California State University, Sacramento
GERO 123 – Research on Aging & the Life Course
Gerontology Department, College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies
Spring 2025

Class Time: None (asynchronous)
Final Exam: due midnight Fri., May 16, 2025
Course Format: On-line, asynchronous
Units: 3
Prerequisites: None

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Virtual Office Hours: Thursday, noon – 3pm, https://csus.zoom.us/j/2507778940
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Welcome to *Research on Aging & the Life Course*. Over the semester, we will become better consumers and producers of research on aging and the life course. We will practice finding, analyzing, evaluating, and applying existing gerontological research published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. We will also gain hands-on experience conducting research. Skills we will develop include defining a research question, selecting and adapting data collection tools, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting results in narrative and visual formats. Along the way, we will learn about how gerontological theories frame and guide research and tackle some special logistical and ethical challenges researchers face when conducting research with and about older adults.

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CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analysis, evaluation, and application of existent gerontological research. Hands-on practice carrying out aging-related research projects, including defining the research question, selecting data collection tools, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, and presenting results in narrative and visual formats. Special emphasis on connecting gerontological theory, research, and interdisciplinary practice, accommodating participants with sensory, physical, or cognitive limitations, and ethical issues.

GENERAL EDUCATION (AREA B5)

This course fulfills the Area B5 General Education (GE) requirement by meeting the following criteria:

Area B-5: Further Studies

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:
- *Cite critical observations, underlying assumptions and limitations to explain and apply important ideas and models in one or more of the following: physical science, life science, mathematics, or computer science.*
- *Recognize evidence-based conclusions and form reasoned opinions about science-related matters of personal, public and ethical concern.*
- *Discuss historical or philosophical perspectives pertaining to the practice of science or mathematics.*

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:
1. recognize evidence-based conclusions and form reasoned opinions about science-related matters of personal, public and ethical concern (GE Area B5)
2. find and use common information resources, engage in specialized library research, use computers, and seek out appropriate expert opinion and advice (GE Area B)
3. use mathematical ideas to accomplish a variety of tasks (GE Area B)
4. analyze, evaluate, and apply published research findings
5. explain how gerontological theories frame and guide research
6. identify and address barriers that may limit participation in research studies by certain groups, such as members of racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ elders, older adults with disabilities, and elders living in long-term care facilities
7. adapt quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to accommodate participants with sensory, physical, or cognitive limitations
8. explain and evaluate basic research design (i.e., research question, theory and hypotheses, participant selection, data collection and analysis)
9. clearly report research findings in narrative, tabular, and graphic formats

10. analyze ethical issues, including participant consent, confidentiality, mandatory reporting of abuse, and conducting research in institutional settings and/or with vulnerable populations

Expected Learning Outcomes will be measured by the following:
- Graded on-line assignments (ELOs 1-10)
- Final exam (ELOs 1-6, 10)

COURSE MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGY

There is no required text. All required course materials will be available on-line through Canvas. Not all course materials will be posted at the beginning of the semester. Some information will be posted after specific material is covered. Please check Canvas regularly.

To access course materials and complete your assignments, you will need a computer with an internet connection. Ideally, you will have Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. You can download a free student version of Microsoft Office. Microsoft programs are also available in the computer labs on campus.

We will be using ChatGPT throughout the semester. If you do not already have a ChatGPT account, you will need to set one up by going to https://openai.com/chatgpt. The free version should work just fine.

You may borrow a laptop computer. To get the technology and support you need to succeed in this course, contact Information Resources and Technology at (916) 278-7337, or email servicedesk@csus.edu. **Please don't try to complete this course on your phone!**

Here are some recommended books that you may find helpful as you work through the course material (optional, all print books available from the CSUS library):
- *Scientific Inquiry in Social Work* by Matthew DiCarlo (ebook available: https://scientificinquiryinsocialwork.pressbooks.com/)
- *Understanding and Evaluating Research: A Critical Guide* by Sue McGregor
- *Research Design in Aging and Social Gerontology* by Joyce Weil
- *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* by Russell Schutt

APA FORMATTING & CITATION GUIDELINES

We will be using formatting and citation rules published by the American Psychological Association (APA) in the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. You may choose to purchase a copy of this book. The manual is also available from the CSUS library. Be sure to use the 7th edition published in 2020.

Some good online sources of help with APA citations include:
- the Purdue University On-line Writing Lab website: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html
- University of Maryland Global Campus Library website: https://libguides.umgc.edu/apa-examples
- CSU, Dominguez Hills: https://libguides.csudh.edu/citation/apa-7

Be cautious about copying and pasting citations from on-line sources. They are often incorrect. If you do copy and paste a citation, check to see that it conforms to APA citation formatting rules.

CLASS CORRESPONDENCE

The best way to communicate with other students or with me is through Canvas, although you can also email me at the address listed at the top of this syllabus. If you email me directly, **please include "GERO 123" in the subject line and sign your full name (not just your first name).** I will strive to respond to messages within two business days.

OFFICE HOURS ARE FOR YOU!

If you would like to visit one-on-one with me, my office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. I will be available virtually during office hours. If these office hours do not work with your schedule, I am also happy to make an appointment to visit with you virtually or in person. Please contact me to set up an appointment.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

To succeed in this course, you will need to:
- Take your time and try your best
- Review and apply feedback
- Carefully read and follow directions
- Ask questions and seek help

Your success is important to me. We will all need accommodation because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or fully participating, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

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 of them (your tuition pays for them!).
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. The CARES office is located in The Well, Office 1031. You can contact the office by calling (916) 278-5138 or emailing cares@csus.edu.

Academic Advising

The Academic Advising Center offers new student orientation, mandatory freshman advising, and advising on General Education and graduation requirements for all students.

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.

[Disability Access Center](#)

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 and e-mail is dac@csus.edu. For a complete listing of services and current business hours visit the Disability Access Center website: [https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/disability-access-center/.](https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/disability-access-center/)

Please feel free to set up an appointment with me, your friendly professor, to discuss your approved accommodation. This syllabus and course materials are available in alternate formats upon request. In addition, as your professor, I feel I have a responsibility to actively support culturally diverse learners with a wide range of learning styles and abilities and to be responsive in my teaching practices. Feel free to discuss your progress and experiences in this course with me at any time.

[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](#)

Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.

[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.

[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.

ACTIVITIES & ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

All due dates are listed in Canvas. Please submit assignments electronically through Canvas. If you do not know how to submit assignments in Canvas, reach out to your friendly professor or ask for help from IRT. If you have difficulties submitting an assignment, please email your friendly professor immediately so we can resolve the situation.

Weekly On-Line Activities (5 points each)

Throughout the semester, you will be exposed to, practice applying, and reflect on course content through weekly on-line activities (LACs, which stands for Learn, Apply, Connect). You will be able to see sample answers and explanations immediately after you submit the Learn and Apply parts of each module. You will receive full credit for making a good faith effort to complete each week's LAC regardless of whether you answered any questions incorrectly. If it is clear that a student did not watch the videos, do the reading, or make a good faith effort to answer the questions, I may deduct points. If you feel that I have unfairly deducted points, please reach out to me so we can discuss.

Graded Assignments (50-100 points each)

There will be four graded on-line assignments worth between 50-100 points each. These assignments are designed to demonstrate your knowledge and ability to apply what you are learning in this course. Some of the graded assignments will include short written components to be graded based on rubrics accessible in Canvas. Be sure to carefully read the instructions and rubrics.

Final Exam (100 points)

The final exam will be untimed and completed in Canvas. You will be able to work on the exam during the last week of the semester as well as during Finals Week. It will be due Friday of Finals Week. Below is a table showing the point distribution for the course:

Course Component	Point Value	Total Points
10 LACs	5 points each	50
4 Graded Assignments	50-100 points each	350
Final Exam	100 points	100
TOTAL		**500**

GRADES & GRADE CORRECTIONS

The following grading scale will be used to calculate course grades:

Letter Grade	Total Points
A	468 and above
A-	449-467
B+	428-448
B	418-427
B-	398-417
C+	383-397
C	368-382
C-	348-367

D+	333-347
D	318-332
D-	298-317
F	297 or below

When calculating course grades at the end of the semester, I will always round up to the nearest whole number. For example, if your total points at the end of the semester is 467.25, I will round up to 468.

If you feel a grade or points posted are not correct or if you have a question about the grade or points you received, you have one week after the grade or points are posted to contact me in writing. After one week the points or grade will be final. The University's Grading Policy can be found at: https://www.csus.edu/umanual/acad/umg05150.htm.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Work

Although I strongly encourage students to submit all course work on time, I understand that this is not always possible. I trust that students who need to turn things in late have a good reason for doing so. Therefore, there is no grade penalty for late submissions. Students do not need to ask for an extension or tell me they plan to turn in something late. Please just get caught up as soon as you can. To receive credit, all course work except the final exam must be submitted no later than the Sunday before finals week. Final exams must be submitted by midnight on the Friday of finals week.

Attendance

This is an asynchronous on-line course, so attendance is never required.

Academic Disruption

Unforeseen events may prevent the course from proceeding as planned. If the faculty member is not available during the semester or campus is closed, students will be contacted and advised how the course will proceed. This may include a change in instructor or modality.

Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Misconduct

The University requires faculty and staff to report any personal disclosures of sexual misconduct including rape, dating/domestic violence, and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator. Students who do not wish to report their experience to me or the Title IX Coordinator may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Student Health and Counseling Services.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

For more information about your rights and responsibilities as a CSUS student please refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.

Understand When You May Drop This Course or Take an Incomplete

It is your responsibility to understand when you need to consider disenrolling from a course. Dates and deadlines for registration and dropping a course are posted online: https://catalog.csus.edu/financial-registration-information/registration/. For more information about the process and consequences of

dropping a course, please read the [University's Drop and Withdrawal policy.](#) Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. For more information about when you may receive an incomplete, see: https://catalog.csus.edu/academic-policies/

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use citations and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes, on the Internet, or from an interview. Violation of university policies on academic integrity may result in failure of the course or the assignment, and could end in suspension from the university. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Use of AI such as ChatGPT

Artificial intelligence (AI) like ChatGPT can help us learn, but it can also get in the way of our learning if misused. In this course, students are encouraged to use AI in ways that will enhance their learning, including:
- asking AI to explain a concept or define a term
- using AI to brainstorm possible topics or generate an outline of a project or paper
- generating a first draft of a written work and asking for feedback on written work
- analyzing data
- creating graphics and images

I will specify how students can use ChatGPT or other AI tools in the instructions for each activity or assignment. Be aware that every professor approaches the use of AI differently, so these guidelines only apply to this course.

CSUS Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporating another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge. The following would constitute plagiarism:
- Word-for-word copying
- The mosaic (to intersperse a few words of one's own here and there while, in essence, copying another's work)
- The paraphrase (the rewriting of another's work, yet still using the fundamental idea or theory) – unless you cite the paraphrase
- Fabrication (inventing or counterfeiting sources)
- Ghost-written material (submitting another's effort as one's own)

It is also plagiarism to neglect quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged. Plagiarism and acts associated with it are cause for disciplinary and/or legal action. 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

Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the Office of Student Affairs. Refer to the University's Academic Honesty Policy for additional information and guidance: https://www.csus.edu/umanual/student/stu-100.htm.

COMMITMENT 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. Both the Student Code and Hornet Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course and it will be expected that each student is both aware of and familiar with the requirements and penalties. All aspects of your course work are covered by the University's student code and Hornet Honor Code, and any violation(s) will be reported to the University.