

**General Advising Form**

Gerontology is a dynamic, interdisciplinary field that investigates challenges and opportunities for aging people, communities, and societies. As our general and world population continues to age, this certificate can improve your academic understanding and applied skills in supporting older people and their families. The gerontology certificate may be paired with a concurrent graduate program of study (social work, public health, urban studies, etc.) or as a standalone, deep dive into aging. This program requires at least 18 credit hours and can be tailored to your academic interests and professional goals.

Three required courses (11-12 credits):

- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 558/658 Perspectives on Aging** (3 credits);  
doctoral students register for 658; all other students register for 558
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 556 Health Aspects of Aging** (4 credits)  
*Choose one of the following:*
- \_\_\_\_\_ **SOC 569 Sociology of Aging** (4 credits) OR
- \_\_\_\_\_ **PSY 562 Psychology of Aging** (4 credits)

Two elective courses\*\* (6-8 credits):

- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 510/610 Creating Age Friendly Communities** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 516 Families and Aging** (4 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 523 Business and Aging** (4 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 557/657 National Long Term Care Policy** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 559/659 Economics of Aging** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 560/660 Mental Health and Aging** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 562 Global Aging** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **PHL 548 Biomedical Ethics** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **SOC 566 Sociology of Dying and Death** (4 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **SW 544/644 Midlife and Beyond** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **SW 574 Social Work with Older Adults** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **SW 569 Social Work in End of Life & Palliative Care** (3 credits)
- \_\_\_\_\_ **USP 585 Housing and Environments for Elderly** (3 credits)

\*\*Including but not limited to these courses. Others that include aging and older adults may be permitted. Please confirm with the gerontology certificate advisor if the class is not listed for approval.\*\*

Internship or Independent Research Project

All internships and research projects must be approved via application to the Institute on Aging.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 504 Internship\*\*\*** or
- \_\_\_\_\_ **AGE 501 Independent Research Project** (thesis or dissertation)

If you have additional questions, please contact Lauren Bouchard at [lboucha2@pdx.edu](mailto:lboucha2@pdx.edu)

### Institute on Aging

Portland State University's [Institute on Aging](#) (IOA) faculty are global leaders on the cutting edge of social science research on aging. Students have the opportunity to work directly with IOA faculty on publicly and privately funded research. Students also have the opportunity to connect with other gerontology students across departments via IOA events, The Gerontology Network, and robust alumni involvement. The IOA produces a monthly newsletter and maintains a student google chat group for ongoing communication of events, research, and other projects.

The [Better with Age Initiative](#) has funds available to support students interested in pursuing their Graduate Certificate in Gerontology and aging-related work. Faculty and students are actively involved in the Oregon Gerontological Association, the Gerontological Society of America, and other state, national, and international organizations.

### Careers in Aging

Students have a wide range of careers available in public and private sectors. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Age-friendly urban planners, politicians, civil servants
- Therapists, nursing home administrators, activity or engagement coordinators
- Research coordination and management
- Home care and nursing home administrators
- Hospital and social service staff
- Non-profit organizations leaders (e.g., LGBT older adult support, program development, evaluation)
- Social workers (geriatric, hospice, older adult services)
- Care counselors (e.g., geriatric care management, crisis counselors, etc.)

### Aging-Related Course Descriptions

#### **AGE 558/658 Perspectives on Aging** (3 credits; online)

An introduction to the field of gerontology is presented from the perspectives offered by multiple disciplines, including sociology, psychology, biology, economics, political science, and demography. Stereotypes of aging and theoretical frameworks for understanding aging are examined, as are normal age-related changes, the impact of social, political, and economic conditions on the process of aging, and the myriad consequences of a growing population of elders.

#### **AGE 556 Health Aspects of Aging** (4 credits; online)

Examination of health-related changes that occur with aging. Review of current scientific literature with an investigation of physiological mechanisms responsible for changes in functional capacity throughout life. Explores the role of physical activity and nutrition in healthy aging.

**SOC 569 Sociology of Aging** (4 credits; online)

A study of social determinants of the human life course, including biological and demographic conditions, age status patterns, age grading, rites of passage, socialization, generational phenomena, and youth and old age movements.

**PSY 562 Psychology of Aging** (4 credits; in person)

Development of the individual from early adulthood through old age. Theory and research focusing on adult development from a life-span perspective.

**AGE 510/610 Creating Age Friendly Communities** (3 credits; online)

Our region, as well as world, is witnessing a rapid and unprecedented growth in the proportion and number of older adults. The window of opportunity for preparing communities is shrinking rapidly. This researched-based course seeks to improve understanding of physical, social, and service environments and it aims to share research findings with local partners in an effort to make the Portland region a better place for those of all ages and abilities. Students will receive research training and will cover topics related to public health, urban planning, community development, and policy.

**AGE 516 Families and Aging** (4 credits; online)

Family ties of middle aged and older adults are explored using a life course perspective. The diversity of family structure and experience is emphasized with attention to gender, race, class, and ethnicity. Life transitions are highlighted as are informal and formal services available to support older adults and their families.

**AGE 523 Business and Aging** (4 credits; online)

Economic and business implications of population aging, including an exploration of demographic changes, the economic reality faced by today's older adults in work and retirement, and older adults as consumers.

**AGE 557/657 National Long Term Care Policy** (3 credits; online)

This course examines the need for long-term care services and the risk factors associated with utilization of them as well as familiarizing students with the financing and delivery mechanisms in long-term care, both public and private. The policy issues in current long-term care initiatives are explored.

**AGE 559/659 Economics of Aging** (3 credits; online)

Objectives are (1) understand the roots of income inequality between the aged and non-aged; (2) review the economic and policy factors that influence the decision to retire; (3) understand the political economy of old age income support in the U.S. and abroad; (4) explore the history, operation, and policy questions of our major public pension system,

social security; and (5) discuss private pensions in relationship to U.S. income maintenance policy.

**AGE 560/660 Mental Health and Aging** (3 credits; online)

Focus on a psychological approach to mental health and aging. The physical and social environments of older people, as well as the individual's physical and psychological condition, strongly affect the mental health and quality of life of older people. It is the goal of the course to be useful to people who work with older adults and their families, or to people who want to understand the changes that may be happening for older members of their own families. Guest speakers from the field of geriatric mental health will supplement the readings and course assignments.

**AGE 562 Global Aging** (3 credits; online)

The rapid, unprecedented aging of the world's populations is resulting in myriad changes that will affect societies, cultures, economies, families, and individuals and their daily lives. Students will learn about broad global trends related to the aging of the world as well as aging in particular countries and regions.

**SW 544/644 Midlife and Beyond** (3 credits; in person)

Focuses on development in mid and late adulthood from a lifespan perspective. Promotes appreciation of the developmental potential for normal and healthy aging. Explores demographic, socio-historical and developmental characteristics of currently emerging older adults. Focuses on current developmental theories in social cognition and identity development in mid and late adulthood.

**SW 574 Social Work with Older Adults** (3 credits)

Mental and physical frailties experienced by older adults are examined for their implications for adaptation and intervention. Mental disorders as they are uniquely characterized in late adulthood are reviewed, with special emphasis on age appropriate assessment. Psychosocial interventions for both community and institutionalized populations will include individual, family, group, and environmental approaches.

**SW 569 Social Work in End of Life & Palliative Care** (3 credits; in person)

Covers a broad range of topics related to social work and end-of-life and palliative care. Addresses: cultural and spiritual dimensions at end-of-life, pain and symptom management, hospice, ethical considerations, practice and policy guidelines, team work, mental health at end-of-life, vulnerable populations and resources available to patients and families.

**USP 585 Housing and Environments for Elderly** (3 credits; in person)

The urban environment as a physical and social context for the diverse lifestyles of its elderly residents. Theoretical approaches to aging and the environment; perception and impact of living environments on older adults. Specific topics include housing and services alternatives, issues in developing, regulating, and managing housing for the elderly, and housing design.