

Gerontology and Aging Studies

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Gerontology and Aging Studies program is designed to encourage and promote a better understanding of lifespan development, aging and the changing nature of older adult services. The program includes options for graduate, traditional undergraduate and non-traditional undergraduate students. Degree options include the undergraduate certificate, the graduate certificate, the undergraduate minor, the Master of Arts Degree, and the Bachelors Degree. An aging emphasis is offered in select other MA programs as well.

What is the signification of the program?

In the next 25 years, the number of older adults in this country will approach or exceed 2.1 million people, nearly double the number in the year 2000. More than ever before, government programs and industries will need more expertise in working with older adults. Ministry programs utilizing the expertise of recently retired individuals, and those serving the needs of the older-old, will become a vital part of the programs and services networks. The Gerontology and Aging Studies program serves professionals who have a heart for older adult services and ministry, as well as those interested in understanding the needs of those in an aging society. The program addresses needs from biological, spiritual, psychological and emotional perspectives with a focus on successful and productive aging.

Who is this program designed for?

Persons who enroll in gerontology courses are typically trainers/educators, ministers, care providers or professionals in health services, however, the program is open to anyone who is interested in working with an older population. We have business professionals, public employees and entrepreneurs who are in the program and interested in developing new programs and services in their areas of interest.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The academic programs will:

- 1) Deliver a high quality course of study that prepares students for service to mature adults in the church and world.
- 2) Provide mentorship and community for students of gerontology.
- 3) Provide students with a working knowledge base of lifespan development, programs, services and issues in aging policy and ministry.
- 4) Offer opportunities for ministry, practice and research related to the student's professional needs and goals.
- 5) Connect and involve students in the aging services networks in church and society.

The specific goals of the academic programs in gerontology are:

- 1) To instruct students about lifespan development and individual aging.
- 2) To prepare students for entrance into service and professions working with mature adults.
- 3) To educate students about an aging society and church as well as the implications that our aging institutions have for ministry, services and policies.
- 4) To encourage and support training, research, programs, services and curricular development in the field of aging.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

The Certificate option offers an intensive 21 credit hour experience that can be completed in one to two years by traditional and non-traditional undergraduate students. Degree programs vary in length from two to four years. One week courses are offered each June and January with post-work (readings, papers and projects) throughout the remainder of the term. On-line and traditional face-to-face courses are offered each quarter of the academic year. Up to six hours of equivalent credit taken at other accredited colleges and universities may be transferred into the program. Graduate students must complete courses at the 500 level.

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRAD CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS **21 HOURS**

Common requirements **12 HOURS**

Gero 400/500 Issues in Gerontology and Aging Studies	
OR Gero/CTA 205 Adult Development and Aging	3
Gero 401/501 Aspects of Health and Aging	3
Gero 402/502 Social Gerontology (Social, Community and Interpersonal Issues in Aging)	
OR Soc 333 Social Gerontology	3
Gero 403/503 Mental Health and Aging	3

Aging Elective(s) **3 HOURS**

Soc 533 Aging and the Family*	
Gero 400/500 Issues in Gerontology and Aging Studies (undergraduate elective)	3
Gero 404/504 Faith/Spiritual Development and Later Life	3
Gero 411/511 History and Literature of Aging	3
Gero 4/512 Life Review, Autobiography and Creative Non-Fiction	3
Gero 413/513 Aging and Communication	3
Gero 414/514 Aging Policy, Programs and Services	3
Gero 415/515 Retirement and Life Span Financial Issues	3
HHP 488 Health Promotion Programming	3
Gero 417/517 Aging and the Brain	3
Gero 418/518 Nutrition and the Older Adult	3
Gero 419/519 Death, Dying and Trauma	3
Gero 498/598 Special Topics in Aging	3

Professional/Content Elective(s) **3 HOURS**

Additional Aging Elective from above OR relevant elective in major field

Application Project **3 HOURS**

Gero 499/599 Practicum (156 hours over the last year of the program)
OR Major/minor based internship/practicum completed with older adults
(Students must complete a practicum equivalent project as part of the internship)

**Undergraduate Credit Only

*Included in either the Family Life Ministry or Religious Education Programs

UNDERGRADUATE MINOR REQUIREMENTS **18 HOURS**

Common requirements **3 HOURS**

Gero/CTA 205 Adult Development and Aging
OR Gero 400 Issues in Gerontology and Aging Studies

Aging Elective(s)—Choose 15 Hours of Gerontology Courses **15 HOURS**

BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE REQUIREMENTS**36 HOURS****Common requirements****18 HOURS**

Gero 205 Adult Development and Aging (pre-requisite for upper level courses)	3
Gero 401 Aspects of Health and Aging	3
Soc 333 Social Gerontology or Gero 402 Social Gerontology	3
Gero 403 Mental Health and Aging	3
Gero 404 Faith/Spiritual Development and Later Life	3
Math 222 Statistics (prior to taking upper level courses)	3

Aging Elective(s)**9 HOURS**

Psy-221 Lifespan Development	3
Gero 400 Issues in Gerontology (recommended if not taken in the core)	3
Gero 411 History and Literature of Aging	3
Gero 412 Life Review, Autobiography and Creative Non-Fiction	3
Gero 413 Aging and Communication	3
Gero 414 Aging Policy, Programs and Services	3
Gero 415 Retirement and Life Span Financial Issues	3
HHP 488 Health Promotion Programming	3
Gero 417 Aging and the Brain	3
Gero 418 Nutrition and the Older Adult	3
Gero 419 Death, Dying and Trauma	3
Gero 498 Special Topics in Aging	3

Professional/Content Elective(s)**6 HOURS**

Additional aging electives from above OR select from lifespan related courses in an area of professional interest including but not exclusive to:

Soc-221 Social Problems	3
Soc-331 The Family	3
Theo 482 Nurturing the Faith	3
Theo 483/583 Sexuality and the Family	3
Theo 487 Planning Adult Education in the Congregation	3
HHP 486 Critical Issues in Health	3
Psych 445 Abnormal Psychology	3
Bio 444 Nutrition	3
HHP 484 Community Health	3
Bio 371 Biology of the Brain	3
HHP 465 Human Diseases	3
Theo 385 Parish Visitation and Evangelism	3
SW 201 Intro to Social Work	3
Theo 485 Family Life Ministry	3

Application Project**3 HOURS**

Gero 499 Practicum (156 hours over the last year of the program)

All students, traditional or degree completion, are required to meet the appropriate general education and credit hour requirements for a bachelor of arts degree from Concordia University, Nebraska.

MASTER'S DEGREE COURSE REQUIREMENTS**33 HOURS****Common requirements****15 HOURS**

Gero 500 Issues in Gerontology and Aging Studies	3
Gero 501 Aspects of Health and Aging	3
Gero 502 Social Gerontology (Social, Community and Interpersonal Issues in Aging)	3
Gero 503 Mental Health and Aging	3
Gero 504 Faith/Spiritual Development and Later Life	3

Aging Elective(s)**12 HOURS**

Soc 533 Aging and the Family*	3
Gero 511 History and Literature of Aging	3
Gero 512 Life Review, Autobiography and Creative Non-Fiction	3
Gero 513 Aging and Communication	3
Gero 514 Aging Policy, Programs and Services	3
Gero 515 Retirement and Life Span Financial Issues	3
HHP 488 Health Promotion Programming	3
Gero 517 Aging and the Brain	3
Gero 518 Nutrition and the Older Adult	3
Psy 570 Professional Ethics*	3
Gero 519 Death, Dying and Trauma	3
Gero 498/598 Special Topics in Aging	3
Educ 545 Lifespan Family Education*	3
Psy 555 Lifespan Development*	3

Up to 9 hours in lifespan studies, public policy or healthcare from other master level programs.

Application Project**6 HOURS**

Gero 599 Gerontology Practicum (registered for twice with same requirements)

Master's degree students must complete no less than 6 exclusively graduate level courses.

MASTERS OF FAMILY LIFE WITH GERONTOLOGY CONCENTRATION**48 HOURS**

Underlined courses are required for the Gerontology track

Required Courses in Family Life

Theo 585 Family Life Ministry	3
Soc 545 – Theology, Theory and Dynamics of Family Relations	3
Psy 546 – Family Dysfunctions – Crisis Intervention,	3
<u>Psy 555 – Lifespan Development</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Soc533 Aging and the family</u>	<u>3</u>
Theo 483 – Sexuality and the Family	3
Psy 545 Foundations of Christian Marriage and Family	3
Family Resource Management	3
Educ 428 – Parent Education	3
Soc 546 – Family Law and Public Policy	3
Psy 570 - Professional Ethics	3
<u>Educ 545 – Lifespan Family Education</u>	<u>3</u>

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Additional Course Requirements in Gerontology

Nine hours of gerontology and aging studies courses.

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Application Project

Educ 597 – Independent Study Practicum (minimum 3 semester credits/125 clock hours)

This course is required as a part of the master's program only for those seeking as a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) with the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). Information on CFLE is located at www.NCFR.org This internship is an elective option in the gerontology track. Gerontology students who complete their practicum in an intergenerational setting may substitute this into the certificate program for Gero 599 Practicum. Students who do not take the practicum are required to take an additional three hour elective in gerontology.

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COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS/TRANSFERS

Official transcripts from all previously attended institutions will be reviewed to determine if a student has completed courses that could be substituted for required core courses. The following guidelines will be used to determine if an equivalent course could transfer and substitute for a required course in the Family Life program. If the course content is equivalent to the Concordia course and is 0-4 years old, it will be accepted as a transfer course that substitutes for a required course. If the course content is equivalent to the Concordia course and is 5-7 years old, it will be accepted as a transfer course that substitutes for a required course AFTER the student has established knowledge of current course content. In most cases, the student will be required to audit the Concordia course for which the transfer course will substitute. Courses over seven years old are not eligible for transfer. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made as determined by the program director.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In order to graduate the student must:

1. Successfully complete all required courses.
2. Submit a graduation application.

GERONTOLOGY AND AGING STUDIES COURSE INFORMATION

Gero/CTA 205 – Adult Development & Aging(UG)

This course provides students with an overview of adult lifespan development from a psychological and communicative perspective, as well as an introduction to aging studies overall. The course is offered as an elective to students in BA programs and to students in gerontology areas.

Gero 4/500 – Issues in Gerontology & Aging Studies

This course provides students with an overview of the field of gerontology, current issues in aging, government policy on aging and research in aging as well as an introduction to careers in aging. Course includes basics of reading and using gerontological research. The course is offered as an elective in select programs and as part of the gerontology and aging studies programs. Offered on-line and in hybrid formats.

Gero 4/501 – Health Aspects of Aging

This course is designed to develop and expand knowledge and skill to understand and address contemporary health issues in aging. The course reviews productive and healthy aging programs, normal aging, age correlated disease and lifespan health. Undergraduate prerequisite is Gero/CTA 205. Online only.

Gero 4/502 – Social Gerontology

Social gerontology is the study of the nonphysical aspects of human aging and includes the psychological, social psychological and social aspects of aging. Social gerontology integrates scientific knowledge about social policy and professional practice into the knowledge base created by basic social scientific research. Course includes a review of principles of gerontological research selecting of topics from ageism, theories of development, family and relational networks, sexuality and gender, retirement and financial issues related to social development, and aging and economics. Topics include: Undergraduate prerequisite is Gero/CTA 205. Online (or for undergraduates as Soc 333 face-to-face in a traditional format)

Gero 4/503 – Mental Health and Aging

This course will provide students with a comprehensive study of mental health issues associated with aging. Issues include: depression, dementia and the management of lifelong conditions in later life. Undergraduate prerequisite is Gero/CTA 205. Online only.

Gero 4/504 – Faith Development & Later Life

This course introduces students to issues, concerns and research in the spiritual development of individuals as they age. The course supplements sociological, biological and psychological theories of lifespan development and explores issues of aging and ministry. Undergraduate prerequisite is Gero/CTA 205. Online only.

Gero/Eng/Hist 4/511 – History and Literature of Aging

This course explores historical, social and literary depictions/understandings of aging in Western and non-Western cultures, with an eye toward a richer understanding of what it means to age in the world today. Offered online and in hybrid formats.

Gero/Eng 4/512 – Life Review, Autobiography and Creative Non-Fiction

This course explores the theoretical concept and value of life review while researching and developing techniques in the writing of autobiography and creative non-fiction. Offered online and in hybrid formats.

Gero/CTA 5/413 – Aging and Communication

This course examines lifespan communication issues including: aging and media, marketing to older adults, lifespan language and communication development, caregiver/receiver communication and intergenerational relationship development. Offered online.

Gero 4/514 – Aging Policy, Programs & Services

This course surveys contemporary policies, programs and services for an aging population. Offered online.

Gero 4/515 & Bus 415 – Retirement & Lifespan Financial Issues

This course explores the impacts of an aging society on financial planning and retirement. Students will study in-depth issues in lifespan financial planning. Offered intensive term.

Gero/Bio 4/517 – Aging and the Brain

This course explores the biological development of the human brain throughout the lifespan and examines the biological changes underlying common age-related neuropathies. (Format to be announced).

Gero 4/518 – Nutrition & the Older Adult

This course examines in depth, the importance of nutrition across the lifespan with specific attention to the particular nutritional needs of older adults. Offered online.

HHP 488 - Health Promotion Programming

This course explores specific health needs of aging individuals and assists students in identifying techniques and strategies used in developing programs for the older adult. The evaluation of programs and the effect upon the older adult will be investigated. (Format to be announced.)

Gero 4/519 – Death, Dying & Trauma

This course examines the processes, theories and responses to individual and collective trauma, the processes and tasks of dying and the issues of death and bereavement. Offered in a seven week, one night weekly term.

Gero 498/598 – Special Topics in Aging

This course examines special issues in aging and gerontology. Topics are specific to the needs of students in the area and expertise of the instructor.

Gero 5/499 – Practicum

The practicum requires students to conduct programmatic research and implement an aging services project in their area of professional interest. Students must interview with and gain permission from the program director before enrolling.

For Non-Gerontology Prefixed Courses (See Graduate Catalog)

Program Application/Planning Document for Gerontology and Aging Studies Certificate Program
(To be completed by the student prior to the completion of 9 hours of coursework.)

(PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

Date: _____

Name: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Address: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Contact: _____

Are you presently enrolled in a degree program (Master or Bachelor)? _____ (yes/no)

Who is your advisor/contact person? _____

If currently enrolled in a degree program, what is that program? _____

In what kind of setting do you hope to complete your practicum? _____

In what kind of setting do you hope to work/continue work when you complete your degree at Concordia?

Number of months/years of relevant work experience/internships/practica? (Volunteer work, jobs or other tasks done primarily with older adults—e.g. senior ministry, nursing home volunteer, CNA, meals on wheels)

Describe your experience with older adults. _____

During which term did you/do you intend to complete each of the following:

<u>Course</u>	<u>Indicate Term (fall/spring/summer) & Year</u>
Gero 400	Issues in Gerontology and Aging _____
Gero 401	Aspects of Health and Aging _____
Gero 402/Soc 333	Social Gerontology _____
Gero 403	Mental Health and Aging _____
Gero 404	Faith Development and Later Life _____
Gero 499 or Internship/Practicum	_____

In which electives are you most interested? _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Return to:

Renea Gernant, Ph.D.
Communication & Aging Studies
Concordia University, Nebraska
Seward, NE 68434

APPENDIX A: Practicum Project (The “Generations” Project)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION – The “*Generations Project*” component of the Concordia University, Nebraska, gerontology program will deepen the understanding of lay leaders, pastors, DCE’s, parish nurses, teachers, case workers and other volunteers as they seek to engage in deliberate ministry/service to older adults. This practicum project seeks to provide theoretically solid, socially relevant, hands-on training to individuals as they

develop healthy aging and elder services in their communities and congregations. The project will be conducted as part of a 156 hour practicum with elders.

HOW THE PROJECT WORKS -- In a prototypical case, a professional becomes involved in the gerontology program and identifies a program or service to implement as part of the “*Generations Project*” requirement. For example, Helen is a trained nurse. She is interested in developing her skills and training in the area of gerontology while seeking a place to serve in her local congregation and community. She seeks a program with an aging ministry focus and enrolls in the program. During her coursework, she is introduced to a variety of programs, services and ministries for older adults. In follow-up to that experience, Helen assesses her own vocational goals and abilities, the services available in her area and the needs of elders around her. Helen determines that elders in her area are in need of a low-income, healthy living program that would assist them in making exercise and nutrition decisions, managing medications and identifying health concerns before they become problematic. As part of her program, Helen chooses courses that would assist her in developing such a program. Helen meets with professionals in her area, the Concordia program director, her employer or a group of interest and creates a plan for a Friday afternoon healthy living workshop to be housed in her congregation. Helen works with the board of elders, area agencies on aging, retired health professionals and colleagues in the Concordia network to implement the program for her local congregation and to keep the program active with the help of others.

SHARING WITH OTHERS – Participants will be required to report to and interact with congregations and community agencies in developing their projects. Each project must network to and register with other agencies as part of the long-term maintenance plan. The Concordia program director will create and maintain a program directory of new and existing programs and services that will be available to congregations, agencies and outside organizations.

GENERATIONS PROJECT OUTLINE:

Program Objective(s)	Annual Activities	Outcomes
Each student conducts an environmental survey and community needs assessment.	<i>Year I (of each project—dates variable)</i>	Productive Aging Groups: Congregational, local and regional services to promote productive aging in congregations or communities (e.g., think tank service projects, intergenerational volunteer projects, visitation ministries, “Senior Gleaners”—food pantries, tutoring programs for children or adults).
Each student identifies projects and electives to provide content knowledge for implementation of program or service	July-September: Participants develop resource portfolios and conduct survey and assessment.	Successful Aging Groups:
Each student completes project proposal and gathering resources for the project implementation.	July-May of Year II: Participants complete content coursework and projects related to their program and service.	Congregational, local and regional services to promote mental, physical, relational and spiritual health (e.g. walking programs/promotions, in-congregation or community center exercise programs, nutrition programs, intergenerational “adoption” and mentoring programs, Laborers for Christ or Community Habitat projects).
Each student begins implementation.	October: Participants interview with program director and file a preliminary proposal for a project.	Educational Programs (Workshops, Courses and Community Fairs):
Each student conducts evaluation and prepares long-term program maintenance plan.	December: Participants finalize project proposal and identify resources for project implementation.	Congregational, circuit, local and regional educational opportunities for mature individuals and their families (e.g., continuing education for mature learners, life review, financial planning, self-care, grief and recovery, discussion groups on issues of aging or the mature mind, end-of-life issues or caregiver education).
	<i>Year II of Each Project</i>	Caregiver, Home and Parish Health Service Programs:
	January-June: Participants implement programs.	Lower cost or volunteer programs and ministries to assist individuals with basic care and/or to support their caregivers (e.g., respite services, volunteer and collaborative health services, health monitoring programs and health fairs, self-care promotions, “call-in and check-up” programs for those living alone).
	June-July: Participants complete program assessments (formative, normative and congregational/community). Participants create long-term maintenance plan.	

Original Programs: Original or expanded services based in the participants professional interests or credentials and designed for mature adults and their families (e.g. design, redesign or reprogramming of a service or product in the participant's field such as providing legal assistance, architectural design for residential housing or church construction, counseling or other health programs with a mature adult focus).