Course Number and Title

GERON 5370/6370; H EDU 5370 - Health and Optimal Aging

Prerequisites

None

Credits

Total Credits: 3

Didactic Credits: 3

Clinical Credits: 0

Meeting Time and Location

This course is fully online and asynchronous.

Academic Terms Offered

Summer, fall

Faculty

Michael Caserta, PhD
5175 College of Nursing
(801) 581-3572
michael.caserta@nurs.utah.edu

Cross Listing

This course is crosslisted as GERON 5370 (Undergraduate) and GERON 6370 (Graduate) as well as H Edu 5370 (both Undergraduate and Graduate). Please be sure you are registered for the right class.
Description

This course will explore the central issues involved in promoting healthful behavior, wellness, and quality of life among people as they age. Its purpose will be to bring together the influences and contributions of theory, research, and practice as they are applied in gerontological health promotion. The course content will be drawn from a variety of knowledge bases including health promotion and wellness programming, the theoretical foundations of behavior change, lifelong learning, gerontological theory, and relevant research findings pertaining to the health and well-being of aging adults. Students also will be exposed to societal issues relevant to gerontological health and wellness. This course is an environment where all identities are respected.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Investigate the risk factors associated with the major health issues experienced by an aging population and their prevalence.

2. Analyze gerontological health and wellness from a contextual perspective.

3. Evaluate the theoretical foundations of health and optimal aging.

4. Identify components of optimal aging and appraise their impact.

5. Apply a variety of conceptual (behavioral) frameworks in facilitating health and wellness as people age.

Required Textbook:


A collection of readings specifically designed for this course consisting of selected journal articles, book chapters, and reports available on designated course modules in Canvas.

PLUS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:


Teaching Methods

Lectures, discussions, assigned readings. Teaching allows me to fulfill what I believe to be a fundamental responsibility of gerontologists: to communicate information to individuals so they can better understand and make informed decisions regarding our aging society. Students should (and I hardly ever use that word) understand the relevance of gerontology to their lives. I also want students to leave this class with an increased appreciation for, and sensing the inherent value in, aging – biological and otherwise. I am a proponent of active learning and use a variety of methods to encourage discussion and interaction on the issues the course presents. Students are also empowered to take responsibility for their own learning and growth instead of regurgitating information on exams. Allowing students to express themselves informally through discussions and other forms of writing affords me the opportunity for a more complete assessment of a student’s ability than would be possible by relying only on a combination of formal examinations.

Evaluation

Evaluation includes the quality and depth of participation in discussions, assigned exercises, and written assignments. On line attendance is gauged by CANVAS analytics, where individual student participation is evaluated by such means as participation in discussion boards and accessing CANVAS modules. Participation may be evaluated in additional ways as specified by the individual faculty’s syllabus. Dismissal from a course and/or the college can result from unprofessional behavior.

Topics

- Course Overview
- Epidemiological Perspectives, Common Aging Health Issues
- Contextual View of Healthy Aging
- Health Promotion Goals & Objectives
- Prevention & Chronic Conditions
- Healthy Aging Programming
- Lifelong Learning Issues
- Health Literacy
- Conceptual Foundations
- Intrapersonal Health Behavior Models
- Social Learning/Cognitive Theory
- Self-Efficacy
- Stages of Change
- Social Networks/Support & Optimal Aging
- Socio-Environmental Factors in Optimal Aging
- Physical Activity
- Nutrition
- Substance Dependency and Medication Management
- Safety Issues
- Mental Health & Wellness
- Stress and Coping in Later Life
- Caregiving and Health
- Sexual Health in Later Life
- Promoting Health and Wellness within a Diverse Aging Society

**Grading Scale**

**Grading Policy:**

A \ 93-100
A- \ 90-92
B+ \ 87-89
B \ 83-86
B- \ 80-82
C+ \ 77-79
C \ 73-76
C- \ 70-72
D+ \ 67-69
D \ 63-66
D- \ 60-62
E \ 0-59

**Grading Criteria**

The grade you earn in this course is based on the points you earn for the assignments. Your final grade will be determined by the percentage of the overall points available in the course, and correspond to the grading scale in the syllabus. You will find that I am not as concerned with assessing your ability to turn things in on time as I am with you understanding the assignments and fulfilling them completely. I will allow you to turn in assignments late, up until the due date of the final, for a one half grade deduction (i.e., an A would earn an A-, a B+ would earn a B).

**Late Submissions & Extra Credit**

Assignments are due the dates and times specified in the syllabus. The course does not have extra credit. You may, however, turn in work after the due date, or re-submit substandard work, for a half-grade deduction (i.e., an A- instead of an A, a B instead of a B+). It is understood that emergencies can arise that may require special arrangements with the instructor. Please make these arrangements before the assigned due date. To receive any partial credit, all work must be turned in by the due date of the final paper.

**Incomplete Policy**

An Incomplete grade can be given for work not completed due to circumstances beyond your control. You must be passing the course and have completed at least 80% of the required
coursework. Arrangements must be made between you and the instructor concerning the completion of the work. You may not retake a course without paying tuition. If you attend class during a subsequent term, in an effort to complete the coursework, you must register for the course. Once the work has been completed, the instructor submits the grade to the Registrar’s Office. The "I" will change to an "E" if a new grade is not reported within one year. If you graduate before a new grade is reported, the "I" remains on your record and will not count towards graduation or the calculation of your grade point average. See http://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/incomplete.php

Plagiarism Software Policy:

I have elected to use a plagiarism detection service in this course, in which case you will be required to submit your paper to such a service as part of your assignment.

Plagiarism Policy:

Refer to UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS - Chapter X - CODE OF STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ("STUDENT CODE") Section I.B.2. “Plagiarism” means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in, or as the basis for, one’s own work offered for academic consideration or credit, or for public presentation. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, representing as one’s own, without attribution, any other individual’s words, phrasing, ideas, sequence of ideas, information or any other mode or content of expression. While students may not realize they are plagiarizing, the consequences may be significant and may affect program progression. The complete University of Utah Code of Student Rights can be found on the University web site, at http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php. The complete College of Nursing Handbook can be found on the College of Nursing website, at http://nursing.utah.edu/pdfs/dnphandbook.pdf. It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with these documents.

Continuing Education Student Requirements

Students seeking to earn a Gerontology Certificate of Completion (whether as a matriculated student or through Continuing Education) must demonstrate a body of knowledge and skill set commensurate with the Gerontology Interdisciplinary Program (GIP). As such, all Gerontology Certificate students should be advised of the following standards:

- Attendance and active participation in each course is an expectation. Course faculty and academic advisors from Student Services track both attendance and participation for all students. On line attendance is gauged by CANVAS analytics, where individual student participation is evaluated by such means as participation in discussion boards and assigned on-line groups. Participation may be evaluated in additional ways as specified by the individual faculty’s syllabus.
- Although Continuing Education certificate students are not required to take quizzes or tests, they are expected to complete all of assigned reading in the course in order to participate in class discussion in a meaningful and informed way.
Syllabus Changes:

This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced and posted on Canvas under Announcements.

Online Guidelines

There are unique responsibilities that come with taking an online course.

Electronic or Equipment Failure

It is your responsibility to maintain your computer and other equipment needed to participate in online forums. **Equipment failures are not an acceptable excuse for late or absent assignments, quizzes, or exams.**

Computer Literacy

You will need to gain access to a computer and to the Internet at least twice a week, as well as to MS Word®, & PowerPoint®. It is assumed that you have a basic knowledge of computers, including but not limited to how to navigate the Internet, attach a document to an email and send the email with the attachment, and use basic software packages (e.g. MS Word®).

Assignment Archiving

To prevent problems involving corrupt or lost files, each assignment should be saved in at least two places (e.g. on hard and flash drive; and on drive or as attachment to an email message you send to yourself). Each student is responsible for making sure assignments (including attachments) are submitted before the deadline, via the Assignment Dropbox, using the requested software in the required version, with the required extension. This generally means a MS Word® (.doc or .docx) or MS PowerPoint® (.ppt or .pptx) files.

Naming Files for Submission

When submitting individual assignments, name files with your last name followed by an underscore and the assignment name(e.g., Harrison_endnote1.docx). **Do not put spaces in the file names** as Canvas inserts a %20 where the space is and may lead to assignment confusion. **Incorrectly named files will not be accepted and returned ungraded.**

Classroom Equivalency

Discussion threads, e-mails, and chat rooms are all considered to be equivalent to classrooms, and student behavior within those environments shall conform to the Student Code. Specifically:

- Posting photos or comments that would be off-topic in a classroom are still off-topic in a discussion thread.
• Off-color language is never appropriate.
• Using angry or abusive language is called "flaming", is not acceptable, and will be dealt with according to the Student Code.
• Do not use ALL CAPS, except for titles, since it is the equivalent of shouting online, as is overuse of certain punctuation marks such as exclamation points !!!! and question marks ????.
• E-mail, e-journals, and other online communications in the course are part of the classroom and as such, are University property and subject to GRAMA regulations and the Student Code. Privacy regarding these communications between correspondents must not be assumed and should be mutually agreed upon in advance, in writing.
• Instructors are required to respond to e-mails in a “reasonable” amount of time. If you have not received a reply to an email communication within 3 business days (Monday through Friday), please contact the instructor again - emails occasionally do not reach the intended recipient.
• Many students learn better by using computers during synchronous sections of class. However, when used for non-class purposes they can distract fellow students and/or the instructor. Therefore, laptops/tablets/smartphones may be used in this class only for class information. If a laptop/smartphone is used for non-class purposes, your privilege may be revoked for the balance of the semester.

Email Correspondence

• Email communication is the official communication medium of the University. Faculty will respond to your email correspondence within 3 business days (i.e. Monday through Friday) and expect that students will respond to faculty email correspondence in the same time frame. Please re-send your email and/or contact faculty by phone if you do receive a response to your email within these parameters.
• Faculty expects that students will check their Canvas email at least three times per week.
• Students can email faculty through our Canvas email.
• Electronic communication etiquette includes respectfully addressing the recipient of the email and use of appropriate font (use of all caps, all bolded, or all italicized font is equivalent to yelling or ‘flaming’ and is unacceptable). Please write out all words. The use of acronyms may lead to misinterpretation. If you are uncertain of your electronic communication, please speak directly with me.

Faculty Responsibilities

Your faculty will:

• Treat students with respect
• Inform students at beginning of class of general content, course activities, evaluation methods, grading, and schedule
• Convene scheduled classes unless valid reason and notice are given to students
• Respond to email correspondence and phone calls in a timely manner*
• Perform high quality, constructive evaluations of written work and exams
• Return evaluations in a timely manner
• Make every effort to ensure an environment that is conducive to learning
• Enforce student code

**ADA - Nondiscrimination and Disability Access Statement**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. Reasonable prior notice is needed to arrange accommodations. Evidence of practices not consistent with these policies should be reported to the University’s ADA/Section 504 Coordinator: Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 201 S. Presidents Cr., Rm 135, Salt Lake City, UT. 84112. (801)581-8365 (V/TDD).

**Faculty and Student Responsibilities**

“All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.”

“Faculty…must strive in the classroom to maintain a climate conducive to thinking and learning.” PPM 8-12.3, B.

“Students have a right to support and assistance from the University in maintaining a climate conducive to thinking and learning.” PPM 8-10, II. A.

**Writing**

Your writing is expected to be professional and of scholarly quality. If you think your writing may be sub-par, please seek help at the [Writing Center](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/) on University Campus. Their motto is, “You can become a better writer, right here, right now.”

APA: Some graduate (6370) assignments are required to be submitted in APA format, as specified. If you are unfamiliar with APA formatting, please contact the Writing Center, and/or go to this link: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/). Additional APA resources can be found in [Course Resources](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).

**Wellness Statement**

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness - [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu); 801-581-7776.
Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Veteran's Statement

If you are a student veteran, I want you to know that the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center on campus. They are located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/ (Links to an external site.). Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.

LGBT Resource Center

If you are a member of the LGBTQ community, I want you to know that my classroom is a safe zone. Additionally, please know that the U of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: http://lgbt.utah.edu (Links to an external site.). Please also let me know if there is any additional support you need in this class.

Learners of English as a Second Language

If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language development and writing. These resources include: the Department of Linguistics ESL Program (Links to an external site.); The Writing Center (Links to an external site.); The Writing Program (Links to an external site.); the English Language Institute (Links to an external site.). Please let me know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

Student Names & Personal Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name as well as “Preferred first name” (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account). While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class, on papers, exams, etc. Please advise me of
any name or pronoun changes (and update CIS) so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronoun will be respected.

Course Assignments

Discussion Topics (4)

The Discussion area is a great way to share your thoughts and reactions to reading assignments and other class materials. The discussion topics also encourage student interaction. You are expected to participate in discussion postings about eight times over the semester. A topic or question will be initiated by the instructor at the beginning of selected 2-week periods throughout the term. You will need to reply in a substantive manner to this posting with your opinion and read your classmates responses. These postings are intended to encourage independent thought about important health and aging issues. You are also required to read your classmates responses and reply accordingly. Periodically go back to the active discussion topic and read your classmates responses and you can reply again if you wish. PLEASE keep the Required Discussion responses separate from the Questions, Comments, Concerns discussion board by selecting the proper topic to post under. You can post messages relevant to the class, but not related to the discussion starter, in the Questions, Comments, Concerns category. The postings in any discussion topic category will be accessible for weeks stated only. At that time (typically around noon Mountain Time) that topic will close. The same procedures will be followed for each topic throughout the term.

Theory Application Exercises (2)

The series of Theory Application Exercises (2 total) will be due at specified times throughout the term. The purpose of these exercises is to demonstrate how the conceptual models that are covered in the lessons and readings are applied to practical health and wellness scenarios encountered in gerontological health promotion. Written assignments are submitted via the Assignment tab. Exercise #1: Demonstrate how a contextual view of healthy aging provides an understanding of a health outcome of your interest (e.g., cardiovascular health, cancer prevention, management of a chronic condition such as diabetes, arthritis, or others, or mental/emotional wellness). Address the eight main components of a contextual view of healthy aging in your application. Exercise #2: Create a Fact Sheet intended for an older audience that provides health information pertaining to the importance of a preventive or protective health behavior (e.g. exercise, proper nutrition, falls prevention, cancer screening, etc.). An intrapersonal health behavior model (Health Belief Model, Theory of Reasoned Action, or Theory of Planned Behavior) must guide the presentation of the information while also taking into account how relevant features of adult learning and cognitive development guide the way information is presented (e.g. font size, color, spacing, etc.). Include a 1-2 page write-up explaining how the features of your chosen model guided the way the information on the fact sheet is presented.

Book Report
Each student is required to read and prepare a synthesis on one of the following selections: •


The book synthesis should be 5-6 pages (typed, double-spaced). Please use the following guidelines as you prepare your report:

1. Give a brief summary of the book, focusing on the key features or themes (1-2 pages).

2. How does the material in the book add to our understanding of healthy and optimal aging?

3. Did you feel the author presented sufficient evidence to support his point of view? Why or why not?

4. Did this book change (or reaffirm) your own personal ideas about aging? In what way?

5. What new questions or ideas were stimulated for you by the book that you would like to know more about?

Your grade will be determined by how well you demonstrate your understanding of the material in the book, how well you organize and present your analysis, and your ability to write coherently and concisely.

Final Project

Each student will be required to complete a final project, designing a prevention or wellness program targeting a particular health problem or issue among the older population. The paper should include a brief review of the relevant literature with special emphasis on prevalence and risk factors, when applicable, and/or the need for the program. Following the review, the paper must delineate a program that addresses the need that has been identified. It is important that the program be supported by the literature and grounded conceptually (more than one theoretical model can be drawn upon, if appropriate). Paper should be 10-15 pages typed, double-spaced. APA referencing format is required for graduate students (anyone registered for 6370).

Course Evaluations

Please fill out the end-of-semester course evaluations. I highly value student feedback and use it to make changes to the course. Thank you for your time and effort in this regard.