

Gerontology Department
Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies

GERO 121 | 221, Strategies for Optimal Aging **Spring 2025 Syllabus**

Gerontology Diversity & Inclusion Statement

"As part of our commitment to social justice and the Anti-Racist and Inclusive Campus Plan, the Gerontology Department works to support and uplift all historically underrepresented communities, on an off campus, and condemn any forms of bias based on age, race, ethnicity, caste, nationality, immigration status, gender/transgender, sexual orientation, disability/ability, religion, cultural attire/hair, body size/shape, class, and more. We strive to be an exemplary leader in inclusive learning."

Land Acknowledgment

Sacramento State is proud to recognize the California Native Nations, communities, and peoples throughout the state and acknowledge the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory.

Our campus operates on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Miwok, Wintu, Maidu, Nisenan (Southern Maidu), and Patwin Native peoples.

Part 1: Course Information

Instructor Information

Instructor: Jenny Stevenson

Office: Amador 552D

Office Hours: Drop in Zooms on Mondays & Wednesdays 4:30-5:00pm <https://csus.zoom.us/j/6689334985> or other times available with appointment.

Office Telephone: (916) 292-8633 (Cell), texting is preferred!! Please provide your name in the text so I know who you are. **You choose what form of communication is easiest for you to contact me.**

E-mail: You can also email me through the course or at j.stevenson@csus.edu

Course Description

This is a combined section GERO 121/221 sections 1 & 2,

undergraduate and master student asynchronous course, with optional course meetings (TBA). You will be paired in the first few weeks of this course, with a mentor from the Renaissance Society, to complete several of the assignments in this course. You will connect with your mentor possibly in person or Zoom. A detailed introduction video is uploaded in Canvas explaining the course. This is an asynchronous course that is an in-depth, interdisciplinary, and holistic exploration of health promotion and adaptation paradigms that facilitate optimal and productive longevity. Hardiness and self-efficacy theories along with expectations and experiences enhancing quality of life are explored. Interactions among such variables as activity, diet, exercise, healthcare, work/leisure, attitudes/beliefs, humor, living environments, spirituality, and social networks are investigated within the contexts of gender, economic, and cultural perspectives.

Prerequisite

- Upper Division Status

Textbook & Course Materials

- Other required readings posted in Canvas (See Specific Modules).

Recommended Texts & Other Readings

- *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). (2019). Washington, DC: Author. (You will be utilizing this text for all your GERO classes)

Course Requirements

- Internet connection (DSL, LAN, or cable connection desirable)
- Access to Canvas
- Ability to connect with mentors through Zoom

Course Structure

This course will be delivered asynchronously and through the course management system Canvas. You will use your Saclink account to login to the course from your [My Sac State](#) account and click on the Canvas button or login directly through the [Canvas Login Page](#). In Canvas, you will access course materials, assignments, discussion questions and resources. Please begin the course by looking through

the Student Resources module and the APA module. After completing the "Start Here" module in Canvas, proceed to Module 1, which is open. Follow directions in the subsequent 4 modules throughout the semester. Each module contains four weeks' worth of class work to be completed and each additional module will open up every 4 weeks or so. To be announced, optional course meeting times throughout the semester.

Canvas Access

To access this course on Canvas you will need access to the Internet and a supported Web browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari). To ensure that you are using a supported browser and have required plug-ins, please visit the "[Which browsers does Canvas support](#)" website.

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem with Canvas you can:

- If you need a laptop or WI-FI hotspot, please let me know and I can request the needed items for you to borrow
- [Submit a Ticket](#) to Report a Problem to the Information Resources and Technology Support Team
- Call the Canvas Support line at Sac State: M-F 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM (916) 278-2450.
- [Schedule a Consultation](#) to get assistance with Canvas and other Academic technologies
- Visit the [Canvas Student Video Guides](#)
- Visit the Canvas [Student Web Tutorials](#)

Important Note: This syllabus, along with course assignments and due dates, are subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be clearly noted in course announcement or through Canvas email.

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Part 2: Course Objectives

After completion of readings, course experiences, and assignments, the learner will be able to:

- Investigate own, older adults' and society's beliefs and experiences about parameters and requirements for optimal aging.
- Analyze interactions among hardiness and self-efficacy theories and optimal aging.
- Analyze how selected keys to optimal aging are mediated by health promotion and adaptation paradigms.
- Create a case study reflecting a success model based on an oral history with an oldest-old adult.
- Explore community resources providing activities and services for older adults and their families.
- Create a personal evidenced-based optimal aging action plan.

You will meet the objectives listed above through a combination of the following activities in this course:

- Complete ALL Module coursework in Canvas
- Complete all assignments in this course in Canvas
- Participate in regular meetings with your mentor. Don't wait until the last minute to reach out or schedule your appointments. They are busy just like you are!

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Part 3: Topic Outline/Schedule

Complete all learning quizzes and other assignments in each module

MODULE TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS
<p>Go through the "Start Here" section in the Canvas modules first. I also recommend looking through the APA module and student resources module in Canvas.</p> <p>Module 1: Weeks 1-4 Mentor Information, APA 7, Storytelling, Ageism, & Generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all Learning Quizzes in Module 1 • Complete Discussion Post #1 plus one peer reply within 48 hours of initial post • Complete Personal Biosketch Assignment • Complete Mentor Confirmation, Mentor/student Survey, Mentor/student Agreement • Research Paper Thesis Statement for GERO 221 Master Students ONLY!! <p>*see specific due dates in Canvas</p>
<p>Module 2: Weeks 5-8 Holistic Parameters, Health Promotions (see specific due dates in Canvas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all Learning Quizzes in Module 2 • Complete Health Promotion Check-in/discussion post #2 plus one peer reply within 48 hours after initial post • Complete Mentor Reflection #1 • Research Paper for GERO 221 Master Students ONLY!! <p>*see specific due dates in Canvas</p>
<p>Module 3: Weeks 9-12 Theories of Optimal Aging, Thriving in Later Life, Locus of Control, Core Gifts, Resiliency (see specific due dates in Canvas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all Learning Quizzes in Module 3 • Complete Discussion Posts #'s 3 and 4 plus one peer reply within 48 hours after initial post • Complete Mentor Reflections #'s 2 and #3

	*see specific due dates in Canvas
Module 4: Weeks 13-16 Role Transitions, End of Life Preparedness (see specific due dates in Canvas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all Learning Quizzes in Module 4 • Complete Discussion Post #5 plus one peer reply at least 48 hours after initial post • Mentor Reflection #4 • Six Word Memoir Assignment
	*see specific due dates in Canvas

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Part 4: Grading Policy

Graded Course Activities

Visit the **Assignments** link or Modules in Canvas for details about each assignment listed below.

Points	Description/Assignments	Due Date
24	Personal Bio-sketch & Health Promotion Plan	2/16
28	Mentor Reflection #1 (Bio-sketch/Eco-map)	3/2
28	Mentor Reflection #2 (Prominent Moments)	3/30
35	Mentor Reflection #3 (Gifts & Talents)	4/20
35	Mentor Reflection #4 (Legacy & Purpose)	5/4
15	Six Word Memoir for Mentor	5/11
25	Discussion Posts	See Canvas
206	Learning Quizzes	All semester -see due dates in Canvas
3	Mentor Student Meeting Survey Questionnaire	1/22
5	Mentor Confirmation	2/2
5	Mentor Student Agreement	2/9
409	Total Points Possible	

GERO 221, in addition to all the assignments above, Master Program/Graduate students must complete the following assignments:

Points	Description	Due Date
10	Research Paper Thesis Statement	2/16
34	Research Paper	3/16
453	Total Points Possible	

Assignments (See Canvas for more specifics)

Personal Biosketch Paper-Health Contract plus three-month calendar. This paper you will complete on yourself. There are a few components on this paper, so please read all directions in Canvas.

Mentor Reflection (4) Papers. These writing assignments reflect your mentor's interview questions as you narrate their life stories through the course.

Mentor Contact Confirmation. There is more information about this assignment task in Canvas.

Mentor Student Agreement Signature form. This is a contract that you will need to sign. Your mentor will be sent a form as well.

Discussion Posts with one peer thoughtful reply within 48 hours after initial post.

Learning Quizzes with varying point values to be completed throughout the course. Unlimited attempts & untimed. These act like mini lectures and are vital to your learning in this course. The APA and the Mentor Do's and Don'ts quizzes do need to be completed accurately for full point value, but are also untimed with unlimited attempts. The remaining learning quizzes need to show that you have attempted to answer the questions (no right or wrong answer).

Six Word Memoir slide presented to mentor in a creative way. More on this to come and see Canvas.

Graduate Students have two additional assignments: thesis statement and research paper assignments.

Late Work Policy

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines—remember many of your assignments depend on you connecting with your mentor. Get these appointments scheduled. **Late assignments will only be accepted with an instructor approval. You must contact me if you run into any issues with turning in assignments preferably before the due date.**

Viewing Grades in Canvas

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Canvas Grade Book. From a computer or mobile device, select the Grades

option from course navigation to view your grades.

Your instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete—typically within two weeks following the completion of an activity. You will see a visual indication of new grades posted on your Canvas home page under Recent Feedback and/or next to the Grades link on course menu.

Letter Grade Assignment

Final grades assigned for this course will be based on the percentage of total points earned and are assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Performance
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work
C	73-76%	Average Work
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

Important note: For more information about grading at Sac State, visit the academic policies and grading section of the university catalog.

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Part 5: Course Policies

Participation

Students are expected to participate in online assignments & activities as listed in the Modules.

Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution. The instructor is available during office hours by appointment. Outside of office hours, I am happy to meet at a mutually agreed upon date/time.

Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will include: learning quizzes, discussion board posts, mentor reflections, & six word memoir, mentor confirmation, and any other noted task in Canvas, will be submitted electronically through Canvas unless otherwise instructed. The research paper and thesis statement **are for Master/Graduate students only. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from instructor preferably *before the due date*.** Extensions will not be given beyond the next assignment except under extreme circumstances.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Sac State Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons includes: (1) documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or (2) documented and severe physical/mental illness/injury to

the student or student's family.

Incomplete Policy

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. An incomplete will only be assigned if the student is current on assignments and there is a compelling reason to allow the student to finish coursework after the semester has ended. All incomplete course assignments must be completed within one year from the end of the semester the course is taken.

Student Resources

There are many services offered by CSUS to help you succeed in this course and throughout your academic career. I encourage you to take advantage. Links to the following resources are also available in Canvas.

[Basic Needs Support: Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support \(CARES\)](#)

If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away! The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. Email the CARES office at cares@csus.edu to speak with a case manager about the resources available to you.

[Academic Advising](#)

The Academic Advising Center offers new student orientation, mandatory freshman advising, and advising on General Education and graduation requirements for all students. While your major and GE advising will be conducted by the Gerontology Department, the Academic Advising office is available if you have questions about transfer credit, transcripts, etc.

[IRT Service Desk \(Service Desk\)](#)

The Information, Resources, and Technology (IRT) helpdesk provides assistance to students, faculty and staff in their use of campus technologies.

[Services to Students with Disabilities](#)

If you have a documented disability and verification from the Disability Access Center, and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of disability to the Disability Access Center and meet with one of their counselors to request special accommodation *before* classes start. Sacramento State is committed

to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class (including pregnancy-related disabilities), please immediately contact Disability Access Center (DAC) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from DAC is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided. Please be advised that disability-related academic adjustments are not retroactive. DAC is located on the first floor of Lassen Hall 1008. Phone is 916-278-6955 or 916 278-7239 (TDD only) and e-mail isdac@csus.edu

For a complete listing of services and current business hours visit the Disability Access Center website.

Title IX

Sac State is committed to supporting students and fostering a campus environment free of sexual misconduct and gender-based discrimination. If a student chooses to disclose to a faculty or staff member an experience related to sexual misconduct which includes, but is not limited to rape, relationship violence, or stalking, all faculty and staff members are obligated to report this disclosure to the university's Title IX Coordinator. Contact Sac State's Title IX Coordinator, Skip Bishop, at (916) 278-5770 or email at william.bishop@csus.edu . Upon receipt of the report, the Title IX Coordinator will contact you to inform you of your rights and options as a survivor and connect you with support resources, including resolution options for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Students who elect not to discuss their experience with the Title IX Coordinator can speak confidentially to the following confidential resources:
Student Health & Counseling Services at The WELL On Campus Phone Number: 916-278-6461 Website: www.csus.edu/shcs
Campus Confidential Advocate Email: weave@csus.edu
On Campus Phone Number: 916-278-5850 (during business hours) WEAVE 24/7 Hotline: 916-920-2952

Student Affairs

If you need help discerning who to see to get a question answered, advice on which classes to take, or information about how to obtain financial aid, Student Affairs may be able to assist you.

Student Health and Counseling Services

Student Health Services promotes the health and wellness of Sac State students.

University Library

The Sac State University Library provides access to a wide array of workshops, research guides, subject specialists, databases, electronic

journals, and other electronic resources. The Sacramento State Librarian for Gerontology is Rachael Stark. She can be reached at stark@csus.edu or 916-278-7494. You can also schedule an appointment with her [here](#). Don't hesitate to reach out to Rachael, she can be of GREAT assistance with your research.

Reading & Writing Center

The University Writing Center can help you at any stage in your reading and writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing and organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor.

Further resources and information: [Martin Luther King Center](#), [Multicultural Center](#), [Dreamer Resource Center](#), [Student Success Center](#), [Academic Advising](#), [PARC](#), [Reading & Writing Center](#), [Grading Policy](#), [Academic Calendar](#), [Hornet Honor Code](#), [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)

Commit to Integrity

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures

"The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades."

Read more about Sac State's [Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures](#)

Definitions

At Sac State, "**cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means."

"**Plagiarism**" is a form of cheating. At Sac State, "plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution."

Source: Sacramento State University Library

Important Note: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the office of student affairs.

Course policies are subject to change. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted in Canvas.