guide the conversation into areas of interest to you. Formulate in your own mind the questions you want to ask; the information needed to complete your understanding. Remember: your task is to collect information both about the consultant's own life experiences and about the events and situations that have had an impact on him/her over the life course/lifespan.
4. Ask open-ended questions as much as possible. Questions that call for a "yes" or "no" answers tend to cut off rather than stimulate discussion.

5. Questions that begin with "how" or "what" are usually more effective in eliciting information than questions which begin with "why." "Why" questions are often threatening because they seem to ask the person to explain or justify his/her behavior. Remember you are there to collect information and learn from the consultant not to psychoanalyze him/her.
6. It is often useful to begin by discussing the earliest periods in the person's adult life and progress to the present (i.e., When you were in your 20's what was your family situation? What was your work situation? What things were happening in society? What impact do you think these things had on your life? etc.).
7. Remember your job is to listen and learn. Although you should feel free to contribute your own thoughts and experiences to the conversation, be sensitive and discreet about any areas you think may cut off discussion. Don't try to fit your consultant into some pre-conceived category or conceptual scheme by the kind of questions you ask or by your reaction to his/her ideas.
8. Don't be overly concerned with establishing the accuracy of particular facts. It is more important to learn about general trends, thoughts and feelings, and the overall meanings of events, crises, etc. in the individual's life.
9. The use of a tape recorder is strongly discouraged, but brief note-taking may be appropriate. Discuss this with your consultant

**JOURNAL READINGS:** You will select 12 articles from an approved list of gerontological journals and write 2-page summaries describing what was learned from each article. No more than four articles can come from the same journal. The journal articles should be published in the last six years (2001-present). Each summary needs to be accompanied by a photocopy of the first page of the article or the abstract and a full reference citation to the journal. The summaries are due at the end of Week Four. This assignment allows students to individualize the course readings to meet their own personal and professional interests and will help students become more familiar with the professional gerontology literature.