Academic Unit: School of Nursing
Course Prefix: NUR 321
Course Title: Gerontology
Term Offered: Summer, Fall and Spring
Credit Hours/Clock Hours: 3 credits theory/45 clock Hours
Course Prerequisite: Admission to the nursing program.
Co-requisites:
Mode of Instruction: Online
Instructor Name:
Instructor Contact Information:
Instructor Availability:

Catalog Description
Explores beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes about the elderly. Includes theories of aging, normal aspects and changes, ethical issues, and successful aging through interdisciplinary health promotion and risk reduction strategies.

Course Purpose
This first year nursing course fulfills the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) competencies for nursing care of the older adult and is a foundation course for the student’s future nursing education and practice. The older adult population is increasing dramatically and so is the demand for geriatric nursing. This course will provide nursing students the needed platform to review aging theories and research frameworks to informed practice and enable students to provide the necessary geriatric care for the nation’s aging population.

This is a didactic course for the knowledge development of advocacy and competence in the care of the aging adult. Through a life review with an aging adult, group discussions, and review of current literature and research, students will develop communication skills, be introduced to leadership skills, establish health equity professional values and accountability, and gain knowledge regarding social justice for the aging population. The successful student will focus on variations in older adults with respect to communication and sensory and motor deficits with an emphasis on the importance of promoting safety among older adults.
Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the successful student:

Clinical Practice and Prevention
- Demonstrate the range of knowledge necessary to identify the nursing role and design responses in caring for the older adult and their caregivers.

Communication
- Demonstrate individualized, clear, effective, respectful and compassionate communication with older adults and their caregivers to overcome potential sensory, language and cognitive limitations.

Critical Reasoning
- Integrate multiple ways of knowing in understanding care of the older adult.
- Identify aging theories and research frameworks to inform practice and be able to make clinical judgments.

Professionalism and Professional Values
- Demonstrate professional values and accountability through the affective characteristics of caring with compassion, competence, confidence, conscience, commitment and comportment

Leadership
- Identify the opportunities for nurses to take a leadership role in creating environments that support older adults.

Global Health
- Examine the impact of health equity and social justice on nursing the older adult.

Course Structure/Approach
This course is a theory course (3 credits). This course addresses theoretical and practice issues related to gerontological care of the older adult. This course uses a variety of approaches to support the students’ meeting the student learning outcomes. These instructional methods include, but are not limited to: lecture (written), discussion, written assignments, and audio-visual materials.

Textbook and required materials


*There will also be links to internet sites and media that you will be expected to use.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
**Method** | **Points**
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Online Discussions/quizzes | 45 points
Older Adult Life Review | 45 points
Self-Reflection/Insights | 10 points
**TOTAL** | **100 points**

**Grading System (no rounding of points)**

A = (93% -100%)
B = (84% - 92%)
C = (78% - 83%)
F = (<78%)

A grade of “C” (78 points) or above is a passing grade in this course. All assigned course work must be completed to receive a passing grade.

**Communication:**

All course related email and communication is to be done through the Blackboard Learn course. In case of Blackboard Learn outage, use faculty’s NAU email address. Your faculty member will be checking into the online classroom at least 3 days a week and will respond to questions Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Responses should not be expected overnight, weekends, or on university holidays. If you would like to set up a telephone conference call, please send a course message through the Blackboard Learn course of your available times and something will be set up that is mutually convenient.

**Late Assignment Policy:**

Faculty understands that sometimes life gets in the way; it is hard balancing school, work, and family. In general, late postings are not allowed without penalty (that is not fair to everyone who posted on time). However, if there is an issue going on in your life of a very serious or emergent nature, it may be possible to negotiate an alternate due date if prior communication and arrangements are made with your faculty. Please do not choose to simply not participate in the discussions/blogs. Your instructor wants you to be successful in your academic endeavors if that is what you want. It is the student’s responsibility to communicate if there is an emergent or ongoing problem and special deadline adjustments need to be considered.

**COURSE OUTLINE** (Spring Break, March 19-25, is not counted as a course week in the outline below.)

**Module I The Older Adult:**

Weeks 1-2
- Demographics of aging
- Positive aging
- Attitudes; Values; Stereotypes of aging
- Ageism
- Communication, Transitions, and Caregiving

**Module II Physiological/Psychosocial Aspects of Aging:**

Weeks 3-5
Physiological aging; Normal changes
Chronic disorders in late life
Psychosocial aspects of aging

Module III: Issues in Aging:
Weeks 6-7
Social aspects of aging
Successful aging
Promoting safety
Goals of health promotion

Weeks 5-7
Older Adult Life Review

Week 8
Life Review Self Reflections/Insights

QUIZZES: (5 points + 2 bonus points possible)
Five quizzes (valued at one point each) have been created to help you master the very basic APA formatting that is required in all your written submissions. Each quiz can be taken as many times as necessary to obtain a score of 100%. Once 100% is achieved, the quiz point will be awarded. The quizzes may be taken at your convenience, but the deadline for their completion is Monday, Nov. 6, midnight.

Two quizzes (valued at one BONUS point each) have been created to help you review the content of Lessons 7 and 8 since there are no discussions associated with these lessons. Each lesson’s quiz will display only the week of the assigned lesson (Weeks 6 and 7). Each quiz may be taken twice. Your highest score will be recorded. A quiz score of 0.7 and above will be awarded 1 Bonus Point.

DISCUSSIONS: (40 points - Weeks 1-5)
Discussion Grading Criteria (8 points for each of 5 graded discussions):
- All discussions are designed to take place over one week (Monday through Sunday).
- It is expected that initial contributions to the discussion will occur earlier in the week, and no later than Thursday, midnight.
- Following the initial post, a minimum of two response posts over two different days are due by Sunday, midnight.
- Students may "work ahead" and submit initial posts early.
- Submission of the initial post after its Thursday midnight due date will be penalized for lateness (0.5 point if late 1 hour or less; 1 point for lateness greater than 1 hour) but accepted for grading for the next 24 hours.
- Submission of a response post after the Sunday midnight due date will be penalized for lateness (0.5 points) but accepted for grading until Monday 10am.
- Initial posts are weighted at 5 points, response posts at 1.5 points each.
- Without an initial post, response posts will not be graded.

Rubric for Discussion Grading:
Score of 7.5 – 8 (approx. 93 - 100%) OUTSTANDING  (The following descriptors apply.)
Student contributions are prompt and relevant. The initial post is engaging, scholarly, and substantive with meaningful reflection on the presented topics. Responses are in-depth, thoughtful, and substantive. All postings (initial and response posts) are supported with references to the text or other assigned learning materials. The reader is convinced the student has read or viewed the assigned learning materials, understands the presented concepts, and is able to apply the content. Student participates in the discussion twice during the online week, on different days following specific discussion rules of engagement as outlined in the Online Discussion Overview document. Basic APA, spelling, and grammar rules are followed. Page numbers are always included in the in-text reference whether it is for a quote or a paraphrase.

Score of 6.75 – 7.25 (approx. 84 - 92%): GOOD  (The following descriptors may apply.)
Student keeps up with the discussion although may need occasional prompting or clarification of postings. Participation shows an understanding of the content; however skills are at a more basic level. Responses demonstrate active discussion as engaging, but rationale is not clearly supported with reading evidence and referencing. Online participation meets rules of engagement for the course. Minor issues with APA, spelling, grammar or writing style are evident.

Score of 6.25 – 6.5 (approx. 78 - 83%): ACCEPTABLE  (The following descriptors may apply.)
Student comments are short and perfunctory or do not add much to the conversation/collegial dialogue; postings demonstrate only a shallow grasp of the material. Comments are not supported with references or reading application. Major issues with APA, spelling, grammar or writing style are evident; readability of work is affected. Online participation meets only minimal rules of engagement for the course.

Score of 6 or less (approx. 77% and below: WEAK/VERY WEAK  (The following descriptors may apply.)
Student does not participate in a required discussion during the assigned on-line week, and comments have minimal substance, such as comments limited to “I disagree” or “Good point.” Contributions reflect only personal or anecdotal experience with no clear evidence of readings and or scholarly references as per directions. Postings are illogical. Student postings are only one day of the online week and/or all postings are on the last online day.

Score of 0: FAIL  (This score is given should any of the following descriptors apply.)
No posts submitted. Student posts are made after the allowed timeframes without prior communication or permission from instructor. There is no initial post.

OLDER ADULT LIFE REVIEW ASSIGNMENT:  (45 points – Weeks 5-7)
This assignment will recap your interview with a person at least 70 years of age (69 is not acceptable). Content is divided into three parts and will be submitted via the course Discussion Board.

You should spend three or four interview sessions with this person beginning to know them and developing a relationship. You must inform this person that you are
completing a school project and that although you will be discussing your conversations you will not identify them by any identifying information. Please use initials or first name only (may not be the person’s real name) for all interview summary submissions. You may use a family member.

The purpose of the assignment is twofold. One is for you to complete a thorough life review of an older adult and share your findings with your colleagues as you go through the interview process. A second purpose is for you to actively participate in one another’s life reviews, providing input on the subject matter based on the content provided, course readings, and discussions, and experiencing the richness of each other’s older adult’s lived experiences.

Both your presentation of the life review and your participation in your peers’ presentations are awarded points. If, as you read the post of a peer, not all content areas are covered adequately and you have additional questions, or when you have a meaningful comment to make, this is where some of the participation points are awarded.

All questions that are posed to you in response to your Life Review postings should be addressed. There are no minimum number of questions, thoughts, or response postings. This assignment is an exchange of ideas with the goal of a high level of conversation or dialog.

There are 10 points allotted as participation points over the course of the Life Review Assignment (5 points each for Parts I and II). These points are awarded for active participation in the discussion throughout the week, in both your submission (answering questions posed to you) and in participating in your colleagues’ submissions.

The initial submission for the Life Review Part I is due Wednesday, midnight of Week 5, and Life Review Part II’s submission is due Wednesday, midnight, of Week 6. Meaningful participation in your colleagues’ posts is expected by Friday, midnight, of Week 5 for Life Review Part I and Friday, midnight, of Week 6 for Life Review Part II.

Questions posed by faculty or peers regarding your initial post can be addressed at any time, but no later than Sunday, midnight, of each submission week.

Life Review Part III submission is due Wednesday, midnight, of Week 7. Though you are welcome to respond to your peers' posts, there are no participation points assigned to Part III of the Life Review.

All initial Part I, II, and III submissions should thoroughly address the interview topics, be well-written, containing minimal grammar, spelling or punctuation errors, and should contain referencing in APA format supporting submission content. Points will be deducted if writing style distracts from reading. Referencing of response posts is encouraged, but not required unless needed to give credit for the ideas you are sharing.

You may start this assignment anytime during the course, but you need to have started Part I (the initial introduction/picture of your older adult) by the beginning of the fifth week of the course.

Assignment submissions and point values:
Part I - Week 5:
Introduction: Describe who this person is and why you chose this person to interview (2.5 points)
A “picture” (not a photograph) of the person you interviewed: Summarize the person’s past (include some information on childhood) and present. Describe their physical, psychosocial, cultural, and environmental information. This should provide a picture of the person. (7 points)
Participation (5 points)

Part II – Week 6:
Philosophy: Describe how the person feels about aging and their philosophy of life. (6 points)
Analysis: Summarize your analysis of the information you have gathered related to coping strategies, adaptation to change and the impact various milestones (such as childhood, marriage, social and historical events, etc.) have had on them. Identify lifelong threads and continuities. Identify biological, psycho-social, and/or developmental theories of aging to support your analysis. (17 points)
Participation (5 points)

Part III – Week 7:
Summary: Discuss the impact this conversation will have on future interactions with older adults. (2.5 points)

Rubric for Older Adult Life Review Participation:

Outstanding Contributor: Contributions reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive; provide one or more major insights. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented; often offers a new direction for discussion. This person responds to all questions posed to them and actively participates with a substantial number of peers in response to their posts. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly. If this describes you, expect 4.65 - 5 points for participation.

Good Contributor: Contributions reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive; provide good insights. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive; sometimes offers a new direction for discussion. Responds to most questions posed to them and somewhat actively participates in their peers’ discussions. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished. If this describes you, expect 4.2 - 4.6 points.

Adequate Contributor: Contributions reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Does not respond to all questions posed to them, nor actively participates in peers’ discussions. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat. If this describes you, expect 3.9 – 4.1 points

Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights, and never a
constructive direction for discussion. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. Does not address questions posed to them by peers; does not participate in peers’ discussions, or attempts to participate outside the approved timeframe. Disrespect to the class falls in this category. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved and the learning experience of all would be enhanced. If this describes you, you should expect to hear from me and receive guidance for improvement.

INSIGHTS OF LIFE REVIEW AND SELF REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT: (10 points – Week 8)

Purpose: Journals are intended to be thoughtful expressions that reflect how you feel regarding specific subject matter. Your reflections should be described in the first person, subjective, as “I” (I feel as though…). You may choose to reflect by using prose, poetry or sketches to illuminate a particular thought. This aesthetic way of knowing is encouraged. Journaling is a reflective process that promotes expanding your worldview and should reflect depth of thought about new concepts. A professional journal is not a personal diary, nor should it be full of citations and quotes from the literature; it should reflect and comment on your personal and professional growth.

Assignment: Discuss insights gained into the aging process. Tell what thoughts or feelings about aging occurred as you carried out the adult interview, and how/if your thoughts and feelings about aging have changed because of the conversation you had with your selected older adult. What stereotypes have been exemplified or dispelled? In addition, reflect on how this course has impacted your understanding of older adults.

Format:
1. Use a word processor, Times New Roman font of 12, 1.5 spacing with 1 inch margins.
2. A formal title page is not necessary, though please include name, date, course number, and assignment title at the beginning of your submission.
3. Your language should reflect that of a student enrolled in a baccalaureate nursing program.
4. Citations, quotes should be properly referenced in APA format, but citations are not necessary in reflective practice. If you do quote or cite, APA must be used and an end reference list provided.
5. There should be enough depth to the journal to show quality of the reflection so the length will likely be 2 pages.

Grading criteria:
The grading guidelines are as follows:
1. Description of experience related to the topic (4 points).
2. Depth of personal reflection and discussion on the experience and its contribution to personal growth in nursing (4 points).
3. Grammar, spelling, adherence to process guidelines, writing style (2 points).

* Important note: Wikipedia is not considered an acceptable, valid, reliable resource for use in any School of Nursing coursework, including NUR 321.

COURSE POLICIES:
Important Notice: There is strict adherence to every part of the NAU School of Nursing BSN Handbook that can be found at http://nau.edu/CHHS/Nursing/Student-Resources/Advising/ and Northern Arizona University Policy Statements for the following:

- Safe environment
- Students with disabilities
- Academic contact hour policy
- Academic integrity
- Research integrity
- Sensitive course material
- Classroom disruption policy

Attendance Policy: Under NAU Policy, students are expected to attend class prepared to participate in the activities and discussion. We believe attendance will enrich the learning experience.

SafeAssign: Academic integrity is an essential component to NAU’s mission along with the profession of nursing. SafeAssign is a requirement of paper and PowerPoint assignment submissions. Assignments will not be graded without a SafeAssign Report.

Late Assignment Policy: Faculty understand that sometimes life gets in the way, if you know ahead of time that you may need extra time for a particular assignment, notify the assigned faculty via e-mail before the assignment is due to request an extension. If notification occurs before the assignment is due, and a mutual agreed upon extension occurs, no penalty will occur as long as student meets the new assignment deadline. If continued requests for extensions became a pattern as a result of poor time management, requests will not be honored.

If students do not make arrangements ahead of time and miss assignments, make up (late assignments) assignments may be arranged for valid reasons such as illness or personal/family emergencies. Arrangements to make up an assignment must be made with the faculty within one week of the missed assignment. Make up assignments will not earn full points, but will have a 20% deduction in the overall grade for that assignment. If arrangements for the makeup assignment have not been made within one week of the assignment, the student will receive ZERO points for that assignment. (Discussion Assignments are excluded from this policy due to the group participation of the activity.)

BbLearn problems: Initial assistance with problems related to the Bb Learn website or software, such as electronic submission of assignments, should be requested from the NAU Student Technology Center (STC) 928-523-9294 or 1-888-520-7215 or at StudentComputing@nau.edu or http://www.nau.edu/stc/

Students are advised to check the course assignment to be assured of proper submission of materials and to problem solve with STC staff as needed. Keep a copy of your Course Content Outline to help you organize your time and keep on schedule.

Netiquette: Our online course will follow the NAU guidelines “Think before you post.” You are responsible for reading and following these guidelines. The guidelines are found at http://www2.nau.edu/d-elearn/support/tutorials/discrubrics/netiquette.php
**Disability Resources:** Learners with an eligible and documented disability, who need accommodations to complete their course work, should contact Disability Services prior to the start of class and no later than the first week. Details for this process are located at [http://nau.edu/Disability-Resources/](http://nau.edu/Disability-Resources/) and accessible through the University Policy Statements link in the course syllabus.

**Plagiarism:** All forms of student academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action. Cheating means intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise. Fabrication means intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Plagiarism means intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another, as one's own in any academic exercise. For further explanation of academic dishonesty refer to the Department of Nursing Undergraduate Student Handbook and Northern Arizona University Student Handbook.

“Whether paraphrasing or quoting an author directly, you must credit the source . . . For a direct quotation in the text, give the author, year, and page number in parentheses (paragraph numbers may be used in place of page numbers for electronic text.) Include a complete reference in the reference list. Depending on where the quotation falls within a sentence or the text, punctuation differs. When paraphrasing or referring to an idea contained in another work, authors are not required to provide a page number. Nevertheless, authors are encouraged to do so, especially when it would help an interested reader locate the relevant passage in a long or complex text” (APA Publication Manual, 1994, p 97,98).

**University Policies:**


1. Safe Environment Policy
2. Students with Disabilities Policy
3. Academic Contact Hour Policy
4. Academic Integrity Policy (also see [http://home.nau.edu/images/userimages/awf/9476/ACADEMIC%20DISHONESTY.pdf](http://home.nau.edu/images/userimages/awf/9476/ACADEMIC%20DISHONESTY.pdf))
5. Research Integrity Policy
6. Sensitive Course Materials Policy
7. Classroom Disruption Policy (also see [http://nau.edu/uploadedFiles/Administrative/EMSA_Sites/Folder_Templates/_Forms/Classroom_Disruption_Policy.pdf](http://nau.edu/uploadedFiles/Administrative/EMSA_Sites/Folder_Templates/_Forms/Classroom_Disruption_Policy.pdf))

The Impaired Student policy will be strictly adhered to; there will be no tolerance in for any evidence of substance abuse.