**GERONTOLOGY**

**M.A. in Gerontology**

The M.A. in Gerontology is informed by the realization that aging is multifaceted, touching every aspect of life. It is a physical, psychological, social, cultural, economic, and spiritual reality. As such, it can only be understood from a broad-based approach with the inclusion of many academic disciplines. In addition, gerontology practice requires finely honed skills in specific areas of practice. Thus, although this is a broad-based, interdisciplinary program, further specialization is developed through a well-designed thesis practicum and integrative papers.

The M.A. in Gerontology will prepare graduates for professional gerontological practice in a wide variety of settings. Graduates will be able to:

- Assume leadership or management positions in programs, institutions, or agencies purposed to work with older persons or dedicated to addressing challenges and opportunities associated with the aging of the population.
- Develop programs that are well-conceived, professionally planned, and effectively implemented.
- Write grants to support the implementation of new ideas and initiatives.
- Conduct training programs and events for professionals needing to keep up-to-date on the latest trends and findings.
- Provide direct service to the older population through social service, church-based, or mission organizations.
- Use appropriate research processes and results in a variety of gerontology practice settings.

The program is designed to work with students from a broad range of backgrounds and specialties. The goal of the M.A. in Gerontology is to extend and enhance the skills and knowledge of students gained through previous experience and training, and to help them to apply this to the field of gerontological practice. Students are challenged to see gerontological practice as serving with older adults and working together with them to create inter-generational communities that embody principles of justice, fairness, and continued learning and growth for all of their members.

**Program Design**

- The program is designed to be completed in two academic years and includes a short break in the summer.
- Courses are generally taken one at a time, with the exception of the Integrative Seminar and Thesis Practicum.
- Classes meet one evening a week, with the exception of the Integrative Seminar and Thesis Practicum.
- A supportive learning community is achieved through the cohort model—a small group of students progressing through a degree program together.

**Certificate in Gerontology**

The graduate Certificate in Gerontology program provides an opportunity for those who have completed a bachelor’s degree to acquire a greater understanding of gerontology theory, research, and practice.

This certificate is designed to provide students from many backgrounds with the knowledge and training they will need to better serve older adults and/or pursue a career in gerontology. Students will explore current research and local, online, and statewide resources on aging and gerontology, and will become familiar with agencies, organizations, and programs (public and private) that offer services and fund projects that impact the aging population. The courses address key content and practice areas in the field of gerontology: social and cultural aspects of aging, adult development, construction of social policy, health, and the changing makeup of the aging population. Students will acquire knowledge, develop skills, and obtain an understanding of the field of gerontology that will prepare them to work with older adults in a variety of fields and occupations.

**Program Design**

- The program is designed to be completed in one academic year.
- Courses are generally taken one at a time.
- Classes meet one evening a week.

**GRTG605 • Health and Aging.** 3 Credits.

Examination of health as shalom, well-being, or wholeness. Normal physical, psychological, and spiritual changes of aging will be addressed. Identification of ways to promote healthy aging and common health concerns of the elderly.
GRTG610 • Adult Development and Aging. 3 Credits.
In-depth understanding of the developmental processes related to aging from a psychosocial perspective. Learners explore age-change theories and human adaptations in terms of mental health, personality stability, sensory aging related to cognitive processes, learning, and social cognition. Discussion of relationship issues, gender roles, death and bereavement, occupational patterns, retirement, and leisure.

GRTG615 • Aging and Diversity: Class, Gender, and Ethnicity. 3 Credits.
Exploration of the meaning of diversity, broadly defined to include differences in types of community, housing, ethnicity, physical status, and age, and examination of this range of diversity as it applies to the field and practice of gerontology.

GRTG620 • Spirituality and Aging. 3 Credits.
Issues such as meaning (and loss of meaning), grief, ambiguous loss, virtue ethics, and wisdom as they relate to aging persons. Examination of ethnic and gender influences on the experience of spirituality in the aging process from a cross-cultural perspective. Models of assessment of spiritual needs will be presented.

GRTG640 • Policy Issues in Aging. 3 Credits.
Major public policies and programs benefitting older persons. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Older Americans Act. Evolving federal, state, local, and individual roles. How laws play out in community. Differential impact of policy proposals on elderly populations, with reference to sex, race, class, and urban/rural differences. Strategies and tactics to influence development of public policy.

GRTG645 • Leadership and Program Management. 3 Credits.
Review of leadership and management styles. Styles identified will be applied to various current and potential positions in the field of gerontology.

GRTG650 • Project Design and Management. 3 Credits.
Preparation of a detailed project proposal for work to be done during a practicum. Write literature review specifying framework using a theoretical perspective from the field of gerontology. State clear learning goals with realistic expectations of practical results. Obtain approvals from program director and site supervisor.

GRTG750 • Master's Project and Integrative Seminar. 3 Credits.
Meet regularly with cohort and instructor(s) to share progress on projects and work on final papers. Explore professional growth and career development, and investigate issues related to integration of faith with professional and academic aspects of gerontological practice.
Prerequisites: GRTG650. Grade exceptions: Graded on an S/U basis.

GRTG790 • Thesis Practicum. 6 Credits.
Intensive experience in the field of gerontology. Students design and carry out applied research projects with clearly delineated learning goals that demonstrate mastery over the chosen subject matter and its relationship to the discipline of gerontology. Final thesis paper exhibits scholarly standards of excellence.
Grade exceptions: Graded on an S/U basis.

PHIL615 • Ethics. 3 Credits.
Introduction to the basic concepts of ethics and examination of practical applications in the fields of gerontology and gerontological practice in a wide range of settings.

SOCS600 • Social Gerontology. 3 Credits.
Study of the aging process. Focus is on how larger social and cultural contexts shape aging processes and how, in turn, these shape the societies and cultures in which they occur. Particular focus is on developing a holistic understanding of aging.