University Studies
Cluster Proposal Cover Sheet
2004-2005

Cluster: Family Studies
Title of course: Social Gerontology
Course Number: PHE 454
Proposing Faculty: Elizabeth Kutra
Cluster Coordinator: Carol Morgaine

Cluster Course to New Cluster
X
Other clusters this course is assigned to:
Healthy People/
Healthy Places

Non 'U' course proposed to Cluster
Removal

UNST Committee-- PASS: Yes [ ] No [ ]
If no, reason:

______________________________

UCC Committee-- PASS: [ ] No [ ]
If no, reason:

______________________________
University Studies
Cluster Course Addition
Adding an already approved “U” course to another cluster

1. COURSE TITLE AND NUMBER: Social Gerontology, PHE 454

PROPOSING FACULTY: Elizabeth A. Kutza, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Community Health

[Signature]

CLUSTER TO BE ADDED: Family Studies

CLUSTER ALREADY APPROVED: Healthy People/Healthy Places

2. AVAILABILITY: This course was developed in the spring of 2002 and offered in the spring term of 2003. It will be scheduled in the spring term of each year.

3. GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS: SUITABILITY & CLUSTER INTEGRITY

Gerontology is an interdisciplinary field that integrates biological, psychological and social theories with a focus on an older person and his/her social environment. Because people age within family structures, considerable attention in the class is given to understanding the role of family in our aging society. Families historically have had an important role as instrumental and emotional supports for their aging family members. But the changing nature of “family” and new demands on younger generations are altering these roles in significant ways. Since aging is also a “women’s” issue, this course deals with the influence that gender has on the aged individual and our aging society. The general educational goals of this course are detailed in the course syllabus.

Chair and Cluster Coordinator Signatures

Department Chair: [Signature] Date: 10-24-03

Cluster Coordinator: [Signature] Date: 10-27-03

Proposing Faculty: Elizabeth A. Kutza, Ph.D.
Course Title and Number: Social Gerontology, PHE 4

Course Approved for Cluster Inclusion

Chair, Cluster Coordinators: ___________________________ Date: ________

Chair, UNST Committee: ___________________________ Date: ________
PHE 454U  
Spring Term

Social Gerontology

Instructor:  Elizabeth A. Kutza, Ph.D., Professor  
Office:  URBN 470
School of Community Health  
Phone:  725-5144
e-mail:  kutzae@pdx.edu

Office Hrs:  Tuesday/Thursday, 10am-11am or by appointment

Class Hrs:  Tuesday/Thursday, 8:00am-9:50am  
Location:  NH 462

Course Description:
This course will address the social and ethical issues, problems, policies, and programs that affect the quality of life for our rapidly aging population. As an interdisciplinary field of study, gerontology offers students the opportunity to integrate biological, psychological, and social theories of aging. This course will also examine the economic and political impacts of an aging society.

Learning Objectives:
1. To increase understanding of the aging process, i.e., changes that occur within the aging individual, how these changes influence interactions with social and physical environments, and how the older person is, in turn, affected by such interactions.
2. To integrate biological, psychological and social theories of aging.
3. To examine how myths about aging take hold in a society and influence the person and their interpersonal relationships.
4. To explore the ethical dilemmas faced within families and in American society as the population ages.
5. To provide a forum for students to explore how politics and policies are shaped by changing demographics.
6. To introduce students to the political economy of aging and how social structures influence personal life chances in late life.

General Educational Goals:

Inquiry and Critical Thinking. In the course of the term, students will be required to critically review two articles from a professional gerontology journal. Using the Article Review Form, students will have the opportunity to synthesize the findings of the research, analyze the methods used by the researcher, and critique the resultant conclusions.

Communication. So as to better understand how a person’s life history shapes his/her old age, each student will be required to interview an older person and write a report of that
interview. As an alternative, students can interview the administrator of a senior citizen social service agency or long-term care facility. In advance of the interview, the class will discuss appropriate interview protocol with an older person, how to plan interview questions and what strategies can help reflect on what is being heard in the interview. An in-class debate and other short written assignments will also have students practicing their oral and written communication skills.

**Human Experience.** In order to sensitize students to some of the common physical problems experienced in late life, simulations of sensory and mobility impairments will be conducted and reflected upon.

**Ethical Issues.** Growing older in the American society of the 21st century is fraught with ethical and social conflicts and controversies. Gerontology provides many fruitful opportunities to discuss such conflicts and controversies. Should we prolong the human life span? Should we ration health care on the grounds of age? Should families provide for their own? Does old age have a meaning? Students will form teams to research and then to debate the pros and cons of a selected number of these controversies. Such debates will not only enhance their experience with teamwork, but also hone their critical thinking, and their capacity to present and argue a position.

**Relevance.** It has been reported that few college students today bother to read newspapers or magazines on a regular basis. Since the media frequently covers issues related to the elderly, it provides a topic that can encourage greater attention to the public media. Students will be asked to keep a “Media Book” of press clippings relevant to the controversies and issues discussed in class. The “Media Book” can even be expanded to include notes about TV programs or other articles obtained from the Internet. This mechanism can stimulate students to see the relevance of classroom learning to current events. Classroom time will be devoted to examining the student’s media books to understand the impact that media stereotyping may have on older persons.

**Expectations for this Class**

**Grading Criteria:**

Class participation—20%
Mid-term examination—15%
Article review—15%
Written interview—20%
Team presentations—10%
Final examination—20%

**Class participation**—Students are expected to be prepared to discuss and apply assigned readings, participate actively in class activities and discussion.

**Article Review**—Select two journal articles and critically analyze their content using an **Article Review Form** to guide your analysis. **Due dates:** April 17th and May 13th.
Written interview—Each student will be responsible for interviewing an older person or a gerontological professional and writing 5-7 page paper detailing the interview/field visit and relating their observations to the class readings. Due Date: May 29th.

Team presentations—Each student will be assigned a team and a topic. Each team will divide in two and select different sides of the controversy to defend in front of the class. Following each debate, the class will critically analyze the presentations reflecting on what was effective and where there could be improvements.

Selection of controversial topics in aging:
- Should health care be rationed on the basis of age?
- Should social security be privatized?
- Should adult children be responsible for nursing home costs of their parents?
- Should the retirement age under social security rise to age 70?
- Does retirement still make sense give increased life expectancy?
- Does age-segregated or age-integrated housing better serve the needs of the elderly?
- Should eligibility for public programs be based on age or need?
- Is there a maximum human life span?
- Should people with moderate cognitive impairments be allowed to live alone?
- Should affluent families be able to use the Medicaid program to protect their inheritance?
- Should inheritance/estate taxes be eliminated?
- Should programs be designed for specific ethnic/racial groups?
- Does old age have meaning?
- Should older people lose part of their social security benefits if they continue working?
- Are women being treated fairly under the social security system?
- Should driving privileges be restricted on the basis of age?
- Should cognitively impaired older persons be allowed to refuse life sustaining treatment?
- Should families be required to impoverish themselves to pay for long-term care?
- Should middle-aged children of infirm parents be encouraged to cut back their work schedule to provide care?

Examinations—Students will be tested on their comprehension of the class materials through a mid-term and final examination.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
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<td>April 1</td>
<td>Aging in American Society: Myths and Reality</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>April 3</td>
<td>Demography of Aging</td>
<td>Barry Edmonston</td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Biology of Aging</td>
<td>Scott Mader, M.D.</td>
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<td>William Schutzer</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>April 10</td>
<td>Psychology of Aging</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
<td>Social Aspects of Aging</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>April 17</td>
<td>Health and Health Care for the Elderly</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>April 22</td>
<td>Long-term Care Options</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>April 24</td>
<td>Family Caregiving</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>April 29</td>
<td>Diversity and Aging</td>
<td>Alice Scannell</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Mid-Term Examination</td>
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<td>May 6</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Aging</td>
<td>Janelle Voegele</td>
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<td>May 8</td>
<td>Economics of Aging</td>
<td>Brenda Sulick</td>
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<td>Supportive Housing/Supportive Neighborhoods</td>
<td>Nancy Chapman</td>
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<td>May 15</td>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
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<td>May 20</td>
<td>Work, Retirement &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>May 22</td>
<td>Programs for the Elderly</td>
<td>Elizabeth Kutza</td>
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<td>May 27</td>
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<td>May 29</td>
<td>The Politics of Aging</td>
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<td>June 3</td>
<td>Spirituality/Ethics</td>
<td>Alice Scannell</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
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<td>Final Examination Week</td>
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Texts:

Reading Assignments:

April 1    Kart & Kinney, Ch. 1 & 2, “The Myths of Aging” and “The Study of Aging”
April 3    Kart & Kinney, Ch. 3, “The Demography of Aging”
April 8    Kart & Kinney, Ch. 5, “Why do People Become Old?”
April 10   Kart & Kinney, Ch. 7, Psychological Aspects of Aging”
April 15   Kart & Kinney, Ch. 8 & 9, “Social Aspects of Aging” and “Sociological Theories of Aging”
April 17   Kart & Kinney, Ch. 4 & 6, “What Are the Results of Aging?” and “Health Status of the Elderly”
April 22   Kart & Kinney, Ch. 17, “Long-Term Care”
April 24   Kart & Kinney, Ch. 10, “Aging and Family Life”
April 29   Kart & Kinney, Ch. 15, “Racial and Ethnic Aging”

May 1      Mid-Term Examination
May 6      Nussbaum, Pecchioni, Robinson & Thompson, _Communication and Aging_, 2nd Ed., Ch. 2 & 3 (available at the Institute on Aging, URBN 470)
May 8      Kart & Kinney, Ch. 11, “The Economics of Aging”
May 13     Kart & Kinney, Ch. 16, Living Environments of the Elderly”

May 16     Class Presentations
May 20     Kart & Kinney, Ch. 12”Work, Retirement, and Leisure”
May 22     Kart & Kinney, Ch. 18, “Health Policy and Aging”

May 27     Class Presentations
May 29     Kart & Kinney, Ch. 13, “The Politics of Aging”
June 3    Kart & Kinney, Ch. 14 & 19, “Religion and Aging” and “Death and Dying”

June 5    Class Presentations