

Gerontology Concentration

Brief Description

The Gerontology Concentration aims to provide social work students with the knowledge and skills to be leaders in advancing social and economic justice for older adults and their families. The concentration provides students with the expertise for working with older adults, their families, the aging service delivery system, and the “aging society.” Graduating students are employed in both the public and private sectors. Some graduates work primarily serving elders and their families in traditional settings such as adult day care centers, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, and home health agencies. Others work in administrative organizations like local, state, and federal agencies overseeing home and community based service programs or engaging in policy advocacy for older adults. A growing number are working in newer areas such as health and wellness, productive engagement, and retirement planning. The Gerontology concentration is broad in scope, designed with the intent to provide a solid foundation in gerontological scholarship and practice skills.

The Gerontology concentration has six courses designated as part of the required curriculum, with different tracks for students choosing to specialize in administrative practice and direct practice. All students in the concentration take the one required theory course, *S20-2010 Theories and Issues in Aging*, in which they increase their knowledge of current issues in aging as well as learn to apply empirically-supported aging theories to practice. All students in the concentration also take the one required policy course, *S40-5780 Social Policy and Aging*. In this course, they learn to critically analyze major social policies and to articulate how social policies related to aging are formulated and influenced. Clinical practice students take three required methods courses in the concentration; administrative practice students take two required concentration practice courses and one elective practice course. Clinical practice students are required to take: *S30-9455 Biopsychosocial Assessments and Interventions with Older Adults*, *S30-7327 Social Work Practice in the Continuum of Care*, and *S30-5068 Development of Programs and Services for an Aging Society*. Administrative practice students are required to take: *S30-5068 Development of Programs and Services for an Aging Society* and any two of the following: *S50-5019 Personnel Management and Supervision*, *S50-5030 Budgeting and Fiscal Management*, *S50-5052 Leadership, Planning, and Decision-Making*, *S50-5060 Social Entrepreneurship*, or *S50-5066 Marketing, Resource Development, and Community Relations*.

Students in the Gerontology concentration are allowed to take one of two different evaluation courses to fulfill their concentration evaluation requirement: *S40-5842 Social Policy and Analysis*, or *S50-5050 Evaluation of Programs and Services*.

Gerontology Concentration Course Requirements

(See “Proposed Course Offerings” for prerequisites and co-requisites)

Social Policy

S40-5780 Social Policy and Aging

Theory, Problems, and Issues

S20-2010 Theories and Issues in Aging

Practice Methods

Clinical practice students are required to take:

S30-9455 Biopsychosocial Assessments and Interventions with Older Adults

S30-7327 Social Work Practice in the Continuum of Care

All students are required to take the following:

S50-5068 Development of Programs and Services for an Aging Society

Administrative practice students select any two of the following:

S50-5019 Personnel Management and Supervision

S50-5030 Budgeting and Fiscal Management

S50-5052 Leadership, Planning, and Decision-Making,

S50-5060 Social Entrepreneurship

S50-5066 Marketing, Resource Development, and Community Relations

Evaluation

All students select one of the following:

S40-5842 Social Policy Analysis and Evaluation

S50-5050 Evaluation of Programs and Services

Practicum

Students are required to take a minimum of five credits (600 hours) of gerontology concentration practicum. Students will select a practicum site from among approved community agencies. Practicum sites offer opportunities for skill development including therapeutic counseling, case management, program administration, and policy advocacy. Practicum sites include acute health care services in medical settings, community-based services ranging from senior centers to housing programs to health and wellness programs, and administrative agencies and advocacy programs. Students must work with diverse populations in practicum.

Faculty Coordinator:

For further information on the Gerontology Concentration, contact Nancy Morrow-Howell, Ph.D., Goldfarb 238, (314) 935-6762, morrow-howell@wustl.edu or Diane Beckerle O'Brien, MSW, Brown 310, (314) 935-7849, drb1@wustl.edu.