I. Course Description

This course will examine social policies, problems, and trends in social programs and services for the aged. It will focus major attention on the strengths and limitations of existing policies and programs related to health, mental health, income maintenance, income deficiency, dependent care, housing, employment and unemployment, and institutional and residential care. This course will provide a framework for an analysis of the services provided to older people. This analysis will include the adequacy with which needs are met in various subgroups of the elderly population. It will also include proposals for change in policies, programs and services. Programs will be compared in terms of access to benefits and services provided to older people.

II. Course Content

This course will familiarize students with social policies and programs for meeting the rapidly growing needs of the older population in our society. Policies, programs, and services for the elderly population will be examined from historical, observational, and analytical perspectives. This course will increase the student’s awareness of programs and services provided through the Older Americans Act, the Social Security Act, and as a consequence of public and community initiatives. Students will be exposed to content areas that will enable them to understand aging programs dealing with social services, health care, housing, and other elements of community and institutional long-term care systems.

**Intensive focus** for this course includes social justice, oppression, and power relationships that have implications for social policies and services for elderly people. The “political economy of aging” paradigm, a social policy paradigm by Dr. Carol Estes and colleagues, is used to critically analyze policies and services provided to older people. The political economy of aging paradigm addresses the “interlocking systems of oppression’ of race, class, gender, and aging,” thereby creating an excellent model for understanding oppression, privilege, and proposals for change.
III. Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the evolution and organization of policies and services for elderly people in the context of the problems that give rise to the need for such policies and services.
2. Critique the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. social service delivery system for elderly people.
3. Identify the problems facing the development of services for elderly people and suggest approaches to address these challenges.
4. Identify criteria for assessing the success of programs for elderly people.
5. Critically evaluate alternative policies and services for elderly people.
6. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to policies and services for elderly people.
7. Use a political economy framework to critically evaluate policies and services provided to elderly people in terms of such issues as privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice.

IV. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes

1. Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed through analysis of differences in needs among subgroups of the elderly population within the U.S. society and the differential application and impact of policies and services.

2. Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed by considering issues such as the distribution of social security and other benefits, varying standards for assessing the need for intervention (e.g., protective services and guardianship), and differing outcomes for behavior considered harmful to self or others.

3. Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed by considering the spectrum of policies and services ranging from promotion and prevention (e.g., pre-retirement programs and in-home services) to treatment and rehabilitation (e.g., income support for those with inadequate resources and nursing homes).

4. Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by the inclusion of theoretical frameworks for understanding social roles, social stratification, and societal functioning among the elderly. The findings of research studies relevant to the design and evaluation of policies and services for older adults will also be included.
V. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values

This course will address social work values and ethics in terms of the extent to which policies and services adequately meet the needs of elderly people. Special emphasis will be given to ethics and values concerning policies and services that provide older people with autonomy.

VI. Organization of Course

This course will include short lectures with discussions, student presentations, and guest lectures by expert policy practitioners. These lectures and presentations will address specific policies and programs/services for elderly people within both an historical and a contemporary context. Additionally, this course will include a field component in which students will engage in the process of assessing and understanding Medicare Part D. Their field and case study projects will require that they spend an unusual amount of time collecting information in the community; therefore, the instructor will allow time from class for students to spend in the field collecting data for field and case projects.

VII. Role of Faculty and Students

The instructor will deliver short lectures and facilitate discussion by encouraging students to share opinions on issues from the weekly readings, current policy events and field projects. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor during office hours and by e-mail or appointment to seek clarity on class assignments.

Student participation is critical to the success of the field experience, class discussions and presentations. Therefore, the instructor expects each student to complete all readings and attend all class sessions. In case of illness or other emergency that makes it impossible for a student to attend class, he or she should contact the instructor immediately by electronic mail. Failure to attend class or submit an assignment when it is due will result in five points deducted from a student’s final grade.

VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: ASSIGNMENTS, WRITING POLICY/CRITERIA AND GRADING CRITERIA

A. Assignment #1 (Total points=20). Review and critique of a professional journal article published after 1994 that focuses on a program/service for elderly people; oral class PowerPoint presentation

This assignment consists of two parts, a short paper (3-6 pages) and an oral class PowerPoint presentation on the program/service of interest to the student. It aims to help students gain knowledge of existing programs and services for elderly people—their characteristics, purpose, beneficiaries, strengths and limitations—especially for those elderly persons having low economic status and group identities based on ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, religion and disability. Students may choose from among the following programs/services when selecting a journal article for this assignment:
Information and Assistance; Transportation; Crime and Legal Assistance; Employment; Volunteer; Educational; Nutrition; Multipurpose Senior Centers; Housing; In-Home Assistance/Care, Adult Day Care

Students who wish to choose a program/service that is not listed among aforementioned programs/services are required to consult with the professor for clearance of the program/service.

Criteria for Assignment #1

1) Using a primary source professional journal article published after 1994, students are required to select an article for a program/service that targets elderly person who are different from them in terms of economic status or group identity (i.e., ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, religion, disability). For a potential article source, students may start with the list of journals that are attached to the syllabus. Books, book chapters, newspapers and magazines are unacceptable.

2) Write a critical review of the article including the following:
   a. The historical context in which the program/service developed;
   b. The purpose/goals of the program/service;
   c. The target population of participants/beneficiaries of the program/service and their eligibility requirements;
   d. Benefits/services (What kind? How Much?) received by participants/beneficiaries;
   e. The structure and control of the benefits/services (i.e., How benefits/services are delivered and who delivers them);
   f. Values and principles of the social work profession that the program/service highlights in targeting participants;
   g. Applicability of Estes and Colleagues’ political economy of aging paradigm to the program/service in terms of both strengths and limitations.
   h. Reference page
   i. Copy of journal article

Maximum number of pages for this assignment is six double-spaced, 12-point font word-processed pages. Assignment #1 is due on February 21st.

B. Assignment #2 (Total points=70). Field component engaging students in the process of assessing and understanding Medicare Part D.

This assignment consists of three parts: Part I – A 2-3 page summary overview of the Medicare Prescription Drug Policy (Medicare Modernization Act of 2003); Part II – A field study of 6 participating pharmacies in Medicare Part D and a case study choosing an individual prescription drug plan; Part III – a 10-12 page written report of the field and case studies culminating in an oral class PowerPoint presentation.

Part I: This 2-3 double spaced page summary overview should include an overview of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003; that is, the overview should be based on the legislative document in addition to any secondary sources that document the Act. For helpful sources, students should consult these government websites (e.g., www.medicare.gov, www.socialsecurity.gov, www.cms.gov), the AARP website (www.aarp.org), the Kaiser Family
Foundation website (www.kff.org), The Commonwealth Fund website (cmwf.org), and the Medicare Rights Center (www.medicarerights.org). Further, it should include appropriate documentation and a reference page.  \textbf{(Part 1=10 points)}

Part II: The field study of 6 participating pharmacies in Medicare Part D will involve students in assessing their accessibility to elderly persons with low incomes (e.g., Medicaid recipients or low income housing residents). The field study will address the 1) the type of pharmacy (e.g., retail chain, grocery chain, private owner), 2) the dissemination of knowledge about Medicare Part D distributed by the pharmacy to beneficiaries—i.e., content of the knowledge, whether the knowledge is in printed or electronic form, and whether the knowledge is in different languages, and 3) the location of the pharmacies in relation to elderly persons with low incomes.

The case study will involve students in assessing and evaluating the most economical prescription drug plan for an elderly person—preferably a client/consumer of an agency. For students lacking access to an agency, the professor will provide a case example. NOTE: Students may work in a dyad or group for this assignment; however, they are required to submit individual reports.

Part III: An 8-10 written report of Part II including the incorporation of Estes and Colleagues’ framework as well as appropriate documentation and reference page. Students are required to give an oral PowerPoint presentation in class.  \textbf{(Parts II=60 points)}

Assignment \#2 is due on April 18.

C. Class attendance/Participation (10 points)

D. Writing Policy/Criteria

Students are required to write all assignments and cite references, text citations and bibliography in the style of \textit{The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition)}. The following grading criteria will be used to evaluate all written assignments.

1. Completeness, Thoroughness and Timely Submission, i.e., Has the student sufficiently addressed all parts of the assignment? Did the student submit the written assignment when it was due?

2. Organization and Clarity, i.e., Are sentence structure, syntax, and grammar of appropriate quality (e.g., clear, concise, coherent sentences)? Is there more active than passive voice? Are clauses and phrases placed close to words they modify? Have subtitles been used to improve organization? Has the student included a summary and conclusion as well as addressed implications for policy/practice? Has the paper been carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc?

3. Documentation and Referencing, i.e., Are the references well integrated in the text of the paper? Is referencing in the text and the bibliography done according to the APA style.
4. Critical Thinking and Theoretical Applications, i.e., Has the student compared, contrasted, and integrated the different viewpoints and material on the subject in a way that shows he or she has a thorough understanding of the issue? Has the student suggested points that others have not addressed? Has the student addressed the strengths and limitations of Estes and Colleagues’ political of economy framework?

NOTE: The instructor will use a comment sheet that lists these criteria when evaluating written assignments. She will return written assignments and evaluations to students in a timely manner—typically one week following submission.

D. Grading Scale

A = 100% - 96%; A- = 95% - 91%; B+ = 90% - 86%; B = 85% - 83%; B- = 82% - 80%; C+ = 79% - 76%; C = 75% - 73%; C- = 72% - 70%; < 69 No Credit

IX. Required Text and Other Readings

Required Text:

Articles
Articles are posted on CTOOLS except for those with a URL. Further, the instructor will copy and disseminate some readings as class handouts.

X. Course Outline

Week 1 January 10
- Introductions
- Course overview
- Organization of Groups/Teams for Assignments
- Policy Beat: 20-30 minute weekly discussions on recent policy matters in the media

Week 2 January 17
- Political Economy of Aging Framework
- Medicare: Historical Overview/Context

Required Readings:

- Estes et al, Chapter 1, Political Economy of Aging Framework; Chapter 3, The Medicalization and Commodification of Aging and the Privatization and Rationalization of Old Age Policy.
sheets on Medicare.


**Note:** Class will adjourn at 1:30 to allow time for work on field and case studies.

**Week 3 January 24**

- Medicare Today
  Guest lecturer: Louanne Bakk, MSW, Director, Access and Benefits Assistance, AAA 1-B

**Note:** Class will adjourn at 1:30 to allow time for work on field and case studies.

**Week 4 January 31**

- The Aging Network and Older Americans Act: Historical Overview

**Required Readings:**

- Layman’s guide to the Older Americans Act (OAA). Found at www.aoa.dhhs.gov
- Older Americans Act. Found at http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/42/ch35.html and on CTOOLS.

**Week 5 February 7**

- Student Presentations on Programs/Services (to be grouped on topical area) - Assignment #1

**Week 6 February 14**

- Student Presentations on Programs/Services (to be grouped on topical area) - Assignment #1 – First 2 hours only

**Note:** Class will adjourn at 1:30 to allow time for work on field and case studies.
Week 7  February 21

- Medicaid: Historical Overview/Context
- Medicaid: Contemporary Context

Guest lecturer: Barb Zaret, MSW, Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County

Required Readings:

- Cash & Counseling Demonstration and Evaluation Program. Located at www.cashandcounseling.org and www.hcbs.org

Week 8  Spring Recess (February 25 through March 5)

Week 9  March 7

- Gender and Health Issues in Aging Policy
- Social Class and Health Issues in Aging Policy
- Ethnicity/Race and Health Issues in Aging Policy

Required Readings:

- Estes et al, Chapter 6, Sex and Gender in the Political Economy of Aging; Chapter 7, Inequality and Aging: The Creation of Dependency.

Optional: Dialogue with diverse elders in class.

Week 10 March 14

• Long-Term Care Issues in Aging Policy
• Historical Overview: Social Security and Retirement Policies

**Required Readings:**
• Estes et al. Chapter 10. The Underdevelopment of Community-Based Services in the U.S. Long-Term Care System.

Week 11 March 21

• **Note:** No class on this date to allow time for work on field and case projects

Week 12 March 28

• Social Security, Retirement, and Disability

  Guest lecturers: Ms. Joanne Ashenden and Ms. Sue Lundgoot
  Social Security Administration, Ann Arbor Branch

**Required Readings:**
• Hudson, R.B. (Spring 2002). Getting ready and getting credit: Populations of color and
retirement security. *Public Policy and Aging Report, 12*(3). Also, other required readings in this issue are “Workers of color and pathways to retirement” (Flippen & Tienda); “Impact of unreported social security earnings on people of color and women” (Kijakazi); and “Care credits: Race, gender, class, and social security reform” (Herd).


**Week 13  April 4**
- NOTE: No class during regular class time. Students are required to attend the Winkelman Lecture at 3:30 p.m. in the Educational Conference Center, SSW.
- Dr. Robert Kelch will speak on Medicare and aging in the U.S. Students can locate Dr. Kelch’s information at [http://www.med.umich.edu/evpma/biohtm](http://www.med.umich.edu/evpma/biohtm)

**Week 14  April 11**
- Student Presentations – Field and Case Studies

**Week 15  April 18**
- Student Presentations – Field and Case Studies

Assignment #2 due on this date.
XI. POTENTIAL SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL ARTICLES

Advances in Gerontological Research
Aging
Clinical Gerontologist
Educational Gerontology
Ethnicity and Aging
Generations
Geriatric Nursing
(The) Gerontologist
Gerontology and Geriatrics
Health & Social Work
International Journal of Aging and Human Development
Journal of Aging and Ethnicity
Journal of Aging Studies
Journal of American Geriatric Society
Journal of Applied Gerontology
Journal of Cross Cultural Gerontology
Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect
Journal of Gerontological Nursing
Journal of Gerontological Social Work
(The) Journals of Gerontology. Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences
Journal of Women & Aging
Policy & Practice of Public Human Services
Social Security Bulletin
(The) Social Service Review
Social Work
Social Work Research
Research on Aging Social Policy
INTERNET RESOURCES: PUBLIC POLICY AND AGING

General facts and other information
http://www.aoa.gov
http://www.kff.org
http://www.cms.org
http://www.cmwf.org
http://www.aarp.org

Social Security: Old Age Survivors Insurance; Supplemental Security Insurance & Social Security Disability Insurance

http://www.ssa.gov


Employment & retirement policies
http://www.eeoc.gov

Disability & aging policies
http://www.disability.gov


Medicare
http://www.tcf.org/Publications/Basics/medicaid/index.html

http://www.tcf.org/Publications/Basics/Medicare_2001/index.html

Caregiving & Intergenerational Policies
http://www.caregiving.org
http://www.rand.org

Housing & Transportation Policies
http://research.aarp.org