

**Cedar Crest College
Department of the Social Sciences
Fall Semester 2009**

Practices, Policies, & Politics of Aging (SOC-329)
Thursdays, 7:00 – 9:30 p.m.
Location: HBB 11

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Course Objectives

The field of gerontology is at an important crossroads. The choices our nation makes will determine whether our society is going to contribute constructively to the wellbeing, not only of older persons, but of all age groups. This course is designed to provide a brief but comprehensive introduction to the choices that confront us and those that lie just ahead as we move through what Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil identifies as the period of the *New Aging*. The course is structured as an interdisciplinary seminar focusing on politics and social change in an aging America. Its broad purpose is to (1) explore why our current delivery of services and benefits to the elderly must change to meet the social forces of generational claims, cultural diversity, and longevity, and (2) why adapting to such forces will be difficult. In addition, we will investigate (3) the tensions and conflicts that will arise if we do nothing to restructure existing benefits, programs, agencies, and services for the elderly. The substance of SOC-329 speaks as much to advocates for the elderly as to those who disagree with the existing framework of programs and entitlements for the aged in America. The course is intended to be intellectually stimulating, pertinent, and useful to students, broadly speaking, and to professionals in fields studying social gerontology.

Required Textbooks

Moody, H. (2008). *Aging concepts and controversies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hooyman, N., & Kiyak, H. (2008). *Social gerontology: A multidisciplinary perspective*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Course Requirements

**Paper – 50% of Grade
Due Dec. 3**

Length: 10 pages, double spaced, APA format throughout paper and reference page. Reference page to be attached: 8-10 references; only professional sources, peer reviewed journals etc.

Subject: A paper on one of the following topics

- Medicare – Title XVII of the Social Security Act of 1965
- End-of-Life Care

- Medicare Drug Program
- Medicare Long-Term Care
- Medicaid for Older Adults
- Subsidized Housing
- Social Security
- Gender Inequalities in Aging Policies

I. Topic Identification

- Define the topic under discussion for this paper
- Discuss the historical background
- What does the current literature say about the topic?

II. Relevance to Gerontology

- How is your topic related to the older adult?
- How would a gerontology professional use this knowledge?

III. Personal Perspective

- Present your personal views of the topic.
- What solutions would you propose for the future?

IV. Conclusions

- Summarize main findings

**Oral Presentation – 25% of Grade
Due Nov. 19**

Presentation of Topic

- 20-minute professional presentation
- Turn in an outline and reference page to each class member and instructor at the time of the presentation

The following must be included in the presentation

- Overview of the policy
- How was the policy developed?
- What types of people would be affected by this policy?
- Apply the policy to a case study to show how it affects an elderly person

Note:

- No reading of your material
- You will be graded on clarity, comprehensiveness, creativity, overall presentation style and organization of the topic materials

**Interview – 25% of Grade
Due Dec. 3**

Theme: You will interview an older adult who has used the services outlined under your policy. Explain the older adult's reactions to the services/policy. For example: was it comprehensive enough, cost too much, provide services in an efficient and timely manner, etc.

Paper: A two to three-page paper will be turned in at the end of the semester summarizing your interview findings. Highlight key policy concept and if the individual felt the policy adequately covered/addressed their needs.

Outline of Topics and Reading Assignments

- Unit 1** Introduction and Orientation to SOC-329 The Sociological Perspective, Aging in America and Social Gerontology
Assigned Readings: Moody Chapters 1, 2 and 3
- Unit 2** Introduction to aging and the American family, hospice, death and dying, resilience of older women, social policies that address social problems of the aged.
Assigned Readings: Hooyman & Kiyak, Chapters 13, 15, 16 and 17
- Unit 3** Social and Economic outlook for an aging society. The future of Social Security, age and need based entitlements, public and private responses to retirement income.
Assigned Readings: Moody Chapters 5, 6 and 9
- Unit 4** The biological, psychological and social aspects of aging. The meaning of age and what is considered successful aging.
Assigned Readings: Moody Chapters 9, 10 and 11