

Aging in Communities
GERO 435
CRN 800

3 Credit Hours
Spring 2026

Ball State University

Instructor: Kim Taylor, MSW	Email: ktaylor3@bsu.edu Phone: (765) 285-1005 Office location: Health Professions Building (HB) 519 Office hours: By appointment
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Catalog Description

Focus on community aging as it applies to all dimensions of life: biological, physiological, sociological, psychological, political, occupational, economical, educational, familial, and societal.

Course Description

This course will provide students with a greater understanding of gerontology, the study of older adults. Students will be introduced to specific areas of aging that impact health and needs within the community. While this course focuses on the health and community needs, special attention will also be given to aging in place, health literacy, policy issues, and ensuring a better future. The impact of nutrition, drugs, and physiology changes will also be explored.

Course Content

This course focuses on gerontology and issues older adults face throughout the aging process. The course examines the social context of aging, aging in place, and physiological, cognitive, and functional changes. An emphasis is placed on overall health, health literacy, and needs within the community while also exploring policies and ways to advocate for older adults. The needs and issues older adults experience, both within the community and in institutional settings, will be examined. The role of formal and family caregivers, and ways in which they can be supported will also be considered.

Course Objectives

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify aging processes including physical, cognitive, and social changes.
2. Describe aging in place, and the needs associated.
3. Effectively communicate ways to support someone, and their loved ones, during end of life.
4. Demonstrate critical awareness of the impact of health literacy on older adults.
5. Describe sensory, perceptual, and physical changes associated with aging.
6. Communicate understanding of nutrition and drug related issues pertaining to the older adult population.
7. Understand the needs of the older adult population and the types of services and support systems that may be available.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of sexuality and aging.
9. Describe ways to promote the well-being of older adults.
10. Identify limitations of current policies surrounding the needs of the older adult population, and their health care needs.

Texts and Required Reading Text

Robnett, R., Brossoie, N., & Chop, W. (2016). *Gerontology for the health care professional* (4th edition). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Additional Reading

Any additional readings will be posted on the course Canvas site within the module.

Teaching Method/Class Format

Students will be exposed to a range of teaching and learning methods, e.g., lectures via PowerPoint, videos, reflection/discussion posts, and assigned readings. Students are expected to complete all reading materials, and actively engage in any posted activities.

Materials for this class can be found on **Canvas**. Students are expected to frequent the Canvas web site to download course materials, and to check for announcements.

Class Assignments and Grading Procedures

A. Quizzes (5 at 30 points =150 Points)

There will be quizzes over the material found in the modules and in the textbook. Quizzes will include multiple choice and true/false questions about the readings. The quizzes are given through Canvas and are automatically graded, so you can see your score after each quiz. Although you are allowed to use your book and notes for the quizzes, you are expected to take the quizzes on your own. Once you start the quiz, you must finish it within the time allotted (**60 minutes**).

B. Discussion Posts (15 at 10 points = 150 points)

Students will answer brief discussion questions posted by the instructor. These are to be

answered using full sentences and **no less than 100 words**. If a source is used, it must be cited in APA format. Discussion posts will be graded on content, grammar, and writing. **Students will also be required to respond to at least one classmate to receive full points.** Responses must be thorough and professional, respectful communication is expected.

C. Personal Introduction/Course Reflection – 10 points/15 points

This assignment will be done in two parts.

- **Personal Introduction:** Complete a 3-4 slide PowerPoint to introduce yourself to your instructor and classmates. It should include two or three personal photos (tasteful, somehow showing your face), your nickname (if applicable) and:

 - Describe what you would like others to know about you.
 - Discuss how you think this course will benefit you.

- **Course Reflection:** Over the course of the semester, add to or adapt the PowerPoint. Your final PowerPoint will be 4-6 slides and will be an overview of your self-reflections in this course. You may include: what you've learned, how you've changed, what assignments and activities you liked or did not like. What other opportunities/assignments/information you would have liked to learn.
Answer the question: What will you take away from this class experience?

D. Senior Community Tour (50 points)

In this assignment, describe the differences between independent living, assisted living, and long-term care communities. Choose one to tour and create a PowerPoint including the content listed below. Please note, the facility does not have to be located in Indiana.

Complete a PowerPoint and address the following:

- Name of community
- Location of community
- Website of community
- Description of community: mission, values, key programs and services
- Your reaction to the community and tour
- How is the community funded? How does the resident pay for services?
- Amenities of community
- What amenities/features do you think older adults would find most important?
- What amenities/features do you think caregivers/loved ones of older adults would find most important?
- Which amenities/features would you change or update?
- Activities within community
- Summary of Experience

E. Professional Interview (50 points)

This assignment will allow students to interview a professional working in a field of interest, related to older adults.

- For this assignment, students will need to contact a professional working in their field of interest, related to older adults. The student will utilize topics learned in this course to complete the interview. Students must incorporate at least three concepts learned throughout the semester in the interview. The overall goal of this assignment is to gain the perspective of the professional working in the field while making connections to information learned throughout this course. Students will also gain a better understanding of potential future employment opportunities in their field of interest.
- Students must also provide a reflection on the professional's perspective and how the student feels they can use those views they you work in communities with older adults.
- Examples of professionals that students may be interested in interviewing may include:
 - 1) Activity's Director, Nurse
 - 2) Executive Director of Assisted/ Independent Living Community
 - 3) Social Workers
 - 4) Physicians
 - 5) Physical Therapist
 - 6) Occupational Therapist
 - 7) Speech Language Pathologist
 - 8) Audiologist
 - 9) Homecare company staff
- If you have questions on whom you may interview, feel free to contact me prior to the interview.

F. Case Study Assignment (75 points)

Students will choose a case study to analyze for this assignment. Multiple case studies will be provided for students to review. During this assignment, students will include the following:

- The case study chosen
- A summary of the case study
 - The key points of the case study (what stuck out to you?)
- An analysis of the case study
 - What are the issues?
 - Who is impacted by the issues?
 - What resources are needed?
 - Based on what you've learned in this course, what are your recommendations for this person(s)?

Grading Policy

The final course grade will be based upon the total points and calculated percentage earned by a student based upon the grading criteria established by the instructor for each assignment. The following categories will be used to assign a final course grade.

Assignments		Grade	Percentage
Quizzes =	150 points	A	95 – 100
Discussion Posts=	150 points	A-	91 – 94.9
Personal Introduction =	10 points	B+	87 – 90.9
Course Reflection =	15 points	B	84 – 86.9
Senior Community Tour =	50 points	B-	81 – 83.9
Professional Interview =	50 points	C+	77 – 80.9
Case Study Assignment=	75 points	C	74 – 76.9
		C-	70 – 73.9
		D+	67 – 69.9
		D	64 – 66.9
		D-	60 – 63.9
		F	< 60
	TOTAL		500 points

Class Schedule

Date	Unit
Week 1 Module 1	<p>Topics: Review syllabus</p> <p>Due this week: Discussion Post Friday, January 9th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, January 11th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Personal Introduction Sunday, January 11th by 11:59 pm</p>
Week 2	<p>Reading for the week: Robnett, R., Brossoie, N., & Chop, W. (2016). <i>Gerontology for the</i></p>

<p>Module 2</p>	<p><i>health care professional</i> (4th edition). Jones & Bartlett Learning. (Hereafter, the textbook readings will be noted solely by the chapter)</p> <p>Chapter 1: Age Matters: Profiles of an Aging Society</p> <p>Due this week: Discussion Post Friday, January 16th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, January 18th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 3 Module 3</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 2: Social Gerontology</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, January 23rd by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, January 25th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 4 Module 4</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 3: Aging in Place and the Continuum of Care</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, January 30th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, February 1st by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Quiz Sunday, February 1st by 11:59 pm</p>

<p>Week 5 Module 5</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 4: Loss, Grief, Death, and Dying</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, February 6th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, February 8th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 6 Module 6</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 5: Health Literacy and Clear Communication: Keys to Engaging Older Adults and Their Families</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, February 13th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, February 15th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Senior Community Tour PowerPoint Sunday, February 15th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 7 Module 7</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 6: Policy Issues for Older Adults</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, February 20th by 11: 59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, February 22nd</p> <p>Quiz Sunday, February 22nd by 11:59 pm</p>

<p>Week 8 Module 8</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 7: The Physiology and Pathology of Aging</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Thursday, February 26th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Saturday, February 28th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>***Have a wonderful Spring break! Sunday, March 1st-Sunday March, 8th</p>
<p>Week 9 Module 9</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 8: Cognitive and Psychological Changes Related to Aging</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, March 13th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, March 15th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 10 Module 10</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 9: Functional Performance in Later Life: Basic Sensory, Perceptual, and Physical Changes Associated with Aging</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, March 20th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, March 22nd by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Quiz Sunday, March 22nd by 11:59 pm</p>

<p>Week 11 Module 11</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 10: Drugs and the Older Adult</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, March 27th by 11: 59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, March 29th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 12 Module 12</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 11: Nutrition and Aging</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, April 3rd by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, April 5th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Professional Interview Sunday, April 5th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 13 Module 13</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 12: Perspectives on Oral Care in Healthy Aging and Prevention for the Older Adult</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, April 10th by 11: 59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, April 12th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Quiz Sunday, April 12th by 11:59 pm</p>

<p>Week 14 Module 14</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 13: Sexuality and Aging</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, April 17th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, April 19th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 15 Module 15</p>	<p>Reading for the week:</p> <p>Chapter 14: Reframing Aging Issues to Ensure a Better Future</p> <p>Due this week:</p> <p>Discussion Post Friday, April 24th by 11: 59 pm</p> <p>Discussion Post Response Sunday, April 26th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Quiz Sunday, April 26th by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Course Reflection PowerPoint Sunday, April 26th by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>Week 16: Finals Week Module 16</p>	<p>Due this week:</p> <p>Case Study Assignment Friday, May 1st by 11:59 pm</p>

Modification of the above schedule may be made based on the needs of the class and at the instructor's discretion. Additional readings, videos, etc. may be found within individual modules.

Course Policies

Updated Fall 2025 (8/14/2025)

Changes to Syllabi and Course Schedules

To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule and syllabus (provided to you by the instructor in Canvas) may shift over the semester. It is also subject to change and the instructor reserves the right to make these modifications to the course. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. Students are encouraged to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact your instructor of record if you have any questions.

Ball State 2025-26 Academic Calendar: <https://www.bsu.edu/calendar/calendars/academic-calendar>

Textbook Affordability Program at Ball State (TABS)

Ball State University, in partnership with our Barnes and Noble bookstore, has established the Ball State First Day program to further promote textbook affordability. Your instructor may also have copies of your textbooks available to be checked out at the College of Health Library or one of the other BSU Libraries. More details on the First Day program can be found here: [Ball State First Day | Ball State University](#)

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In all social work courses, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage(<https://www.bsu.edu/about/freedom-of-expression>) and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge: <https://www.bsu.edu/about/beneficence>

ADDITIONAL BALL STATE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

Equal Opportunity Policy

Ball State University is committed to the principles of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in education and employment. Further, the University is committed to the pursuit of excellence by prohibiting unlawful discrimination and providing equal opportunity to individuals without regard to race, religion, color, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or gender

expression, disability, genetic information, ethnicity, national origin or ancestry, age, protected veteran status, or any other legally protected status. This commitment enables the University to provide qualified individuals access to all academic and employment programs on the basis of demonstrated ability without regard to personal factors that are irrelevant to the program or job requirements involved.

The University assigns a high priority to the implementation of this equal opportunity policy to expand its efforts to guarantee equality of opportunity in employment.

The University President affirms the commitment to equal opportunity. All persons involved in the decision-making process, including members of faculty and other employee committees, shall act in a nondiscriminatory manner. The Director of Employee Relations has been specifically designated to be responsible for overall compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding nondiscrimination, and with approval of the President, is authorized to make any necessary modifications to this policy for purposes of regulatory compliance.

To ensure equal opportunity and nondiscrimination, each member of the Ball State University community must understand the importance of this policy and his/her responsibilities to contribute to its success. This policy seeks to encourage the reporting of incidents so they may be addressed. Students, employees, and applicants shall not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion, discrimination, or retaliation because they have engaged or may engage in any of the following: 1) filing a complaint; 2) assisting or participating in an investigation, compliance review, hearing, or any other activity related to the administration of any federal, state, or local law requiring equal employment opportunity; 3) opposing an act or practice deemed unlawful by a federal, state, or local law requiring equal employment opportunity; or 4) exercising any right according to this policy and/or any other lawfully protected right.

Complaints regarding unlawful discrimination or retaliation should be filed within 300 calendar days following the alleged act or incident giving rise to the complaint with the Assistant Director of Equal Opportunity and ADA Coordinator in accordance with the Ball State University Equal Opportunity Complaint Investigation Procedure and Appeal Process. The University encourages the prompt filing of all complaints. A copy of this document may be obtained by contacting the Assistant Director of Equal Opportunity and ADA Coordinator. Any individual or group found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary or remedial action, up to and including termination of employment or expulsion from the University. Faculty and staff who are determined to have violated this policy also may be held personally liable for any damages, settlement costs or expenses, including attorney fees incurred by the University.

The University maintains an audit and reporting system to determine overall compliance with its equal employment opportunity mandates.

Revised by the Board of Trustees July 24, 1998, July 19, 2013, July 17, 2015, November 14, 2022. Revised pursuant to delegation April 17, 2025

Reference of Policy: <https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/employee-relations/policies-and-legal-information/equal-opportunity-policy>

Furthermore, all departmental and program practices are subjected to the standards embodied in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) [2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#), the

code of ethics found in the [National Association of Social Workers](#), and Ball State University's [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Diversity Statement

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our [Beneficence Pledge](#). For Bias Incident Response information, [visit the webpage](#) or e-mail reportbias@bsu.edu

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu

All instructors at BSU are mandatory reporters under the Title IX policy and required to report any information they receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.