Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Curriculum: Social Work with Older Adults

The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is an interdisciplinary course of study offered through the Institute on Aging within the College of Urban and Public Affairs. The School of Social Work is a member of this consortium of disciplines and offers students the opportunity to obtain a certificate in gerontology studies while pursuing the MSW degree. Students must satisfy the requirements for both the MSW degree and the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, although some of the courses will meet the requirements for both programs. Application to the Certificate program should be made through the Institute on Aging before or during the first term of the student’s MSW program. Applications are available on-line at http://www.pdx.edu/ioa/graduate-certificate-in-gerontology. Please notify Dr. Vicki Cotrell at cotrellv@pdx.edu or Dr. Maria Talbott at talbottm@pdx.edu if you are applying to the program.

Please note that to complete both the MSW and the Certificate simultaneously, the student may need to take more than the 78 credits required by the MSW program. See the course of study.

Some students who are obtaining both the MSW degree and the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology choose to take a few extra courses, so that they can take more social work electives.

Some students may not be able to simultaneously complete both the MSW and the Certificate; they may need an extra term to complete the requirements for the Certificate.

For advising, students who are completing both the MSW and the Certificate in Gerontology programs will need to be in regular contact with either Dr. Cotrell or Dr. Talbott on the social work side. If the student is assigned a faculty advisor other than Dr. Cotrell or Dr. Talbott as their MSW advisor, the student will need to also maintain contact with that assigned advisor. And on the Institute on Aging (IOA) side, the student will need to be in regular contact with the Director of IOA, Dr. Margaret Neal (nealm@pdx.edu) or her designee.

The MSW curriculum is adapted in the following ways for students who are simultaneously pursuing both the MSW and the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology:

1. For all: PHE 558 Perspectives in Aging is taken for three credits towards the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. This course is offered in the fall and is considered the first course in the Certificate program. This course may be used as a free elective in the MSW program of study and is usually taken in the fall of the second year.

2. For all: SW 574 Social Work with Frail Older Adults must be taken. At present this course is usually offered in the fall term only. This course will satisfy the MSW requirements for a concentration-approved advanced practice elective. Please note that beginning in academic year 2012-2013, SW 574 will no longer count as an advanced research elective.

3. For all: SW 544 Advanced Human Behavior: Midlife and Beyond must be taken. This course is offered in the winter or spring term and satisfies the requirement for an advanced HBSE elective for all concentrations for students in the Certificate program. Please note that beginning in academic year 2012-2013, SW 544 will count as both an advanced HBSE elective and an advanced research elective.
4. The Advanced Policy elective is taken from one of the following two courses: PHE 557 National Long-term Care Policy or PHE 559 Economics of Aging. PHE 557 is usually offered in the spring, and PHE 559 is usually offered in the winter. PHE 557 is recommended.

5. An additional elective that is approved by the Institute on Aging. An on-line list of electives that satisfy this requirement and a schedule of offerings are available through the Institute on Aging Website. In addition, the Institute on Aging can determine whether other aging-specific courses may satisfy this requirement. This can be a 3-credit or a 4-credit class and satisfies elective requirements for both the Certificate and the MSW.

This is a partial list of electives that would satisfy this requirement:
- PHE 556 Health Aspects of Aging (4 credits)
- PHE 559 Economics of Aging (3 credits)
- USP 585 Housing Environments for the Elderly (3 credits)
- PHE 560 Mental Health and Aging (3 credits)
- PHE 561 Cultural Variations in Aging
- PHE 510 Families and Aging (3 credits)
- PHE 510 Global Aging and Health (3 credits + optional 3 credits by successful application to Education Abroad for the service learning program in Nicaragua)

There is one social work class that will satisfy this requirement: SW 569, Social Work in End-Of-Life and Palliative Care.

6. An internship is required of students in both programs. The MSW degree requires a more substantial field placement experience than the Gerontology Certificate. To satisfy both programs, the second year of field placement (and preferably both years) must take place in an agency serving primarily older adults. Two credits of that field instruction are counted toward the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. Each program has paperwork requirements prior to and following the internship that the student must complete. For the MSW, the field placement must be made through the Field Education office of the SSW. Students and field instructors must complete and submit the field educational plan, and supervisors must complete the quarterly evaluations and records of hours. These are submitted to the student’s advisor at the SSW.

There is no list of approved internships on the part of the Institute on Aging (IOA); the only requirement is that the placement be in an agency that serves primarily older adults. In general agencies that contain aged, elder or older adults in their titles are acceptable. Other agencies may also serve predominantly older adults, such as Hospice. Contact either Dr. Maria Talbott or Dr. Vicki Cotrell if there is any question about the eligibility of the placement. This should be done as soon as the student becomes aware of a potential placement for the next academic year. Questionable placements will be reviewed for eligibility by the Director of IOA, Dr. Margaret Neal (nealm@pdx.edu).

In addition students must register for one credit for the internship requirement through IOA, which is separate and distinct from any other course work that is taken. Registration is handled through a “By Arrangement” form available in the IOA office. Students register for 1 credit (graded) of PHE 504 with their advisor in the Certificate Program (generally Dr. Neal); usually this credit is taken in spring term.
For the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, a student must obtain, through the IOA website or office, a copy of:

- the Gerontology Certificate Internship Application and Learning Contract
- the Performance Evaluation Form, and
- the “Art of Reflective Practice” document containing the guidelines for the internship experience report.

The Gerontology Certificate Internship Application and Learning Contract should be completed by the student after the student receives notification of their placement. Once the Certificate Internship application is completed, the student should schedule an appointment with the advisor in the Certificate Program to review the plans and the application form and also to review a list of the coursework taken to assure that requirements for the Certificate have been met.

At the end of the final term of the internship (generally spring term), the student is to have her or his field instructor complete a Performance Evaluation Form (see the IOA website). The student should complete the first part of the evaluation listing the activities performed during the internship. The field instructor will then complete the second part of the evaluation, which contains ratings of the student’s performance.

Students must also complete a written report about the internship. The Internship Experience Report (The Art of Reflective Practice) must follow the IOA guidelines regarding content and generally are 8-12 pages in length. Students submit the report and the Performance Evaluation Form and the internship report to the IOA office coordinator.

7. Students entering the MSW program who have obtained the Gerontology Certificate within the last five years can transfer 7-11 credits into the MSW program. The courses that can be credited include PHE 558 Perspectives on Aging and electives approved for the Certificate. Transferred credits will be used to satisfy free elective requirements for the MSW SW 544 Midlife and Beyond and SW 574 Social Work with Frail Older Adults taken for the Certificate before entry into the MSW program can be counted as free electives in the MSW program. They cannot usually be counted as advanced electives if they are taken before the foundation MSW courses.
# SAMPLE COURSE OF STUDY: JOINT MSW AND GERONTOLOGY CERTIFICATE

## First Year (42 credits)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 500 Field Instruction I (4 credits)</td>
<td>SW 500 Field Instruction II (4 credits)</td>
<td>SW 500 Field Instruction III (4 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 530 Generalist Social Work Practice I (3 credits)</td>
<td>SW 531 Generalist Social Work Practice II (4 credits)</td>
<td>SW 532 Generalist Social Work Practice III (4 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 539 Social Justice in Social Work (3 credits)</td>
<td>SW 540 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Micro Theory (3 credits)</td>
<td>SW 541 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Macro Theory (3 credits)</td>
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<td>SW 520 Social Work and Social Welfare Policy (4 credits)</td>
<td>SW 550 Foundation of Social Work Research (3 credits)</td>
<td>SW 551 Data Analysis in Social Work Research (3 credits)</td>
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## Second Year (37 credits)

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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 500 Field Instruction IV (4 credits) within an aging services program</td>
<td>SW 500 Field Instruction V (4 credits) within an aging services program</td>
<td>SW 500 Field Instruction VI (4 credits) within an aging services program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 533 Advanced Practice for Direct Human Services I or SW 536 Advanced Community-Based Practice I or SW 580 Advanced Practice for SSAL (3 credits)</td>
<td>SW 534 Advanced Practice for Direct Human Services II or SW 537 Advanced Community-Based Practice II or SW 581 Advanced Practice for SSAL (3 credits)</td>
<td>SW 535 Advanced Practice for Direct Human Services III or SW 538 Advanced Community-Based Practice III or SW 582 Advanced Practice for SSAL (3 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHE 558 Perspectives in Aging (3 credits)</td>
<td>Advanced HBSE Elective: SW 544 Midlife and Beyond (3 credits)</td>
<td>PHE 557 National Long-term Care Policy (3 credits) or PHE 559 may be taken in winter instead</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 574 SW with Frail Older Adults (3 credits)</td>
<td>PHE 504 Internship Experience credit (1 credit)</td>
<td>SW 569 Social Work in End-of-Life and Palliative Care (3 credits)</td>
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### Note:
A total of 78 credits is required for the MSW degree. With careful planning, students may be able to satisfy the requirements of both the MSW degree and the Certificate in Gerontology with 79 credits. Students may have a 14-credit spring in their second year.