

GERONTOLOGY

Interdepartmental Undergraduate and Graduate Minors and Graduate Degree Programs

The gerontology program is designed for students interested in improving their understanding of adult development and aging across contexts and desiring careers in a variety of aging-related fields. Graduates understand the ways in which individual and societal aging influence, and are impacted by, developments in their major field of study. They have an appreciation and understanding of the interdisciplinary aspects of human aging.

Undergraduate

Undergraduate students may elect to minor in Gerontology, complementing their major. Courses prepare students to apply aging-related expertise to their field of study.

Graduate

Students enrolled in the on-campus master's and doctoral programs are able to choose a home department in any unit across campus including, but not limited to Design, Human Development and Family Studies, Kinesiology, Political Science, School of Education, and Sociology. Students take courses and engage in research and outreach to develop the necessary interdisciplinary breadth which, in combination with other disciplinary training, can prepare them for diverse career pathways. Students work with their Major Professor and Program of Study Committee members to chart a course of study. Current Iowa State graduate students can enroll in the Gerontology graduate minor.

Students enrolled in the online graduate certificate and master's programs take courses from experts across partnering institutions to prepare them for translational and applied positions in the field of aging. The program is designed to be flexible and meet student needs.

Undergraduate Study

Undergraduate study in this program provides the student with an opportunity to develop a minor in gerontology. A balanced grouping of courses assists the student in developing both a sensitivity to the issues and the ability to synthesize ideas from the variety of disciplines important to the study of the aging process.

Minor

Undergraduate students may minor in gerontology by taking 16 semester hours of gerontology related courses. Nine of these credits must come from the following courses:

GERON 3730	Death as a Part of Living	3
GERON 3770	Aging and the Family	3
GERON 3780	Retirement Planning and Employee Benefits	3

Students will participate in a prepracticum seminar, GERON 4660 Gerontology Prepracticum Seminar, and will complete a supervised field practicum after all gerontology coursework is completed (GERON 4670 Gerontology Practicum). A minimum of 3 semester credits must be selected from a list of supportive gerontology related courses. Supportive courses include units or topics related to aging and can be used to complement the student's major interests. The minor must include at least 9 credits that are not used to meet any other department, college, or university requirement. The student's minor program must be approved by the undergraduate gerontology coordinator.

Graduate Minor

A graduate minor in Gerontology is available to any current ISU graduate student and consists of a minimum of 12 credits taken from a list of acceptable courses, and from at least two departments. Nine of the 12 credits must be in courses that are focused specifically on aging. One 5900 course (3 credits maximum) can be taken as part of the 12 credits. At least one member of the Gerontology faculty will be on a student's Program of Study Committee.

On-Campus Programs

Our on-campus Gerontology master's and doctoral degree programs are interdepartmental in nature. This means students receive content and training in Gerontology as well as a complementary discipline. We believe an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach allows students to enhance their experiences, training, and skills and ultimately their marketability and career success. Students work with their Major Professor and committee members to craft a program of study which encompasses core Gerontology and home department curriculum while fitting the unique needs of the student.

Online Programs

Iowa State University offers a Master's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences with specialization in Gerontology. This is an interinstitutional online program offered through the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (or GPIDEA). The student selects a home institution (Iowa State), which ultimately grants the degree. After admission to Iowa State, the student takes courses from Iowa State and the other participating institutions North Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas Tech University, and University of Arkansas.

The master's degree consists of 36 credits, 24 required credits and 12 elective credits (<https://online.hs.iastate.edu/graduate-degrees/gerontology/.html>). This program does not require a thesis.

Graduate Certificate

The 15-credit Graduate Certificate in Gerontology (<https://online.hs.iastate.edu/graduate-degrees/gerontology/>) is offered completely online through the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (or GPIDEA). The student selects a home institution (Iowa State), which ultimately grants the certificate. After admission to Iowa State, the student takes courses from Iowa State and the other participating institutions North Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas Tech University, and University of Arkansas. This is a stand-alone graduate certificate available to any student with a bachelor's degree.

Courses primarily for undergraduates:

GERON 2340: Adult Development

(Cross-listed with HDFS 2340).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Prereq: PSYCH 2300 or HDFS 1020

Introductory exploration of the health, individual and social factors associated with adult development including younger adulthood, middle age and older adulthood. Information is presented from a life-span developmental framework. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 3730: Death as a Part of Living

(Cross-listed with HDFS 3730).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Prereq: HDFS 1020

Consideration of death in the life span of the individual and the family with opportunity for exploration of personal and societal attitudes.

(Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 3770: Aging and the Family

(Cross-listed with HDFS 3770).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Interchanges of older adults and their families. Emphasis on role changes, social interaction, and independence as influenced by health, finances, lifestyles, and community support. (Typically Offered: Fall, Summer)

GERON 3780: Retirement Planning and Employee Benefits

(Cross-listed with HDFS 3780).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Prereq: 3 credits in ECON, HDFS, or FIN

Financial needs analysis for retirement, characteristics of employer-sponsored and individual retirement plans, tax implications of retirement plans, Social Security funding and benefits, strategies for meeting varying retirement needs in a diverse society, financial counseling and planning practice, and overview of employee benefits. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 4660: Gerontology Prepracticum Seminar

Credits: 1. Contact Hours: Lecture 1.

Prepracticum training for students planning a gerontology practicum. Exploration of possible agencies for the practicum, in-depth study of a selected agency, and development of goals and objectives for the practicum. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 4670: Gerontology Practicum

Credits: 3-6. Repeatable.

Supervised field experience related to aging. Offered on a satisfactory-fail basis only. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 4900: Independent Study

Credits: 1-30.

Prereq: Instructor Permission for Course

Consult program coordinator for procedure. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

Courses primarily for graduate students, open to qualified undergraduates:

GERON 5010: Seminar

Credits: 1-30. Contact Hours: Lecture 30.

Repeatable.

(Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 5010J: Gerontology Seminar: Gerontechnology

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Gerontology Seminar: Gerontechnology. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 5010M: Gerontology Seminar: Spiritual & Aging

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Gerontology Seminar: Spiritual & Aging. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 5100: Survey of Gerontology

Credits: 1-3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Repeatable.

Provides an overview of important gerontological issues. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 5210: Biological Principles of Aging

(Dual-listed with BIOL 4210). (Cross-listed with EEOB 5210).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Basic biological principles of aging. Course modules include an introduction to the aging process, body systems and normal aging, and environment and the biology of aging. In addition, disorders and diseases of aging, prevention and treatment and exercise and aging topics will be covered. (Typically Offered: Summer)

GERON 5220: Long-Term Care

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Administration principles involved in the planning, organizing and directing of long-term care agencies. Includes an in-depth exposure to federal and state standards and regulations governing long-term care. (Typically Offered: Fall)

GERON 5230: Mental Health and Aging

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Introduction to the range of issues involved in aging and mental health. From a systems framework the major emotional and psychiatric problems encountered in old age will be examined including mood, anxiety, adjustment and personality disorders, dementia, cognitive problems, substance abuse, and suicide. Barriers to treatment and cohort and cultural issues will be explored. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5240: Cognitive Health

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Cognitive skills form the foundation for functioning in everyday life and these skills take on added importance in older adulthood. This course focuses on selected theoretical approaches and current research related to cognitive aging. We will review normative and non-normative cognitive changes, assessment techniques, and prevention/intervention efforts. Throughout the course we will keep the role of environment and life-span implications in the forefront of our discussion. (Typically Offered: Summer)

GERON 5300: Perspectives in Gerontology

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5300).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Overview of current aging issues including theory and research, critical social and political issues in aging, the interdisciplinary focus of gerontology, career opportunities, and aging in the future. (Typically Offered: Fall)

GERON 5310: Foundations in Integrative Aging Studies

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Introduction to foundational concepts in the interdisciplinary field of aging studies, including: core theories of adult development and aging how to be critical consumers of aging research; developing writing and other professional skills; and exploring career options in aging. Offered even-numbered years. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5340: Adult Development

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5340).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Exploration of the biological, psychological and social factors associated with aging. Although the focus is on the later years, information is presented from a life-span developmental framework. Empirical studies are reviewed and their strengths, limitations and implications for normative and optimal functioning are discussed. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5400: Nutrition and Physical Activity in Aging

(Cross-listed with DIET 5400).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

WWW only. Basic physiologic changes during aging and their impacts in health and disease. The focus will be on successful aging with special emphasis on physical activity and nutrition. Practical application to community settings is addressed. (Typically Offered: Fall)

GERON 5450: Economics, Public Policy, and Aging

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5450).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Policy development in the context of the economic status of the older adult population. Retirement planning and the retirement decisions; social security and public transfer programs; intra-family transfers to/from the aged; private pensions; financing medical care; prospects and issues for the future. (Typically Offered: Fall)

GERON 5630: Environments for the Aging

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5630).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Emphasis on independent living within residential settings including specialized shelter, supportive services and housing management. Application of criteria appropriate for accessibility and functional performance of activities; universal design principles. Creative project provides service learning opportunities. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5710: Design for All People

(Cross-listed with ARCH 5710).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Principles and procedures of inclusive design in response to the varying ability level of users. Assessment and analysis of existing buildings and sites with respect to standards and details of accessibility for all people, including visually impaired, mentally impaired, and mobility restricted users. Design is neither a prerequisite nor a required part of the course. Enrollment open to students majoring in related disciplines. Credit counts toward fulfillment of History, Theory, Culture requirements. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5770: Aging in the Family Setting

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5770).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Theories and research related to personal and family adjustments in later life affecting older persons and their intergenerational relationships. Related issues including demographics also are examined through the use of current literature. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5840: Program Evaluation and Research Methods in Gerontology

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5840).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Overview of program evaluation, research methods, and grant writing in gerontology. Includes application of quantitative and qualitative methods in professional settings. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5890: Systems Neuroscience: Brain, Behavior, and Nutrition-Related Integrative Physiology

(Cross-listed with FSHN 5890/ NUTRS 5890/ NEURO 5890/ PSYCH 5890).

Credits: 2. Contact Hours: Lecture 2.

Structural, functional, and biochemical aspects of brain and non-motor behavior across the human lifespan. Types of neuroimaging used to assess the brain. Current research is leveraged to gauge how nutrition, diseases related to nutrition, and associated physiological processes influence the brain, particularly for common developmental, psychological, and neurological disorders. (Typically Offered: Spring)

GERON 5900: Special Topics

Credits: 1-30. Repeatable.

Prereq: Instructor Permission for Course

Consult program coordinator for procedure. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 5910: Internship

Credits: 1-9. Repeatable, maximum of 9 credits.

Prereq: Instructor Permission for Course

Supervised experience in an area of gerontology. (Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

GERON 5940: Professional Seminar in Gerontology

(Cross-listed with HDFS 5940).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

An integrative experience for gerontology students designed to be taken near the end of the degree program. By applying knowledge gained in earlier coursework, students will strengthen skills in ethical decision-making behavior, applying these skills in gerontology-related areas such as advocacy, professionalism, family and workplace issues. Students from a variety of professions will bring their unique perspectives to bear on topics of common interest. (Typically Offered: Summer)

GERON 5990: Creative Component

Credits: 1-30. Repeatable.

Prereq: Instructor Permission for Course

(Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)

Courses for graduate students:

GERON 6300: Theories of Aging

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Historical, contemporary, and interdisciplinary basis of aging theory. Biological, psychological, sociological, and human developmental conceptualizations of aging will be critically assessed. Emphasis will be placed on conceptual models, as well as theoretical development and application within gerontological research and the field of aging. (Typically Offered: Summer)

GERON 6350: Adult Development, Aging, and Health

(Cross-listed with HDFS 6350).

Credits: 3. Contact Hours: Lecture 3.

Review of the impact of the growing older adult population as well as individual development and aging on individuals, families, and society. Exploration of theoretical perspectives applied to adult development and aging and distinction of normative and non-normative changes in adulthood. Discussion of methods to assess development across adulthood and consideration of the role of individual and environmental factors impacting efforts to optimize adult development. Offered odd-numbered years. (Typically Offered: Fall)

GERON 6990: Research

Credits: 1-30. Repeatable.

Prereq: Instructor Permission for Course

(Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer)