**Course Number and Name:** DDHS 4410 Gerontology

**Course Type** (underline one): Lecture Laboratory Clinical Seminar Selective

**Academic Year/Semester Offered:** 2016 Fall

**Course Director:** Patricia R. Campbell, RDH, MS  
Office: 139A, Ph: 214-828-8342  
Email: pcampbell@bcd.tamhsc.edu

**Other Participating Faculty:**  
Lisa Mallonee, BSDH, MPH, RD, LD  
Mike Reed, DDS, FAGD, FASGD, ABSCD  
Helena Tapias, DDS

**Course Description:**  
This course will examine the unique considerations a dental professional will encounter when providing care to a geriatric patient. Social, psychological and biological aspects of aging will be discussed. Strategies for patient care will be outlined and discussed. Appropriate community referral agencies will be explored to aid the hygienist in providing assistance to the elderly patient.

**Course Objectives:**  
Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Evaluate theories of aging and examine their own beliefs and attitudes regarding older adults.
2. Discuss the social, psychological and physiological factors that affect the lives of the aging population.
3. Identify common diseases of the elderly, their manifestation and the impact of these diseases on oral healthcare.
4. Discuss the effects of normal and pathological aging on oral health.
5. Improve communication with elderly patients.
6. Analyze cultural differences in the definition of aging, the experience of aging and the treatment of aging.
7. Formulate a dental hygiene care plan for the elder adult.
8. Discuss alternative practice delivery methods for the homebound and long-term care older adult.
9. Identify resources and services that may be of assistance and support to the older adult.

**Learning Outcomes/Related Competencies:**  
2.3 Communicate effectively with diverse populations without discrimination.  
2.4 Employ the principles of scientific writing.  
3.3 Contribute to the knowledge base of dental hygiene.  
4.2 Identify the health needs of individuals and assist them in the development of appropriate and individualized self-care regimens.

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4.3 Encourage patients to assume responsibility for their health while respecting their goals, values, beliefs and preferences.
5.1 Identify services and agencies that promote oral health and prevent oral disease and related conditions.
5.3 Influence the public (consumer groups, businesses and government agencies) to support health care issues.
6.1 Determine medical conditions that require special precautions or consideration prior to or during dental hygiene treatment.
6.4 Recognize predisposing, etiologic risk factors, and life style choices that may require intervention to prevent disease.
6.6 Determine the need for referral to the appropriate health professional.
7.1 Determine priorities and establish oral health goals with the patient/family and/or guardian as an active participant.
7.2 Acknowledge cultural differences in populations when planning treatment.

Evaluation Criteria/Methods:

Assignments/Quizzes - In order to be an active participant you must be punctual and prepared for class. Quizzes will not be announced ahead of time and are not posted on the schedule. They will be short answer and will be over the assigned reading material. They will be given at the beginning of the class and make-up quizzes will not be given.

- **Letter to Legislator** – As a dental hygienist you are encouraged to act as an advocate for the general public to improve their oral health. This letter is designed to have you act as an advocate for the elderly. This constitutes 15% of your grade and you will be graded according to the criteria stated in Appendix A. **DUE 10/31/2016, 4:00 p.m.** There will be a one (1) point deduction for each day that the paper is late.

- **Elder Interview** - This project has been designed to allow you the opportunity to expand your knowledge and experience in dealing with the “well elderly” so that you will be better prepared to communicate and deliver dental hygiene care to the elderly. This constitutes 15% of your grade and you will be graded according to the criteria stated in Appendix B. **DUE 12/05/2016, 4:00 p.m.** There will be a one (1) point deduction for each day that the paper is late.

- **Grading**
  - Attendance/Quizzes: 10%
  - Exam #1: 20%
  - Exam #2: 20%
  - Final Exam: 20%
  - Letter to Legislator: 15%
  - Elder Interview: 15%
  - Total: 100%

**Grading Scale:**

- A= 90-100
- B= 80-89
- C= 75-79
- D= 70-74
- F= <70

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Learning Materials:
1. Course Manual
2. Additional reading material may be distributed during class

Remediation Policy:
Remediation will be provided during the following semester.

Attendance and Make-up Policy:
Attendance is part of your grade and is mandatory. It will be the responsibility of the student to see the course director for any supplemental materials missed in the event of an absence. **Four or more unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.** For university excused absences, refer to Student Rule 7 for details. For an excused absence, a missed exam or assignment must be made up within one week of the excused absence.

Class attendance and participation are a vital part of the learning process. You must attend the entire class session to be counted as present. **If you are 10 or more minutes late for class, you will be counted as absent.**

1 absence = A for attendance (e.g., 95 points/100)
2 absences = B for attendance (e.g., 85 points/100)
3 absences = C for attendance (e.g., 75 points/100)
4+ absences = Failure of the course

Laboratory/Clinic Policies and Procedures:
N/A

Special Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities:
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Dr. Charles Berry, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in charge of Disability Services, Room 514, or call 214 828 8208 for additional information.

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy:

> “An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the honor Code, to accept responsibility, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System.

Date prepared: by Patricia R. Campbell 05/26/2015

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<td>Course overview/Why study aging?</td>
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Lecture Objectives:

Why Study Aging?
1. Define specific terms related to gerontology.
2. Discuss the demographics of the population over 65 years of age in the United States.
3. Differentiate between chronological aging and biological aging.
4. Identify the most common misconceptions about the elderly population.
5. Evaluate bias as it applies to the elderly.

Nursing homes/homebound elders/hospice
1. Identify challenges in caring for the long-term care patient.
2. Discuss barriers to improving the dental management of institutionalized geriatric patients.
3. Discuss ethical/legal consent concerns for long term care patients.

Myths, realities and stereotypes of aging
1. Identify the major factors that have contributed to population increases and changes in age distribution during the last century.
2. Evaluate popular myths of aging and how they may affect the health of the elderly.
3. Discuss strategies for promoting a healthy lifestyle for the aging population.
4. Critically evaluate the theories of senescence.
5. Discuss theories on aging.

Age related physiologic changes to the body
1. Identify major concerns of the elderly that may impact their well-being.
2. Describe age-related sensory changes.
3. Discuss the social consequences of physiologic changes such as visual and auditory.
4. Identify and discuss the implications of physiologic changes to the dental environment.

Age related cognitive changes to the body
1. Identify major concerns of the elderly that may impact their well-being.
2. Describe age-related cognitive changes.
3. Discuss the social consequences of cognitive.
4. Identify and discuss the implications of cognitive changes on the dental environment.

Morbidity and oral health in elderly patients
1. Identify age related oral changes commonly found in the older adult.
2. Explain potential alterations in the dental hygiene process of care that need to be considered when treating an older adult.
3. Describe current status of oral health among the elderly.

Psychopathologic changes of the aging
1. Examine older person’s responses to life events and stressors.
2. Identify cognitive changes of aging.
3. Identify major concerns of the elderly that may impact their well-being.
4. Identify and discuss the three most prevalent forms of late life psychopathology.
5. Discuss the stages of Alzheimer’s disease.
6. Distinguish signs of normal aging and dementia.
**Medication and substance misuse**
1. Identify patterns of substance misuse as one ages.
2. Discuss methods of proper medication management for the elderly.
3. Describe screening tools that may be used in the dental environment.
4. Identify barriers to identification of substance misuse problems of the elderly.
5. Recognize risk factors for alcohol and prescription drug misuse as it pertains to the elderly.
6. Discuss legal and ethical issues relevant to substance misuse and the geriatric population.

**Identification and implications of elder abuse**
1. Discuss the meaning of the various types of Elder Abuse/Neglect (EAN) listed below:
   - Physical abuse/neglect
   - Sexual abuse
   - Elder neglect (physical mental health, medical, dental
   - Emotional/psychological/verbal abuse/neglect
   - Financial exploitation
   - Self-neglect
2. Discuss the demographics of elder abuse/neglect in Texas and the U.S.
3. Describe the various signs and symptoms of elder abuse/neglect that are observable during the course of a dental visit.
4. Examine the dental hygienist’s role in:
   - Assessment of suspected abuse or neglect
   - Interviewing victims and providing support.
   - Documentation and reporting of suspected abuse and neglect.
   - Referral of victims for appropriate assistance

**Nutritional needs of the elderly**
1. Discuss the changes that occur most commonly among the aging population.
2. Describe nutritional disorders that may be commonly found in the elderly associated with diet and poor nutrition.
3. Discuss the dietary considerations for the aging adult
4. Discuss the dietary considerations for the aging adult with dentures.
5. Discuss barriers to maintaining good nutrition for the elderly.

**Aging successfully**
1. Discuss the myths and realities surrounding successful aging.
2. Define successful aging according to experts in gerontology as well as those considered “seniors”.
3. Discuss lessons from centenarians described in the reading.
APPENDIX A

Legislative Project

This project will provide you with an opportunity to communicate a geriatric healthcare issue to your state legislator in letter form. The tone of your letter should be professional, knowledgeable, and persuasive. Suggested topics will be provided during the course.

Project Directions
1. Carefully review all material related to a topic/issue to be sure you have your facts straight.
2. Determine if there are current bills related to this issue.
3. Identify your state senator (if a senate bill) or congressman (if a house bill). Choose the legislator from the state where you are registered to vote. Be careful to choose the correct legislator. In other words, federal issues need to be sent to the federal government representatives and state issues need to be sent to state representatives. If there are any questions, please see me.
4. Write a coherent, factual letter to your representative. If applicable, you may introduce yourself as a student dental hygienist. If you plan to practice in an underserved area or with underserved populations after graduation, let your legislator know this. Discuss briefly your position on the current bill or state why you believe a bill should be introduced.
5. State specifically what you want the legislator to do about your problem or request and ask for a reply regarding your representative's perspective on the bill/issue.
6. Provide specific evidence or support for your argument. Evidence includes facts, figures, and opinions: for example, a story, first-hand knowledge, statistics, findings from recent research, expert opinion, and the like. Cite full responses in footnotes or endnotes.
7. Limit your letter to 1 page typed and using 10 -12 point fonts. You may attach a copy of your reference to the letter if applicable.
8. Turn in one hard copy of your letter along with the scoring rubric and email me a copy.

To Earn Full Credit
9. I will make suggested revisions/corrections to your letter. After you complete the revisions, return the original letter to me with the scoring rubric and a signed copy of your revised letter in a stamped, addressed envelope that I will mail. Do not seal the envelope – I will do that.
10. Email me a copy of the final version.
11. Do not use Texas A&M stationary! As a state institution we cannot lobby for or against any position using supplies paid for with public funds.
Guidelines
Do . . .

• Spell the government official's or legislator's name correctly and know his/her appropriate title (Representative, Senator, Delegate, Commissioner, Director, etc.). All elected officials should be addressed as "Honorable."

• Run spell check and grammar check before sending the letter. No matter how knowledgeable or passionate you are about an issue, if you have misspelled words and grammatical errors it takes away from your credibility.

• Write as an individual constituent. Because legislators pay the most attention to personal letters from their constituents, it is important that your letter express your own views.

• Limit letter to one page. Conciseness and brevity have impact when writing a letter. Because, legislators are so busy, they do not have much time to read through a long, involved letter in order to discover your point. If your letter is limited to one page, they can scan it quickly. If you have more information than will fit on one page, include it as an attachment for background material, clearly marked as such, and attach it to the letter.

• Cover only one subject and clearly identify it as such. For example, at the top of the page write, "Re: (name of bill or issue)." This will speed up the routing of the letter in the office.

• Be as specific as possible. Regardless of what you are writing about, be as specific as possible in describing it. Refer to a particular bill by number and what it will do. Show as much knowledge as you can, but don't hesitate to write merely because you are not an "expert."

• Include your name and return address on the letter. Use the address where you are registered to vote. If you aren’t registered, use your local address.

• Use this outline:
  ▪ Indicate who you are and the purpose or nature of your problem or request.
  ▪ State specifically what you want the legislator to do about your problem or request i.e., vote for or against legislation, add or remove amendments, change language in legislation, etc.
  ▪ Indicate why it is important to you that they take action regarding your problem or request.
  ▪ Put a "hook" in your letter. Ask for something that will require a substantive reply to your letter or communication. For example, ask a legislator if they are a cosponsor of legislation, ask for the status of pending legislation, or ask agency staff for the timetable for issuing regulations.
  ▪ Indicate your thanks, reiterate your most important message, and say that you expect a response.

Don't . . .

• Write letters that demand the legislator’s cooperation.
• Write a chain letter or form letter.
• Threaten a legislator with defeat at the next election.
• Adopt a politically partisan tone in your letter.
• Use the legislator's first name in the salutation of your letter unless you know them personally.
Resources

United States Senate

United States House of Representatives (use the search to find information relevant to your topic)

Where to do Research.com (has links to many national newspapers and government agencies)

USA.gov (you can register to vote through this site if you are not already registered)

Congress.gov (type in a word/phrase and search to find current bills relevant to your topic)

AARP (you can find almost anything you need re: geriatric issues through this site)

The Texas Senate
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APPENDIX B

Well Elder Experience for the Dental Hygiene Student

The following project has been designed to allow you the opportunity to expand your knowledge and experience in dealing with the “well elderly” so that you will be better prepared to communicate and deliver dental hygiene care to the elderly. For those of you who have little experience in dealing with an older individual, this will help you identify and practice positive communication skills when dealing with this target population. Because of this, all interviews must be done in person. Telephone interviews will not be accepted.

This “well elder” experience will consist of some time, thought, and written documentation on your part. My hope is that this project will be a positive and rewarding experience.

Objectives
Completing this experience will enable the student to:
1. Demonstrate communication and interpersonal skills.
2. Recognize the value of attentive listening.
3. Discuss special considerations for communicating with the elderly.
4. Evaluate one’s own communication patterns.

General Guidelines
1. Choose a relatively healthy individual who is 70 years or older. This can be a family member, neighbor, friend, patient, assisted living resident, etc.
2. Set up a meeting and plan to spend at least 1 ½ hours. During this time, you will talk and listen to the elder person using the prepared questions only as a guideline.
3. The interview must be conducted in person. No telephone interviews will be accepted so please don’t ask.
4. This is not to be conducted during clinic sessions.
5. Summarize the visit by including the answer to the questions on the “Summary of Visit with Elder” form. Do not answer the questions individually. The paper is to be written in paragraph form.
6. Paper must be typed, double-spaced, using Times Roman 11 or 12 point font. The paper is to be a minimum of three full pages. Full credit will not be given if margins and spacing are excessive.
7. The “Summary of Visit with Elder” grade sheet must be completed and stapled to the back of your paper. If this is not done, the paper will be returned to you for completion and points will be deducted for each day of tardiness.
Reminiscence

Oral History: Techniques and Questions

Creating a “Natural” Interview Setting

- If visiting a relative or other person specifically for interview, take along home baked goodies, an artifact/object from the past or a picture that may be used during the pre-interview session as a lead to interview questions.
- Use props whenever possible: Documents, letters and photo albums to stimulate memories.

Oral History Questioning Techniques

1. Ask questions that encourage conversation rather than those requiring only a yes or no answer.
2. There will be some information you will not get, some sensitive issue cannot be approached even when trust is developed. You may be the wrong age or sex. That’s okay though, just expect it.
3. Take a low key approach. This helps ease both you and the informant into the interview role.
4. Show interest through body language but don’t crowd your informant. Interject remarks, take part in the conversation but don’t take over. Learn to be a good listener.
5. Know what questions you want to ask, but don’t be afraid to let your informant go off on a tangent.
   - Getting back on track:
     “Before you told me about this or that we were talking about so and so. Can you tell me how so and so were affected when the color TV became available?”
6. If you need to write down questions, put them on note cards (one or two to each card).
7. Use props whenever possible.
8. Be sensitive to the needs of the informant. Older people may tire easily. Cut off interview at first sign of fatigue.
9. Consider Ethical Issues:
   - Be honest about your intents.
   - Respect privacy and confidences.
   - Respect sensitive issues.
   - Don’t make promises you can’t keep.
   - Safeguard the relationship with your informant.
   - Remember, secret recordings violate your informant’s right to know.
   - Let your informant see anything that will be published. Ask for permission to use tapes/photos to be displayed publicly.
Oral History Questions

The most useful questions will be those that you develop through your knowledge of yourself and your family. For your initial efforts you may find the following list of questions helpful.

1. Where and when were you born? How long have you lived at your present home? Where did you live as a child? What can you recall about your family home and neighborhood?
2. What do you know about your family surname? How did it originate? What does it mean? What are the traditional first or middle names in your family?
3. What was family life like when you were growing up? How did you celebrate holidays and special occasions? What are some of the traditions still carried on by your family?
4. What church did you attend when you were growing up? What activities were associated with church going? How has the church affected your life and the life of your family?
5. What did you do for a living? (Or what type of work did you do as a homemaker?) Has this type of work changed?
6. What were your favorite childhood games? Have sports changed much during your lifetime? What other entertainment have you enjoyed?
7. What effect did (the Korean War, Vietnam War, the 60s, women’s lib, etc) have on your life?
8. What changes have you noticed during your life in such areas as fashion, morality and technology? How do you feel about these changes?
9. What “Words of Advice” would you like to pass on to future generations in your family?


Updated: 13 April, 2006 Family and Consumer Sciences
31 May 31, 2012
Summary of Visit With Elder

Student Name: ___________________________ Date of visit: ___________

Elder’s Name: ___________________________ Age: ___________

Address: _______________________________ Telephone #: ___________

Location of Visit: ________________________ Gender: ___________

Arrival Time:__________ Departure Time:__________ Total Time:__________

Relationship to Elder: __________________________

Directions: Paper must be a minimum of 3 full pages typed, double-spaced, using Times Roman 11 or 12 point font. Complete the information on this summary sheet and staple it to the back of your paper. See General Guidelines on p. 15.

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Include all of the following in your paper:

☐ Description of the interview (include impressions, general reactions, and feelings about your visit).

☐ Describe the most interesting information you discovered about your elder’s past?

☐ Examine how the interview changed and/or confirmed your perception of the elder healthy population?