I. Course Description

This course will examine the social policies, problems, and trends in social programs and services for the aged. We 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 institutions 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 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 the elderly. The “political economy of aging,” a major 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 the elderly 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 the elderly.
3. Identify the problems facing the development of services for the elderly and suggest approaches to address these challenges.
4. Identify criteria for assessing the success of programs for the elderly.
5. Critically evaluate alternative policies and services for the elderly.
6. Discuss typical ethical concerns related to policies and services for the elderly.
7. Use a political economy framework to critically evaluate policies and services provided to older people in terms of such issues as privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice.

IV. Course Design

This course will typically involve a combination of lecture and discussion. Guest speakers and student presentations will be used to supplement and enhance discussion of weekly topics.

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 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 the elderly. Special emphasis will be given to ethics and values concerning policies and services that provide older people with autonomy.
VI. Organization of Course

We will conduct the class in a seminar fashion, which means students will be expected to fully participate in the learning process. Seminars will include short lectures, guest speakers, discussions, and student presentations. Short lectures will highlight specific portions of policies and place them in the historical and contemporary context of programs and services for older adults. Guest speakers and student presentations will be integrated at strategic points in the semester to facilitate better understanding of the course content.

VII. Role of Faculty and Students

In addition to delivering short lectures, the instructor will encourage students to share their thoughts and opinions on issues and ideas from the weekly readings. She will be available for 30 minutes after class to answer individual questions. Students are encouraged to contact her during office hours, by appointment or e-mail to seek clarity on written assignments.

Student participation is critical to the success of class discussions and presentations. I expect each student to complete all readings and come to class prepared to engage in a lively discussion. I expect students to attend all class sessions unless illness or other emergency makes attendance impossible. In case of illness or other emergency, the student should contact me immediately and follow up with written evidence. As a general rule, I will not accept a late assignment. Failure to attend class, leave class early or submit a timely assignment will result in points deducted from final grade.

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

A. Weekly Participation in Class (15% of final course grade)

Expectations for class participation are noted under VIII Role of Faculty and Students.

B. Assignment #1: Programs and Diversity Paper (25% of final course grade)

This assignment consists of two parts, a paper and a class presentation, which are due on the same day in class. Each student will select a program/service for older adults based on topical areas and chapters in the Gelfand text. A primary purpose of this assignment is to help students gain knowledge of existing programs and services for the aged, their characteristics, purpose and users. Each student will choose from among the following programs/services.

Programs/Services:
Chapter 5: Information and Assistance, 61-68
Chapter 7: Transportation, 82-90
Chapter 8: Crime and Legal Assistance Programs, 191-110
Due date: Feb. 10

Chapter 9: Employment, Volunteer, and Educational Programs, 111-122
Due date: Feb. 17

Chapter 10: Nutrition Programs, 123-33
Due date: Feb. 10

Chapter 11: Multipurpose Senior Centers, 139-153
Chapter 12: Housing, 154-178
Chapter 13: In-Home Services, 179-191
Chapter 14: Adult Day Care, 192-203
Due date: March 2

Part 1: The Paper

No more then 2 students will be allowed to focus on any one area. Topics will be assigned on January 13, 2004.

1. Once you select a program/service, read and use the content from the appropriate chapter in the Gelfand text.

2. You are to focus on the implications of your selected program/service for an elderly subgroup other than one with which you would identify (i.e., a racial, cultural or ethnic group; persons of a different sexual orientation, e.g., a gay person, a bisexual person; a person with a physical, cognitive or mental disability).

3. Use primary source professional journal articles (See the attached list of Aging Journals or equivalent). Books, book chapters, newspapers and magazines are unacceptable. Use professional gerontological journal articles no later than 1993 to briefly describe among other factors:

4. a. The history of the problem leading to the development of the policy/program/service;
b. The diversity and human differences of policy and/or program participants;
c. Socio-demographic characteristics of the population affected;
d. System and mechanisms that create and support oppression and or privilege in the policy or program;
e. Documentation of the main social justice issues the policy/program/service addresses; and
f. A discussion of how the content on oppression, privilege and social justice enhances, supports or does not support some aspect of Estes and colleagues’ paradigm.

You are to use no fewer than six outside sources (excluding any citations from the required readings); three of these outside sources must address the selected population under study. This assignment should be limited to 5-6 double-spaced, 12-point font, typed or word-processed pages.

Part 2: Oral Presentations

Since two students may be addressing one topical area, the oral presentation will be in a group format. This will help avoid unnecessary duplication and insure each group adequate time (no more than 15 minutes) for each topic. Students will evaluate these oral presentations. The instructor will provide an evaluation tool.
C. Assignment #2: Short Integrative Research Papers (30% of final course grade)

Each student is to select a gerontological journal article from the years of 1993-2003 (see the attached list of journals or equivalent) that addresses aspects of the weekly assigned readings on these topics: race/ethnicity, class, sex, gender, employment, retirement, income and mental health. Prepare a 2-3 page double spaced, 12-font, position paper that includes:

a. A brief summary of featured points in the article.

b. How the content relates to Estes, et al., “political economy of age.”

c. Specific relationship to intensive foci and what social justice could look like.

d. A discussion on the policy and/or program issues as well as their implications for the future in light of the changing older American socio-demographics.

Each student is required to do a total of 2 integrative research papers for the class. Topics are assigned on the basis of last names and due in class on the following dates.

#1 Feb. 17, 2004 Race/Ethnicity, Class, and Aging  (A - Mattson)
#2 Feb. 17, 2004 Sex, Gender, and Aging  (McKeon - Y)
#1 March 16, 2004 Employment, Retirement, and Income  (A - Mattson)
#2 April 6, 2004 Mental Health  (McKeon - Y)

D. Assignment #3: Integrative Policy Debate & Paper (30% of final course grade)

This assignment is to build on what you have learned during the semester. It will further help develop and sharpen your critical thinking skills. Specifically, the policy debate paper is designed to give each student an opportunity to critique the strengths and weaknesses of a social policy or program for the elderly. Further, it is designed to give each student an opportunity to demonstrate understanding of Estes and colleagues’ “political economy of aging” paradigm and its implications for social justice. Each student is expected to work separately on this project throughout the semester. For the final product and the debate, at least two people will present their work on a selected debate topic with one presenting the pro’s and the other the con’s.

Nine proposed issues for debate are from Controversial Issues in Aging by Scharlach & Kaye, editors, (1997), Boston: Allyn & Bacon. I have added a 10th issue because it is salient to contemporary policy issues pertaining to community care of older adults. While you may use the format in Controversial Issues in Aging as a guide, I expect you to develop your own arguments and use other references. Be creative in your thinking. A reminder: “Two people could analyze the same policy with different arguments and recommendations, because the analysis reflects the analyst’ view of the world.”

No rejoinders are required. You are, however, to clearly state your issue, and your supported opinions in a debate format. The selected substantive debate questions are not in order of presentation.

Debate Questions:

1. Should Social Security benefits be reduced for high-income individuals?

2. Can age discrimination in employment be eliminated?
3. Should older legal immigrants be eligible for SSI?

4. Will baby boomers consume the federal budget?

5. Should health care be rationed by age?

6. Should eligibility for Medicare be means tested?

7. Should government policy encourage age integrated life course?

8. Should driving for older people be restricted?

9. Should grandparents have visitation rights after a divorce?

10. Should government reimburse family members for the care of their older relatives?

You are to research and discuss both sides, pro and con, of the debate question. More specifically, you should make every effort to remain objective and include arguments on both sides of the issue. Here again, use Estes and colleagues’ paradigm while supporting it with empirical evidence from professional gerontological literature or through use of statistics and sound logic. Summarize your final conclusions in a manner that moves in the direction of social justice.

This assignment should be limited to 8 - 10 typed pages. Readings from the class may be used. The assignment should cite at least 10 additional references with no more than three of them from the Internet. Integrative policy debates begin March 9. Refer to the syllabus, beginning with this date through end of term, for the due date of your integrative policy debate paper.

E. Writing Policy

Good writing skills that express information accurately and concisely to individuals involved in helping client systems are required for effective social work practice. Therefore, all writing assignments for this course (i.e., papers) will be evaluated for content, ideas presented, and clarity of ideas.

Students are required to use appropriate referencing on all written assignments. Students are referred to the section on “Ethical Conduct in the University Environment” of the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program 2003-2004 (p. 53) to become familiar with penalties that may result from scholastic dishonesty such as plagiarism in written assignments.

Most social work journals and aging journals (See, for example, Social Work and The Gerontologist respectively) use the style of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition). Students are required to write all assignments and cite references, text citations and bibliography in the style of The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition). All papers are to be double-spaced, narrative format, paginated and typewritten or word-processed with a 12-point font.

Students can receive assistance with writing assignments from the College Writing Workshop offered by faculty of the English Composition Board staffs. Students are encouraged to use this service. For further information contact:
F. Grading Criteria

The following grading criteria will be used to evaluate all written assignments. Please review them before submitting a paper.

1. Completeness, Thoroughness and Timely Submission (30 points)

   How fully has the issue been addressed? Has the student sufficiently researched the issue using library resources, interviews, and other means to gain differing perspectives and full knowledge of the issue? Does the paper leave the reader with the impression that major questions have been considered or are important issues not addressed? Has the paper been carefully proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc? Did the student submit the written assignment when it was due?

2. Organization and Clarity (15 points)

   Is the paper well written and organized in a logical manner? Are there appropriate transitions between, paragraphs, and sections? Are sentence structure, syntax, and grammar of appropriate quality (e.g., clear, concise, coherent sentences) for a graduate student? 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 addressed issues in a way that someone unfamiliar with the issue can understand it? Do different sections of the paper cohere into a unified paper? Is there a summary and conclusion?

3. Documentation and Referencing (25 points)

   Are there sufficient references? Has the theoretical and empirical literature on the subject been incorporated into the paper? Are the references well integrated in the text of the paper? Is referencing in the text and the bibliography done according to the style of the American Psychological Association?

4. Critical Thinking, Originality and Creativity (30)

   Has the student used analytical skills in a way that suggests more than a restatement of what others have said about the issue? 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?

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.
G. Grading Scale

Grades will be determined by adding the scores from the three written assignments and classroom participation. I will convert the numerical grade into a letter grade using the following scale:

- A+ = 101%+
- 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

H. Summary of Assignments

Assignment #1: Programs and Diversity Paper with presentation (25% of final course grade).

Refer to VIII, Item B, Assignment #1, for dates when this assignment is due.

Assignment #2: Short Integrative Research Papers (30% of final course grade)

- #1 Feb. 17, 2004 Race/ Ethnicity, Class, and Aging (A - Mattson)
- #2 Feb. 17, 2004 Sex, Gender, and Aging (McKeon - Y)
- #1 March 16, 2004 Employment, Retirement, and Income (A - Mattson)
- #2 April 6, 2004 Mental Health (McKeon - Y)

Assignment #3: Integrative Policy Debate and Paper (30% of final course grade)

IX. Required Texts and Supplemental Readings

Required Text:

Library Reserve:

Supplemental Readings:
Additional readings as handouts will be a part of the formal assignment. I will copy and distribute handouts at least one week prior to reading them.
X. Course Outline

UNIT ONE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & THE AGING NETWORK

Week 1 January 6
- Introductions
- Course overview

Weeks 2 & 3 January 13 and 20
- Historical Perspective
  - Policy and programs
  - The Older Americans Act of 1965 - as Amended in 2000

Required Readings:
Gelfand: The Older American, 1-10, Chapter 1
Gelfand: Legislative Bases for Programs and Services, 11-28, Chapter 2
Handout: The Older Americans Act as Amended, 2000

Weeks 4 & 5 January 27 and February 3
- Political Economy of Aging Framework
  - Political, economic and social conflicts
  - Power struggles, differing ideologies
  - Systems of oppression

- Application of Critical Perspective Approach
  - Aging and health from gerontological, political, feminist, & cultural foundation

Required Readings:
Estes et al.: Political Economy of Aging Framework, 1-19, Chapter 1
Estes et al.: Critical Perspectives on Aging, 23-44, Chapter 2

Week 6 February 10
- Student Group Presentations
- Programs for the Aged—Their Characteristics, Purpose and Users.

Required Readings:
Gelfand: Information and Assistance, 61-68, Chapter 5
Gelfand: Transportation, 82-90, Chapter 7
Gelfand: Crime and Legal Assistance Programs, 91-110, Chapter 8
Gelfand: Nutrition Programs, 123-132, Chapter 10

- Processes that Shape Old Age, Aging & Policy Formulation
  - Medicalization, commodification, privatization & rationalization

Required Readings:
Estes et al.: The Medicalization and Commodification of Aging and the Privatization and Rationalization of Old Age Policy, 45-60, Chapter 3
NOTE: Guest speaker invited for this class session

UNIT TWO: WORK, RETIREMENT & ECONOMIC STATUS

Week 7 February 17
- Student Group Presentations
- Programs for the Aged—Their Characteristics, Purpose and Users.

Required Readings:
Gelfand: Age, Employment, and Income Maintenance, 29-44, Chapter 3
Gelfand: Employment, Volunteer, and Educational Programs, 111-122, Chapter 9
Gelfand: Services for the Aged, 135-137, Part IV

- Employment, Retirement and Income
  - Financial well-being
  - Federal programs for the employment of the older population Labor force trends
  - Early retirement

- Political Economy of Sex and Gender
  - Creation and perpetuation of economic and social dependency of women
  - Inequality resulting from dependency
  - Economic and social well-being
  - Social support, mortality, morbidity and the use of health care

Week 9 March 2
- Student Group Presentations
- Employment, Retirement and Income Continued
- Programs for the Aged—Their Characteristics, Purpose and Users Continued
Required Readings:
Gelfand: Multipurpose Senior Centers, 139-153, Chapter 11
Gelfand: Housing, 154-178, Chapter 12
Gelfand: In-Home Services, 179-191, Chapter 13
Gelfand: Adult Day Care, 192-203, Chapter 14

Integrative Policy Debates
Begin

Weeks 10 & 11  March 9 and 16
- Social Security
  - Precedents to Social Security
  - The 1935 law & major amendments

Required Readings:
Gelfand: Age, Employment, and Income Maintenance, 29-44, Chapter 3.

- Integrative Policy Debates
  - Should Social Security benefits be reduced for high-income individuals?
  - Can age discrimination in employment be eliminated?

NOTE: Guest speaker invited for this class session

UNIT THREE:  HEALTH CARE POLICIES & SERVICES

Week 12 & 13  March 23 and 30
- Health Care Issues

Required Readings:
Gelfand: Illness, Medical Care, and Income Maintenance, 45-58, Chapter 4
Gelfand: Health & Mental Health, 69-81, Chapter 6
Estes et al.: The Medical-Industrial Complex and the Aging Enterprise, 165-185, Chapter 8
Estes et al: A Political Critique of “Productive Aging”, 187-198, Chapter 9

- Health Care Programs
  Medicare
  Medicaid
  Managed care
• **Integrative Policy Debates**
  - Should health care be rationed by age?
  - Should eligibility for Medicare be means-tested?

**NOTE:** Guest speaker invited for each class session

**Week 14  April 6**

• **Mental Health**
  - Age-related facts
  - Availability of resources
  - Responsibility for care

**Required Readings:**
Gelfand: Health & Mental Health, 69-91, Chapter 6

• **Integrative Policy Debates**
  - Should older legal immigrants be eligible for SSI?
  - Will baby boomers consume the federal budget?

**Week 15  April 13**

• **Long-Term Care**
  - Institutionalization
  - Quality of life

**Required Readings:**
Estes et al.: The Underdevelopment of Community-Based Services in the U.S. Long-Term Care System: A Structural Analysis, 201-215, Chapter 10
Estes et al.: The Political Economy of Health Work, 217-230, Chapter 11
Gelfand: Long-Term Care Residences, 204-223, Chapter 15
Gelfand: Challenges for the Aging Network, 224-232, Chapter 16

• **Integrative Policy Debates**
  - Should government policy encourage age integrated life course?
  - Should driving for older people be restricted?
  - Should grandparents have visitation rights after a divorce?
  - Should government reimburse family members for the care of their older relatives?

**XI. SELECTED AGING JOURNALS**

*Abstracts in Gerontology* (Current Literature on Aging)
*Advances in Gerontological Research*
*Aging*
*Clinical Gerontologist*
*Educational Gerontology*
*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 Abstracts
Social Work Research
Research on Aging Social Policy

Please search the MIRL YN catalog for the title of a particular journal in order to check the complete holdings on campus. The MIRL YN catalog can also give you the URL or web address of any particular electronic journal to which the libraries subscribe. For those journals to which only the Social Work Library subscribes, you may want to bookmark the Social Work Library Journals web page (http://www.lib.umich.edu/socworkswljournals.html).

Acknowledgements: This course syllabus has been adapted from a Winter 2003 version developed by Professor Shirley Lockery.
INTERNET RESOURCES: PUBLIC POLICY AND AGING

General facts and other information


Social Security: Old Age Survivors Insurance


- Social Security Trust Funds: FAQs. SSA. Found at: http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/ProgData/fundFAQ.html

**Employment & retirement policies**

• Facts about age discrimination. EEOC. Found at: http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/age.html
• Facts about the ADA. EEOC. Found at: http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-ada.html
• ADEA Charges. EEOC. Found at: http://www.eeoc.gov/stats/adea.html
• EEOC litigation statistics. EEOC. Found at: http://www.eeoc.gov/stats/litigation.html

**Disability & aging policies**

• Cash and counseling demonstration home site, University of Maryland Center on Aging. Found at: http://www.hhp.umd.edu/AGING/CCDemo/info.html

**Medicare**


**The Aging Network & the Older Americans Act**

• Older Americans Act. Found at: http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/42/ch35.html

**Caregiving & Intergenerational Policies**

Housing & Transportation Policies

- Can We Talk? Families Discuss Older Parents’ Ability to Live Independently. Or Do They? AARP. Found at: http://research.aarp.org/il/ind_liv.pdf
- Government Assisted Housing, 2) Home Modifications, and 3) What are your rights? All found at the National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification, under “Center Publications”. http://www.homemods.org/
- Reverse mortgages. AARP. Found at: http://www.aarp.org/revmort/
- Accessory apartments. AARP Found at http://www.aarp.org/confacts/housing/accessapt.html
- ECHO Housing. AARP. Found at: http://www.aarp.org/confacts/housing/echo.html
- CCRC’s. AARP. Found at: http://www.aarp.org/confacts/housing/ccrc.html
- Assisted living. AARP. Found at: http://www.aarp.org/confacts/housing/assistliv.html

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