



Course Syllabus: Aging

SOWK 4113 X10
Fall 2026

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course will explore a wide variety of topics associated with the aging process including the physical, mental, and emotional changes occurring in the body as it ages; environmental factors affecting older adults, such as rising health care costs, and limited housing; family issues, role changes, facing death and dying; and as well as other life issues. Theories of life stages and human development will also be discussed to provide students with a framework of practice. This course is designed to prepare students to obtain an actual "person in environment" perspective when interacting with older adults, expose them to sensitive issues when working with this population, and assist those seeking generalist practice skills.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

McInnis-Dittrich, K. (2014). Social Work with Older Adults (5th Ed). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Course Goals and Objectives

- **Develop an understanding of the aging process and how physical, mental, and emotional changes affect older adults**
- **Identify the extent to which societal, cultural, and economic factors may influence**
- **Apply theoretical knowledge into practice to acquire general practice skills in the gerontological field**
- **Recognize cultural differences within the older adult population**

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify a wide variety of environmental factors that affect older adults
- Apply information regarding physiological, emotional, mental, and psychological health issues commonly faced by the aging population to complete a biopsychosocial assessment
- Recognize their fears, assumptions, or perspectives associated with the aging process
- Locate and evaluate community resources helpful to the older adult population, their families, and their caregivers
- Identify employment opportunities and research on aging
- Develop a sensitive and environmental viewpoint when interacting or offering services to the older adult population

Tutoring Assistance

Begin drafting papers as early as possible and take advantage of the [Tutoring & Academic Support Programs](#), located off the first floor of the Moffett Library. The MSU TASP Learning Center offers drop-in tutoring support for most general subject areas including but not limited to Writing, Math, Science, Business, and Foreign Languages. Students check in to work one-on-one with a tutor typically for an hour regarding specific concepts.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Course Grade - List all graded assignments with their point value and or percentage of total grade. Letter Grade Scale indicate the overall points or % to letter grade scale for example 1270 to 1137 = A.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Weekly discussion questions	100
Mental Illness/Cognitive Issue Paper	100
Interview	100
Quizzes (10)	100
Social Service Agency Paper	100
Participation	10
Total Points	510

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	510-450
B	449-400
C	399-350
D	349-300
F	299 or below

Homework

Use this area to describe your homework. Be sure to include how and when homework will be turned in.

Quizzes

There will be 10 multiple choice quizzes worth 10 points each. Due dates will appear on the Course Schedule in more detail.

Interview

100 points: The objective of this assignment is to understand the aging process from the perspective of an older adult. Students will select one individual over the age of 65 to conduct an interview. This person should be from a different cultural or ethnic group (someone not in your immediate family). Students will type the information in a **narrative format**. Papers must be double-spaced using a 12-point font, and the interviewee's identity should be kept confidential. Students can use the sample questions suggested below or formulate their questions.

- What year were you born? Where? Siblings?
- What was the house/apartment that you grew up in like?
- What kind of neighborhood did you grow up in?
- What did your parents do for a living?
- What was your life like when you were a child? Teenager?
- What was your school experience like?
- What is your family life like now?
- How different is society today from when you were young?
- What are some essential life lessons you have learned?
- Have you had any influential people in your life? Who and how did they influence you?
- What is the best part of growing older? What is the worst (if any)?
- Do you have any regrets or unfulfilled dreams? What are they?
- Do you have any advice for younger generations?

Social Service Agency Paper

100 points: This assignment aims to build knowledge about different resources for older adults. Students will contact a social service agency/organization serving older adults and write a paper about it. The paper must be double-spaced using 12-point font and in APA format. Students will be graded on the completeness of information and writing style (grammar, punctuation, and flow of ideas). The information in the paper does not need to come in any specific order; if any information does not apply to the agency, it should be stated in the paper. The paper does not have a number of required pages but should include, at a minimum, all the following information:

- Name of agency
- Type of agency (i.e., public, private, for/nonprofit, etc.), funding source, and type of services
- Mission statement, vision, and values
- Estimated number of people served a year
- Requirements to receive services
- How are services accessed (by phone, in person, through a referral)?
- Accessibility to the facility for people with physical, visual, or hearing impediments
- Estimated number of employees/staff members
- Number of social work positions (if any)? What is their primary role?
- Challenges the agency may be facing (i.e., high staff turnover, high caseloads, complex cases, funding)
- Student's opinions on the agency (i.e., is the facility clean, is it welcoming, staff members friendly, barriers to receiving services, etc.)

Social Service Agency Papers will be posted for your classmates to view so the class can learn about the variety of services available for older adults.

Mental Illness/Cognitive Paper

100 points: This assignment aims to build knowledge about different diagnoses for older adults. Students will choose a disorder/diagnosis (dementia, depression, etc.) often assigned to the elderly population. Students must include information about the diagnosis, symptoms associated with it, and one treatment modality that can be used for a client once they are diagnosed. Each paper must be double-spaced using 12-point font and in APA format. Please include a reference page showcasing your resources. Students will be graded on the completeness of information and writing style (grammar, punctuation, and flow of ideas). More information to come about what needs to be in the paper.

Weekly discussion questions

10 points each/100 points total: There will be general questions relating to the chapter, case vignettes, current events, or watching a video. You must participate in 10/13 of the weekly discussions (10 points each week). You can earn extra credit if you participate in more than 10 discussions.

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted unless it is an emergency or extenuating circumstance, in which case the student will need to communicate with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances and whether an extension may be granted.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: August 24-27
- Deadline to file for graduation: September 21
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:"November 23
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow***

students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.

Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. ***Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations; however, they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Recording Classes

****Recording classes is generally prohibited without the professor's explicit permission.*** Such recordings, when permitted, are for personal use only and may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published without the professor's prior consent. Some faculty may not permit recordings of their classes. When it is feasible and appropriate, students may record classes to accommodate disabilities under the Americans With Disabilities Act, with prior approval of Disability Support Services. Such recordings may not be uploaded to the internet or otherwise shared, transmitted, or published.

Instructor Class Policies

The expectation is that students complete their reading assignments and are active on D2L, completing all assignments by the due date.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors

to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected life circumstances can affect anyone. If you are experiencing challenges meeting basic needs—such as housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks or other life necessities, resources may be available to help. Visit the [Student Emergency Support and Resources webpage](#) to learn more, and explore emergency support opportunities through MSU and how to access them. For additional information, please contact the Office of Student Affairs: Clark Student Center #108, (940) 397-7500, student.affairs@mstuexas.edu.

Pregnant and Parenting Students

To support the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions, the University offers reasonable modifications based on the student's particular needs. Any student who is pregnant or parenting a child up to age 18 or has conditions related to pregnancy, may contact MSU's designated [Pregnancy and Parenting](#) Liaison to discuss support available through the University.

College Policies

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University's Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick

Title IX Coordinator

Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse

940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University's policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit
<https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond

to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Please note the disclaimer above and include that with your schedule. There can be no blanks or merged cells in your table. You must put some kind of text in all the blanks such as: N/A or No content. You can use a dash (-) or “to” between dates, avoid using the @ sign unless in web address.

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/24 to 8/30	<i>Palmore’s Facts on Aging Quiz</i> – What surprised you most about your answers to Palmore’s quiz? All about me posting (discussion)	8/30
Week 2 8/31 to 9/6	Reading: Chapter 1 Discussion Question 1 Quiz 1	9/6
Week 3 9/7 to 9/13	Reading: Chapter 2 Discussion Question 2 Quiz 2	9/13
Week 4 9/14 to 9/20	Reading: Chapter 3 Discussion Question 3 Quiz 3 Interview paper	9/20
Week 5 9/21 to 9/27	Reading: Chapter 4 Discussion Question 4 Quiz 4	9/27
Week 6 9/28 to 10/4	Reading: Chapter 5 Discussion Question 5 Quiz 5	10/4
Week 7 10/5 to 10/11	Reading: Chapter 6 Discussion Question 6 Quiz 6	10/11

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 8 10/12 to 10/18	Reading: Chapter 7 Discussion Question 7 Quiz 7 Mental Illness/Cognitive Disorder Paper	10/18
Week 9 10/19 to 10/25	Reading: Chapter 8 Discussion Question 8 Quiz 8	10/25
Week 10 10/26 to 11/1	Reading: Chapter 9 Discussion Question 9 Quiz 9	11/1
Week 11 11/2 to 11/8	Reading: Chapter 10 Discussion Question 10 Quiz 10	11/8
Week 12 11/9 to 11/15	Reading: Chapter 11 Discussion Question	11/15
Week 13 11/16 to 11/22	Reading: Chapter 12 Discussion Question Social Service Agency Paper	11/22
Thanksgiving Break	Nov 25-Nov 29	
Week 14 11/30 to 12/4	Start a thread and attach your Social Service Agency Paper. Read other papers and comment on at least 5 different papers.	12/4