

Course Prospectus

For THL 428 Working with the Elderly in the Church

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Overview

Aging is something that everyone does but few understand, and even fewer understand well. Most everyone will grow old, and most will work with and adjust to aging relatives and friends. This course will assist students as they develop a deeper understanding of the steps mental and physical aging process. It will also help students more clearly understand the challenges brought upon by the aging process. We will examine barriers to “healthy aging” and actions that can be taken to age gracefully and in the healthiest way possible. We will also examine how church programs and services should be developed in order to keep the needs of the elderly in mind as well as to more effectively serve them.

Course description

This course deals with identifying the needs both physical and spiritual of the elderly. Emphasis is on learning and applying necessary care skills to meet these needs and developing an awareness of available community resources. Upon completion, students should be sensitive to and proactive in dealing with the challenges and needs of an aging population, e.g., spiritual/religious, social, biological, physiological, and psychological.

Prerequisites and corequisites

None.

Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

Instructional Objectives

On completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Recognize the changing demographics in church congregations
2. Identify and explain different theories on aging.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of different mental and physical challenges faced by those who are aging.
4. Select challenges faced by those caring for the aged.
5. Explain the range of emotions experienced by those going through the death and dying process.
6. Identifying key elements of church-based programming for the elderly.

Your Instructor

The instructor for this course is Dr. Scott D. Winnail, MSPH, Ph.D.



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Phone: 704-708-2292

You may email your instructor with any questions or thoughts. When doing so, be sure to include *THL428* in the subject line of your email. This will allow your instructor to know that the email is a course matter and enable him to tend to your email accordingly. Your instructor may take two to three days to respond to emails due to responsibilities outside of Living University. At the very least, an email acknowledging received email will be sent, time permitting.

Course Protocols

Technology access

This course requires web access. You also have to have an established email account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. If you do not already have it, you may download the free Adobe Acrobat reader at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> , which you may then install and use to access PDF documents on this site.

Students 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 inform your instructor by email (on the course Info webpage, click on the instructor's name and then select "Send Email").

Attendance in this course

One of the most vital aspects of the college and university experience is attendance and punctuality in the learning environment. Regularity of attendance is necessary for students to derive maximum benefit from a course and to maintain a satisfactory academic record, whether in an online course or in an on-campus course. We have noticed that students who fall behind in their coursework typically drop out. Therefore, we highly encourage you to complete your assignments on time as we want you to succeed. Remember Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go."

Please be aware that all students who fall behind in an online course and do not complete twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total assignments and other required activities for a course, on or before "Last day to withdraw from a course" as set forth in the University Academic Calendar, will receive a grade of "W" for it. After that date, the grade will be a "WF" and counted in a student's GPA. Moreover, an instructor may drop a student from a course whenever the instructor concludes that a student's class attendance or punctuality endangers the student's success or places other students at risk.

Withdrawing from or dropping this course

It is the responsibility of a student to drop a course if he or she cannot meet the requirements of the course. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing from it risks receiving a punitive grade for that course. A student who finds it necessary to drop a course after the Late Registration (Drop/Add) Period must notify the Registrar's Office in writing. Please note the following:

- If a student drops a course on or before the "Last day to withdraw from a course without a grade penalty" as published in the University Academic Calendar, even if his or her work is not of a passing grade, then a "W" is recorded.
- If a course is dropped after that date, but before the last 21 calendar days of the semester, then the instructor determines the grade. The faculty member will at this time record a grade of "W" if passing (not computed in GPA) or "WF" if failing (computed in GPA).
- Students who drop a course, yet remain in one or more other courses during the last 18 calendar days of the semester, will receive a grade of "WF."
- Students who completely withdraw from the University at any time during the semester may be

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given a grade of “W” on all courses.

If students do not initiate the withdrawal process, the instructor is required to initiate the administrative process and to record a grade of “W” or “WF” for the course depending on the date the faculty member drops the student from the course. Students who register for a course as an audit, but then withdraw will be assigned a grade of “W” for the course.

Course evaluation

We welcome your input for improving this course. Making suggestions to us by email is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course you will have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make distance learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning your experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate your letting us know how we can improve our products and services for you and other distance learners.

Textbooks

Students may order their books through the University Bookstore which is located on our main website. Living University is a participant in the Amazon Services LLC Associates Program. Be aware that the books used or referred to in this course are commercial publications. They represent the views and ideas of their authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse these texts nor vouch for their accuracy. We simply employ them in helping you master the content of the course.

Required Textbooks

Hillier, Susan M., and Georgia M. Barrow. *Aging, the Individual, and Society*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.

Lebow, Grace and Barbara Kane. *Coping with Your Difficult Older Parent*. New York: Quill, 1999. Print.

Mace, Nancy L., and Peter V. Rabins. *The 36-Hour Day*. New York: Grand Central Life & Style, 2011. Print.

Optional Books

Gentzler, Richard H. *Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2008. Print.

Loverde, Joy. *The Complete Eldercare Planner*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2009. Print.

Saxon, Sue V., Mary J. Etten and Elizabeth Perkins. *Physical Change and Aging: A Guide for the Helping Professions*. 5th ed. New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2010. Print.

Additional Readings

Most of the class readings will come from church literature and selected other texts. The appropriate web links will be designated on the course web site, and may also include other secular sources.

NOTE: Required texts and other outside readings have been chosen because of their “overall” value and relation to the course. Students should keep in mind that these sources are “secular” and although very good in many ways, not all the ideas shared by the authors are biblically accurate or even acceptable in God’s Church. The instructor will attempt to point out major errors, but ultimately the student must “sift” through the material gleaning the wise and godly elements, and dismissing the inappropriate.

Course Requirements

Due dates and extensions

Submit assignments **on** or **before** the date due. **No** late or make-up assignments will be allowed except for extreme circumstances (permission of instructor is necessary). Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

Icebreaker assignment

All students are required to post a brief biography to the Icebreaker forum **by the end of the first week of class**. In your forum post, briefly answer the following questions (please limit your comments to 200 words). The assignment is worth **20 points**.

- a. Your name and the Church area that you attend.
- b. How long you have been part of/attending the church.
- c. Why you are taking this particular course and what you hope to learn.
- d. Whether or not you have taken any other Living University courses.

Reading assignments

Students will be responsible for the weekly readings that correspond with the class lecture. Be sure to read the readings prior to logging in and completing the weekly assignment. Readings will correspond with in-class assignments and will help you be better informed. Completing the readings in advance will make the assignments make more sense to you!

Viewing assignments

Course lectures will take the format of both video and audio. PowerPoint slides will also periodically be available for download with some lectures. These slides will appear in PDF format. See the course website for details.

Discussion forums

Each week there will be forum question posted by the instructor. Minimal participation requires one posting in response the weekly question. Postings are due on or before **Tuesday at 5pm** (in whatever time zone you are in). Students should also take time at the end of each week to read/review comments from their classmates. Re-posts and additional comments or questions addressed to at least two other classmates are also encouraged and should be posted **by Wednesday** of the same week. Make sure that your comments are more than merely “personal opinion.” Your comments should be grounded in your chapter readings, lecture notes, and based on scripture. Be sure to keep the discussions positive and helpful. These weekly discussions are very important and are designed to reinforce the weekly content in a unique way, so it is important to participate in the discussions. Class participation points will be assigned in accordance with your level participation, and will be a combination of student and instructor input. There are **50 points** possible. Please note that these discussion posts will add to the interactivity of the class, allow you to know what your fellow classmates are thinking, and also get to know your

classmates better. The more you are engaged in these class discussions, the more you will learn from of the course and the more you will enjoy it.

Writing assignments

Writing assignments should follow the MLA style as set forth in *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* (14th edition) by Lester & Lester. Please cite your sources and use quotation marks where needed.

Research Paper

This assignment is an opportunity for you to research a topic related to aging, that you have always wanted to learn more about. The topic can be basically anything related to aging, including a condition related to aging, an aging-related resource, a challenge faced by many aging people, etc. If you have any questions, discuss them with the instructor. The body of the paper should be 5-7 pages plus the title page and bibliography. It should be typed and double spaced. It should include a title page, introduction, body, conclusion, and reference list or Works Cited. You should use at least 5 different sources as references. The paper will be graded based on the follow criteria: degree to which it meets the requirements, the amount of effort expended on the research (did the student ask questions and look for suitable answers), referencing, grammar and syntax. The research paper is **worth 100 points**.

Three Additional Activities: (50 points each) You are free to complete these Activities and turn them in at any time prior to and up to the date due. These Activities are designed to get you to think further on particular topics and issues related to class. Activities should be typed and double spaced. All should be 2-5 pages in length.

- A. Aging Interview:** For this assignment identify someone you know who is age 70 or older. Ask them if you can get together with them to talk about what they have learned about life and growing older. Be sure to try to talk with them “face to face” or at least on the telephone or SKYPE. Share your question list with them beforehand so that they have time to prepare. You should type up and submit your answers in a 2-5 page report. Look for answers to the following questions:
- i. Report this person’s gender and age.
 - ii. What aspects of growing older have you enjoyed? What have been the most rewarding aspects of aging?
 - iii. What aspects of aging have “caught you by surprise”? Put another way, what aspects of growing older do you wish someone would have told you about ahead of time?
 - iv. If they are in the Church, ask: “How do you think the aging process will be different in the Kingdom of God – during the millennium and White Throne Judgment period?”
 - v. What advice about aging does this person have for a younger person?
 - vi. Do they have any other thoughts or advice regarding growing older?
 - vii. *To the interviewer/student:* Now write a couple of paragraphs reflecting on your interview and what you learned. Why was the interview beneficial or not? What wisdom did you gain from the interview that you may want to pass on to others – even on to other older individuals?
- B. Community Resource Interview:** For this assignment, identify an agency or facility in your community that specializes in serving the aging population. This could be some type of *council on aging*, a senior citizen center, an adult day care center, a retirement or nursing home, etc.

Plan a face-to-face interview with a member of their staff (you will want to call and make an appointment, ask to speak with someone who can give you a good overview of the facility and its services and programs). Let them know you are doing research for a class on Working with the Elderly and that you would like to learn more about the services this entity provides (more than one student can interview the same person/agency, but each student must write up his/her own assignment). You should type up and submit your answers in a 2-5 page report. Look for answers to the following questions:

- i. What is the name of the facility and the name and position of the person you interviewed?
- ii. What is the mission of the organization?
- iii. What ages and genders and ages does the facility serve?
- iv. What type of services are provided?
- v. What if any are the costs to the clients?
- vi. What information does this person wish more people knew about their facility?
- vii. What advice does this person have for people who are younger, before they reach the age of needing the services provided by this facility?
- viii. What advice does this person have for families with aging loved ones who might need to use this facility or one like it?
- ix. *To the interviewer/student:* Now write a couple of paragraphs reflecting on your interview and what you learned. Why was the interview beneficial or not? What wisdom did you gain from the interview that you may want to pass on to others – even on to other older individuals?

C. Caregiver Interview: For this assignment identify someone you know who IS or HAS BEEN a caregiver for an aging relative. Ask them if you can get together with them to talk about what they have learned about taking care of someone who is aging. Be sure to try to talk with them “face to face” or at least on the telephone or SKYPE. Share your question list with them beforehand so that they have time to prepare. You should type up and submit your answers in a 2-5 page report. Look for answers to the following questions:

- i. Report this caregiver’s gender and relationship to the aging person.
- ii. Is the person being cared for still alive?
- iii. What fond memories does the caregiver have related to caring for their loved one? What aspect of giving care do they enjoy?
- iv. What are some of the most challenging aspects of being a caregiver for an aging person?
- v. What does the caregiver wish they had known prior to committing to becoming a caregiver for an aging person?
- vi. What family or community resources have been the most helpful?
- vii. What advice would this person give to someone who is considering becoming a caregiver for an aging person?
- viii. If they are in the Church, ask: “Based on your experiences, how do you think people will age differently in God’s Kingdom – while people are still human?”
- ix. *To the interviewer/student:* Now write a couple of paragraphs reflecting on your interview and what you learned. Why was the interview beneficial or not? What wisdom did you gain from the interview that you may want to pass on to others – even on to other older individuals?

Develop Program for Congregational Seniors: (100 points)

Seniors in our congregations are a valuable resource of information and experience. They are also important members of our church congregations that need attention, encouragement, and love. For this brief project, start by sitting down with your pastor and learning about what specific activities, if any, are done for senior citizens in the congregation. You might want to ask if he knows how many brethren in the congregation are over age 65 (even if he has a rough guess). Let him know that your class assignment requires you to develop a brief activity program for seniors and that you want to create it “hypothetically” for the congregation. Let him know that you are NOT developing a program that he will have to implement – it is just an activity for your class. Ask him if he has any thoughts about what he might like to do with and for the seniors in his congregation IF he had the time and the resources to do it. Let him know that you would be happy to share it with him when you are done, if he would like to see it.

Now, based on your conversation with him about what is already being done, and what he would like to do, think about what other needs of seniors need to be met and develop a brief program to address these needs – you can use your pastor’s ideas as a spring board and build on them, or develop something entirely different. In your program be sure to address the following:

- 1) The problem/challenge that you see facing seniors in your congregation OR an area you would like to assist them in/with;
- 2) A brief rationale for your program (why you feel it is necessary and how you think it could help seniors and others in the congregation);
- 3) The program – include details on who is targeted, who should run the program, what you plan to do, the time line for the project, the cost of the program, and how you will be able to tell if your program is a success.

You can create something totally new or model your program after something else you have seen or read about. This entire assignment should be about 5-8 pages in length. You should plan to use a minimum of 4 different resources as references. Seniors Program paper is **due at the end of the semester**.

NOTE About Interview Protocol with a member of the opposite sex/gender:

If interviewing a person of the opposite gender “face-to-face,” be sure to either have another adult with you (possibly your or their spouse), or do it in a public location – an office with an open door is fine. As Christians, we must be sure to do things in a way that is “above reproach” (Colossians 1:21-22).

Quizzes and examinations

A Mid-term exam will be given during the middle week of the semester. The exam will be comprehensive and review all the material covered to that point in the semester. The exam will be comprised of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It will be *open book* and open notebook (NOT proctored). Students are NOT however permitted to discuss exam questions and issues while taking the exam. **IMPORTANT:** It is “highly recommended” that the student prepare for this exam by studying ahead of time. Although the exam will not be timed, preparing for the exam will help the student expedite the exam taking process and greatly shorten its duration. Mid-term exam is **worth 100 points**.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined based on the number of points you have earned over the semester as follows:

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS	POINT VALUE		Letter Grade	Total Points
Icebreaker Assignment	20		A	468 or more points
Research Paper	100		B	416-467 points
Three Activities (3 @ 50 points each)	150		C	364-415 points
Class Participation and forum posts	50		D	312-363 points
Mid-Term Exam	100		F	311 points or below
Senior Program Development	100			
Total	520			

Grades are assigned in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning we believe that mastery of the subject matter is achieved when a student can demonstrate that they have achieved 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want you to earn at least 416 points in this course. If you do not do so then you have not developed the mastery we would like you to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades. Also, don't go on a guilt trip if you get a C. That is an honorable grade, but if you receive a D or below, then you might want to retake the course. Mastery of the material is what your goal should be.

Academic Irregularity

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were the writer's own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned. In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members may refuse to grade such papers or examinations, completely or in part, and to record each of them as a failure. If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of f;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University

Course Outline

Week	Topics
1	Aging in America and Beyond
2	Stereotypes and Views of Aging
3	Social and Psychological Theories of Aging
4	Physical Health and Wellbeing
5	Mental Health and Aging
6	Importance of Family, Friends and Community
7	Finances and Lifestyles
8	Living Environments and Conditions
9	Caring for the Very Old
10	Coping with Challenging Loved Ones
11	Dementia
12	Death and Dying
13	Preventing Decline and Planning Programs
14	Mental Health of the Caregiver
15	Conclusion and Wrap Up