Gerontology Certificate and Minor
School of Social Work

The Gerontology Program at CSU, Chico
The School of Social Work offers two interdisciplinary educational tracks in Gerontology:
Minor in Gerontology, and Certificate in Gerontology
For more information contact:
Butte Hall 511, School of Social Work (530-898-6204)

Consider a Career in the Field of Aging*

Are you looking for a job in an area that is growing rapidly, that needs people with a broad range of skills, that will improve people’s lives, and that will be exciting, challenging, and rewarding? Are you interested in improving the lives of older adults? Are you interested in knowing more about your own aging and the changes to expect in your family members as they grow older? Consider a career in the field of aging!

Expanding Career Opportunities

Populations are aging worldwide. This means that people are living longer, and the number of older adults is increasing. These trends are evident in American society, as well as in many countries around the world. In 1900 about one in 25 Americans was over 65; today one in eight is over 65. And the age group growing fastest in our society and in many other countries is the “very old,” people aged 85 and over. The growth of the elderly population will continue into the future. By the middle of the 21st century, one in five Americans will be over 65, and there will be 15 to 18 million adults over the age of 85. These growth trends will result in a demand for professionals with knowledge and expertise in aging. People who are interested in this diverse field can enter at any educational level and in many disciplines, professions, and clinical areas, such as social work, nursing, counseling, recreation, public policy, long-term care administration, medicine, architecture, psychology, adult education, and rehabilitation therapy.

A Stimulating, Challenging Field

The field of aging is very diverse, offering many different employment opportunities. This diversity exists, in part, because older persons are very different from each other in many other ways. As we age, our experiences, needs, resources, and abilities vary according to such factors as gender, race, ethnicity, and economic status. For example, many older adults are very healthy and active. Persons working with these older adults might be providing educational opportunities, recreation and leisure programs, and volunteer activities. Some older adults are frail and less active. Jobs which relate to these more vulnerable elders might be in long-term care or other health care settings or in certain agencies that deliver services to older adults. The relative newness of the field means that there are opportunities for innovative ideas and new programs and products. Many people have started their own businesses, such as coordinating home health care or consulting with businesses and corporations about how to develop services or design products that would attract older consumers.

Multidisciplinary Opportunities

The varied needs of older adults lead to exciting opportunities for working side by side with professionals from other disciplines. As a service provider, you may be coordinating information from housing agencies, lawyers, transportation providers, nurses, and family counselors. As a health professional, you might serve on a health care team providing hospital care, day care, or home care to older adults. As an educator, you might teach a course on work and retirement to students from several university departments. As a researcher, you might study the relationships between the maintenance of friendship networks and the mental and physical health of older adults.

Potential to Make a Difference

People working in aging report great satisfaction in addressing the challenges of those who are growing older, helping to maintain the quality of their lives, and enjoying the wit, wisdom, and creativity of the older adults with whom they come in contact. Even as a student you can make a difference; your community can benefit from volunteer work you do with older adults. Later, as a professional in the field, you can continue to serve the community as a volunteer, for example, by speaking about various aspects of aging to civic and community groups or teaching in pre-retirement programs. Working in the field of aging provides an opportunity to influence positively the agencies and organizations serving older adults and the legislation and policies that affect their lives. Studying aging also gives you a perspective on your own aging and insight into the aging of your family members.

*Excerpted from, “Careers in Aging: Consider the Possibilities,” Association for Gerontology in Higher Education www.aghe.org
What Jobs and Careers are Available in the Aging Field?

Some professionals work directly with older adults. Other professionals are less directly involved with older adults but work on their behalf, educate others, or investigate issues in the field of aging. Some professionals devote themselves full-time to the field of aging. Others divide their time between aging and other areas of interest within their disciplinary, professional, or clinical areas.

Work Settings

- retirement communities
- federal, state, and local government agencies
- professional associations
- long-term care institutions
- religious organizations
- community service agencies
- educational and research settings
- business and industry
- hospitals and rehabilitation facilities

Types of Professional Activities

- developing programs such as health promotion, senior theater groups, or intergenerational activities for older adults in senior centers, community agencies, or retirement communities
- providing direct care to frail, ill, or impaired older adults in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, or through adult day care or home care programs
- counseling older adults and their families about issues of care-giving, employment, death and dying, or mental health
- advising older clients about estate planning and investments, financing long-term care, or housing options.
- conducting research on the aging processes and diseases associated with aging
- analyzing issues related to older adults such as retirement opportunities, income maintenance, the health care system, and housing alternatives
- planning, administering, and evaluating community services and service delivery systems for older adults
- teaching courses on aging to college and university students, health care professionals, and older adults
- advocating with or on behalf of older persons before legislative bodies or in institutional settings
- designing products to meet the special interests and needs of older adults
- advising business, industry, and labor regarding older workers and consumers

Whether or not you choose a career in aging, the knowledge you have gained will serve you well as a decision-maker, service provider, planner, business person, consumer, family member, and informed citizen.

A student enrolled in the Gerontology Certificate Program must be accepted for University admission and must complete required course work as outlined below. It is not necessary to complete the requirements for a bachelor's degree in order to receive the Certificate in Gerontology. With the permission of the certificate advisor, students may substitute an internship offered by another department for HCSV 389. An overall grade point average of 2.5 is required for the certificate.

**MINOR IN GERONTOLOGY (18 units)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Semester Offered</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCSV 328</td>
<td>Multicultural Health (USD)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall/Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCSV 543</td>
<td>Social Gerontology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCSV 541</td>
<td>Health in the Later Years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYC 354</td>
<td>Psychology of Adulthood and Aging</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECR 360</td>
<td>Recreation Therapy with Older Adults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall/Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 474</td>
<td>Policy and Programs for Older Adults</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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**CERTIFICATE IN GERONTOLOGY (21 units)**

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<tr>
<td>HCSV 389</td>
<td>Community Service: Supervision</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>Fall/Spring</td>
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Appropriate course substitutions of equivalents or waivers may be granted by the Gerontology program advisor. Please consult the advisor regarding specifics.