GEY 4360  
Gerontological Counseling  
Spring 2015  

SYLLABUS

Instructor: Kathy Black, Ph.D.  
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Email: kblack@sar.usf.edu  
Office Hours: TBA  
Class Location and Time: T 6-8:50 pm

DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of developing a helping and counseling relationship with older adults. The course emphasizes personal awareness and development of communication skills. This course provides a broad overview of the theoretical basis that guides generalist gerontological counseling interventions from a strengths-based viewpoint and includes an overview of the mental health needs of older adults and service systems. Counseling strategies that enhance mental health and well-being and preventive measures will be emphasized.

OBJECTIVES

1. Gain a broad understanding of common mental health issues and their symptoms in older adults;
2. Become familiar with the service systems in which older adults receive counseling services;
3. Examine basic concepts of helping and counseling relationships, specifically those involving older adults;
4. Develop basic skills to effectively communicate and build rapport with older adults;
5. Conceptualize later life as an ongoing developmental process;
6. Challenge personal stereotypes about aging while appreciating both normative and psychopathological issues in aging;
7. Recognize the relationship between gerontological counseling and its influence on the quality of life for older adults within a holistic and contextual framework.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This is a hybrid course which will include both in-person classes and online instruction. This class will use Canvas and learners are expected to be signed on and check for class up-dates. The instructor reserves the right to add assignments, readings, or require email contact as the course progresses. The instructor will use the Canvas email address to communicate with you. Tutorials on how to use Canvas is available at: http://www.sarasota.usf.edu/Academics/DE/current_learners.php.
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I see learning as a collaborative process between the instructor and the learners. I have structured this course based on my experience and the experience of others who have taught it to enhance opportunities for expanding awareness of oneself as an individual. I work from the strengths perspective and understand that the talents and needs each learner and each class as a whole brings to this experience are unique. The success of my teaching depends on all of us putting forth our best efforts and communicating openly throughout this course.

EXPECTATIONS

Learner Responsibilities:

1. Participate in all course exercises and activities.
2. For in-person classes, come to each class session, on time, and stay for the entire class period and return on time from breaks. Failure to attend any class sessions will affect your ability to contribute to class discussions and activities and thus will negatively affect your grade.
3. Participate in class discussions and individual/small group or online activities, which are vital to the learning in this course.
4. Listen attentively when others are speaking and keep cell phones turned off.
5. Have read assigned course material and be prepared to discuss content when scheduled.
6. Write papers that follow the guidelines provided in this syllabus, use correct grammar and APA format, and demonstrate learner learning from the texts and class session lectures and activities.
7. Turn all assignments in on time (see Assignment-Due Policy below).
8. Keep the instructor informed of any issues that interfere with individual learning, attendance, and/or turning in assignments on time.

Instructor responsibilities:

1. To prepare class session activities that enhances and augment learning from the text.
2. To share the instructor’s knowledge that relates to course content.
3. To start and end each in-person class session on time.
4. To listen attentively to learner contributions and questions.
5. To facilitate course discussions to maximize learner participation and keep focus on course content.
6. To respond to the extent possible to learner suggestions and questions.
7. To develop graded activities which evaluate learning from readings in the text and from course activities.
8. To evaluate and grade learning based on the criterion provided in this syllabus.
9. To give learners feedback on their performance.
WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All written assignments **MUST** be turned in on time. ALL assignments should be submitted electronically by the due date noted. Late assignments papers WILL receive reduced grading: 5% off per 24 hours late. All written assignments must demonstrate acceptable writing style, American Psychological Association (APA), including the use of standard English, acceptable grammar, and the use of the American Psychological Association (APA) style of reference citation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

For inperson class dates, learners are expected to be on time and prepared to participate when class begins as well as be present throughout the entire class meeting. Classroom exercises, discussions, role plays, guest speakers and other in-class experiential exercises are essential for learning and continued development of self awareness. This form of learning cannot be “made up” once missed. Accordingly, attendance is required at all class meetings. There are no excused absences (except for military leave, jury duty, or religious holidays that are planned in advance). A learner is considered absent if he/she arrives more than 20 minutes late to class, leaves 20 or more minutes early or does not come to class. Learners can miss 2 classes without penalty. After that, 5% off of the total grade will be deducted for each missed class. **Learners are responsible for any missed material due to absences or lateness.**

USFSM AND USF SYSTEM POLICIES

**Academic Dishonesty**
The University considers any form of plagiarism or cheating on exams, projects, or papers to be unacceptable behavior. Please be sure to review the university’s policy in the USFSM Catalog, the USF System Academic Integrity of Students, and the [http://usfsm.edu/student-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/](http://usfsm.edu/student-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/)

**Academic Disruption**
The University does not tolerate behavior that disrupts the learning process. The policy for addressing academic disruption is included with Academic Dishonesty in the USFSM Catalog, USF System Academic Integrity of Students, and the [http://usfsm.edu/student-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/](http://usfsm.edu/student-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/)

**Contingency Plans**
In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USFSM to suspend normal operations. During this time, USFSM may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Canvas, Elluminate, Skype, and email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It’s the responsibility of the student to monitor Canvas site for each class for course specific communication, and the main USFSM and College websites, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information. The USF hotline at 1 (800) 992-4231 is updated with pre-recorded information during an emergency. See the [Campus Police Website](http://usfsm.edu/student-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/) for further information.
Disabilities Accommodation
Students are responsible for registering with the Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) in order to receive academic accommodations. Reasonable notice must be given to the SDS office (typically 5 working days) for accommodations to be arranged. It is the responsibility of the student to provide each instructor with a copy of the official Memo of Accommodation. Contact Information: Disability Coordinator, 941-359-4714
http://usfsm.edu/disability-services/

Fire Alarm Instructions
At the beginning of each semester please note the emergency exit maps posted in each classroom. These signs are marked with the primary evacuation route (red) and secondary evacuation route (orange) in case the building needs to be evacuated. See
http://usfsm.edu/facilities/safetypreparedness/

Religious Observances
USFSM recognizes the right of students and faculty to observe major religious holidays. Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class for a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second week of classes. Instructors canceling class for a religious observance should have this stated in the syllabus with an appropriate alternative assignment.

Web Portal Information
Every newly enrolled USF student receives an official USF e-mail account. Students receive official USF correspondence and Canvas course information via that address.

Counseling and Wellness
The Counseling and Wellness Center is a confidential resource where students can talk about incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. This confidential resource can help students without their having to report the situation to either the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSSR) or the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity (DIEO) unless they wish. Please be aware that professors, administrators, or other staff must report incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based crimes including sexual assault, stalking, and domestic/relationship violence. If students disclose any of these situations in class, in papers, instructors are required to report it to OSSR or DIEO for investigation. The Deputy Coordinator for USFSM is Mary Beth Wallace, AVP for Student Enrollment, Engagement and Success, 941-359-4330 or marybeth@sar.usf.edu.
Counseling Center and Wellness Center 941-487-4254
Victim Advocate (24/7) 941-504-8599
List of off-campus resources:
Hope of Manatee: 941-755-6805
Safe Place & Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC) – Sarasota: 941-365-1976

COURSE READINGS

Required Texts
Recommended Readings
*Will be listed as links or pdfs posted in Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

There are 5 graded assignments for the course: 1) Reflection Essays; 2) Case Studies and Postings; 3) Genogram; 4) Term Paper; 5) Presentation.

1) Reflection Essays (5 essays at 10 points each = 50 points)

You are required to submit 5 reflection essays about new concepts and insights that you are learning as a result of the course activities and readings. Your learning will be enhanced by reflecting upon new concepts and skills that you are developing, as well as challenges you experience. Your writing skills also will benefit from practice. **Do not provide a synopsis or review of each chapter in reflection essays.** Rather, I am looking for your personal responses, thoughts, questions, and feelings, toward any of the course material.

Please note this assignment is primarily about the content of what you write, so don’t obsess over writing style. However you must write in complete sentences and accurate grammar, however. Note that it will be easiest to write your reflections immediately after reading or completing course activities when your memory is freshest. The essays should be submitted via Canvas on the dates identified in the syllabus.

Learners may use their essay to discuss knowledge acquired or insight gained and to share personal opinions, perceptions, or experiences related to the particular topic. The entries should be typed, 12 pt font, and submitted online. Please use ONE or TWO (but NOT all) of the following prompts to begin each essay. The entries should be about a page in length/ ~ 250-300 words.

- a. I learned…
- b. I was surprised by…
- c. I am beginning to question…
- d. I am thinking about…
- e. Relevance and/or application to my current work or future career …
Case Studies and Postings (10 case studies @ 10 points each = 100 points)

You will provide written responses to 10 case studies. Each chapter from the text addresses a relevant topic pertaining to gerontological counseling. A brief case study is identified at the end of each chapter, along with 3-5 questions about the case. The cases provide an opportunity to apply the chapter content. You will answer the questions as completely as possible, with complete sentences and correct grammar. You should post your responses via Canvas.

In addition, you must post a thoughtful response to another’s posting. Please note that your responses do not need to cite references. Your case study responses will be graded on the application of chapter concepts applied as well as the completeness and quality of your written response. Generally, responses to all questions will be about one –two pages in length total.

3) Genogram (25 points)

You will develop a genogram based on your life, including family members and their relationships, quality of relationships, estrangement or close bonding, and other features of family life. If you prefer, a fictitious family may be constructed. This assignment will provide you with an opportunity to address psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of your own (or a fictitious person) lifecourse development and provides a subjective and insightful connection to the contextual and holistic relationship between mental health and well-being.
4) **Term Paper (100 points) and 5) Presentation (25 points)**

You will write an 8-10 page paper related to gerontological counseling and give a 15-20 minute presentation to the class about your topic. This assignment allows you to explore a topic within gerontological counseling that is of particular interest to you. Other benefits include developing your writing and presentation skills, informing other learners about a new topic, and learning from your fellow classmates about their topics.

What should I write about? You have several options, based on your interests:

a. **Review paper** – Write a review paper about a topic of your choosing. A broad range of topics could be appropriate, such as: counseling strategies for a particular type of behavioral health issue, motivating older adults to participate in counseling, models of training gerontological counselors, modifications of counseling strategies for older adults, or other ideas. Provide a background to the topic area, describe the goals of the paper clearly, describe and critically evaluate current theory and research, and develop your own conclusions about the issue based on current research. (In other words, this should not be a “book report” that merely summarizes other papers.)

b. **Develop a counseling intervention** – Propose a counseling intervention to address a specific behavioral health issue for older adults. Describe the behavioral health issue, goals of the intervention, strategies that will be used, theoretical and empirical rationale for the strategies you propose, and how you will evaluate how well the intervention is implemented and how well it works. Use current research to guide your selection of the targeted behavioral health issue, design of the intervention, and evaluation.

c. **Interview someone who provides (or has provided) professional counseling to older adults** – Get the person’s permission, develop interview questions prior to the actual interview that focus on particular themes of interest to you, tie the person’s responses to current research regarding the topics on which you focus, and develop recommendations regarding how counseling interventions or programs could be improved. You must turn in the interview questions with your paper (put them in an Appendix).

d. **You are free to come up with another topic idea**, IF it relates to gerontological counseling and IF you obtain either of the instructor’s approval.

You must submit a one-paragraph proposal to obtain approval about your proposed paper. After approval and feedback, you can proceed with your proposed idea. You can change your idea later, as long as you email and obtain subsequent approval.

Your paper should have the following sections: title page, abstract page (summary), main body of the paper, and references. The main body of the paper should be 8-10 pages long, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1” margins all around. Use APA (American Psychological Association) style. Include at least five published references (book, book chapter, peer-reviewed journal articles), formatted using APA style. Journals of interest include: *Clinical Gerontologist, Aging and Mental Health; Mental Health and Aging* References should be recent (2005 or later). At least 2 references must be original empirical research studies from peer-reviewed journals.

You will present your paper on the final date of class. Your presentation should summarize the components of your paper. You should propose a question or two to your classmates based on your paper and be prepared to respond to any questions as well.
Grading for the paper will be based on content (that is, was it completed as outlined above?), use of empirical research to support your conclusions, and writing style. Your presentation will be graded for content, organization, clarity, and presentation style.

**GRADING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genogram</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Essays</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Studies /Postings</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Paper</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>300</td>
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Class grade will be determined by dividing the total number of class points (300) by 3, and based on the following ranges:

- **90-100 = A**  
  - [A+ = 97-100;  A = 92-96.9;  A- = 90-91.9]
- **80-89 = B**  
  - [B+ = 87-89.9;  B = 82-86.9;  B- = 80-81.9]
- **70-79 = C**  
  - [C+ = 77-79.9;  C = 72-76.9;  C- = 70-71.9]
- **60-69 = D**  
  - [D+ = 67-69.9;  D = 62-66.9;  D- = 60-61.9]
- **< 60 = F**

**Course Outline/ ***= ONLINE CLASS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 6</td>
<td>Introduction to course</td>
<td>Text, Ch. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Theories of Aging and Later Life Development</td>
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<td>Jan. 13***</td>
<td>Attending and Listening Skills in Work with Older Adults</td>
<td>Text, Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Case Study Due</td>
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<td>Reflection Essay Due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Jan. 20***</td>
<td>Stages of Counseling Older Adults</td>
<td>Ch. 3</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td>Jan. 27***</td>
<td>Psychodynamic and Existential Foundations of Counseling</td>
<td>Ch. 4</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>Transference and Other Counseling Processes w/ Older Adults</td>
<td>Ch. 5</td>
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<td>Feb. 10***</td>
<td>Approaches to Counseling Older Adults</td>
<td>Ch. 6</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reflection Essay Due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 17***</td>
<td>The Culture and Context of Old Age</td>
<td>Ch. 7</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td>Feb. 24***</td>
<td>Multicultural Gerontological Counseling</td>
<td>Ch. 9</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 3</td>
<td>Spring Break: Have a Good Time!</td>
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<td>Mar. 10</td>
<td>Spirituality and Counseling Older Adults</td>
<td>Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Mar. 17***</td>
<td>School, College, &amp; Career Counseling and Older Adults: Grandparenting,</td>
<td>Ch. 10</td>
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<td>Reentry Students, and Retirement</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Reflection Essay Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 21</td>
<td>Last day to drop from course with a “W;” no academic penalty</td>
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<td>Mar. 24***</td>
<td>Health and Rehabilitation Counseling Work w/ Older Adults</td>
<td>Ch. 11</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td>Mar. 31***</td>
<td>Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementias</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td>April 7</td>
<td>Family Issues in Counseling Older Adults</td>
<td>Ch. 13</td>
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<td>April 14***</td>
<td>Psychological Issues in Community and Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>Ch. 14</td>
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<td><strong>Case Study Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reflection Essay Due</strong></td>
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<td>April 21</td>
<td>Course Synthesis</td>
<td>Ch. 15</td>
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<td>Future Trends in Aging and Counseling</td>
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<td><strong>Reflection Essay Due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Term Papers Due/ Presentations</strong></td>
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