



Lifespan Gerontology Certificate Program

in partnership with the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center (FLGEC) at the University of Rochester

2023-2024 Course Catalogue*

The Lifespan Gerontology Certificate Program in partnership with the Finger Lakes Geriatric Education Center (FLGEC) at the University of Rochester is a foundational gerontology education to foster intergenerational connection and deepen understanding of a wide range of age-related topics for professionals and community members. Lifespan of Greater Rochester is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers # SW-0089.

Overall goals of program:

- 1) Deepen understanding of wide-ranging aging and longevity topics.
- 2) Foster intergenerational learning and understanding.
- 3) Integrate themes of equity, justice, and person-centered care throughout the course with mindfulness of the intersection of experiences and identities (ie: intersection of ageism, racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, etc.).

To receive the certificate, regular attendance and active participation is required. There are 8 units and the number of classes within each unit varies. There are 32 classes (80 contact hours) total. Opportunities to make up missed classes are available.

Unit 1: Introduction

UNIT OVERVIEW: This one-session introduction unit will provide students with a foundation in gerontology topics before we dive deeper into themes and specific units. Session taught by Dr. Rick Machemer, PhD, co-founder of the Lifespan Gerontology Program in 1981.

Introduction to Gerontology & to Theories of Aging

September 13, 2023

Gerontology is the study of the process of aging and its impact on of adults who are older. That study approaches the aging process from numerous academic and professional perspectives. This class forms the foundation for the Lifespan Gerontology Certificate Program by providing an overview of the various subtypes of gerontological study and the implications of aging on numerous aspects of the lives and functions of persons who are older. We will identify and discuss theories of aging with the primary focus on biological aspects of aging as we begin the Bio-Medical Aspects of Aging unit.

Objectives:

1. Define gerontology and briefly explore its subtypes.
2. Distinguish between gerontology and geriatrics.
3. Explore a variety of the numerous theories of aging.

Unit 2: Biological & Medical Aspects of Aging

UNIT DESCRIPTION: This six-session unit focuses on bio-medical aspects of aging. Students will learn how the human body system is affected by chronological aging and how different bio-medical disciplines approach age-related topics. Sessions taught by a biologist, pharmacist, and physicians.

Physiological Aspects of Aging, Part 1 and Part 2

September 20 and 27, 2023

Physiology is the branch of biology in which one studies the “normal” functions of living organisms and of each organ and organ system in that organism. In Physiological Aspects of Aging Parts 1 & 2, we will describe the impact of chronological aging on the various functional systems of a human. In addition, we will identify environmental and genetic factors that may/do impact the outcomes of the aging process as well as discuss the ways physiological aspects of aging may/can be modified.

Objectives:

1. Describe the impact of chronological aging on functional systems of a human.
2. Summarize the variety of environmental factors that may/can affect physiological aspects of aging.
3. Discuss how genes influence physiological aspects of aging.
4. Discuss the ways in which physiological aspects of aging may/can be modified.

Functional Assessment of Older Adults

October 4, 2023

How do we define functioning and quality of life in older age? This module will delve into tools used in functional assessments and their role in care plan development. Students will review case studies and critically examine the role of functional assessment tools.

Objectives:

1. Identify models of functional assessment.
2. Distinguish the value of functional assessment versus medical diagnosis.
3. Discuss the ways in which the information obtained from an assessment is used in creating a care plan.
4. Explain human-centered strategies to functional assessment.

Polypharmacy

October 11, 2023

More than 40% of older adults in the United States regularly take 5 or more prescription drugs. In this class, students will explore the relationship between age-related changes and the use of medications, including over-the-counter prescriptions, non-prescription medications, herbal supplements, and vitamin supplements. Patient education strategies will also be identified.

Objectives:

1. Describe the interplay between age-related biological changes (senescence) and medication therapy.
2. Recognize common drugs and drug classes that are potentially inappropriate for use in older adults.
3. Apply sound surveillance and patient education strategies to minimize drug-related problems.

Medical Perspectives on Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias (ADRD)

October 18, 2023

According to the Alzheimer's Association, between 2000 and 2019, deaths from heart-related illness decreased 7.3% while deaths from Alzheimer's dementia have increased 145%. The disease diagnosis processes will be reviewed, including the differential diagnosis of the various types of dementia. Case studies and current research will additionally be discussed.

Objectives:

1. Identify the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia.
2. Review the complex brain changes related to dementia and how they relate to memory, mood, and function.
3. Describe current research regarding the causes and treatment of dementia.

Aging & Lifestyle Medicine

October 25, 2023

As people are living longer, the prevalence of chronic, age-related conditions have significantly increased. Lifestyle medicine is defined as an evidence-based medical approach, which incorporates behavioral interventions to prevent and treat chronic diseases related to lifestyle. Uncover the impact of nutrition, exercise, and other lifestyle interventions on health, wellness, and quality of life of older adults.

Objectives:

1. Define lifestyle medicine and its role in geriatric medicine.
2. Identify evidence-based tools and approaches included in lifestyle medicine.
3. Reflect on the potential impact and strategies to increase equitable access of diverse older adults to this branch of medicine.

Unit 3: Jurisprudential Gerontology

*UNIT DESCRIPTION: Jurisprudential gerontology specializes in the study of laws and legal structures, which affect older adults. In this four-session unit, we will explore how law, policy, and research interact in the field of gerontology. This unit is taught by a lawyer, aging services providers with expertise in Medicare and Medicaid, the CEO/President of Lifespan, an elder law attorney, and a **PhD gerontological researcher, respectively.***

Insurance for Older Adults: Medicare and Medicaid

November 1, 2023

On July 30, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the bill that led to Medicare and Medicaid. Learn the history and benefits of each program. Students will gain tools to better understand and navigate Medicare and Medicaid services.

Objectives:

1. Recall history and purpose of Medicaid and Medicare.
2. Recognize the differences between each program and key features of each.
3. Describe the interplay when someone is accessing both Medicaid and Medicare.
4. List strategies navigate accessing unbiased, nothing-to-sell information on Medicare and Medicaid in your county and community.

Foundations of Social & Public Policy

November 8, 2023

In 1965, the passing of the Older Americans Act was the first federal law to establish services for older adults. This class will discuss emerging trends in aging social and public policy and how to advocate on the federal, state, and local levels. We will explore the impact of existing policies and the legislative process needed to create new policies.

Objectives:

1. Review the Older Americans Act and the initiatives it established.
2. Identify emerging trends in gerontological social and public policy.
3. Describe the impact of existing policies and understand the legislative process needed to create new policies and advocate on federal, state, and local levels.

Legal Aspects of Aging: Advance Care Planning

November 15, 2023

As we age, which legal documents are especially important to have in place? We will discuss current legalities regarding Powers of Attorney, guardianship, wills, trusts and estates, and health care proxies. Additionally, we will discuss tips to navigate accessing resources and knowing when to get connected to an elder law attorney.

Objectives:

1. Describe advance care planning legal documents (Powers of Attorney, Guardianship, Wills, Trusts & Estates, Health Care Proxies).
2. Summarize tips to navigate accessing resources and knowing when to get connected to an elder law attorney.
3. Identify two reasons why it is important to specifically work with an elder law attorney.

We will not have class on Wednesday, November 22 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Innovative Brain Health Research & Implications

November 29, 2023

A healthy brain is key for living longer, healthier, and more meaningfully. However, research has largely overlooked the importance of psychosocial factors (e.g., coping, resiliency, lifestyles) for brain health. In this class, we will highlight the next era of brain health research that shifts the focus toward preventing illness, promoting optimal brain functioning, and enhancing quality of life with aging. An emphasis will be placed on translating the latest science into clinical practice and integrating digital health technologies.

Objectives:

1. Provide a biopsychosocial definition of brain health with aging
2. Highlight scientific initiatives, informed by the proposed biopsychosocial definition, that will lead the next area of brain health research, practice, and training
3. Explore the potential for digital health technologies to enhance intervention delivery and research
4. Discuss the implications of this research on clinical practice and public health

Unit 4: Environmental Gerontology

UNIT DESCRIPTION: *Environmental gerontology is the study of aging as it relates to one's physical and social environments. In this two-session unit, students will gain insight on how one's environment impacts overall well-being as we age. Sessions taught by a registered Occupational Therapist (OT) and MSW/leading Culture Change advocate, respectively.*

Age-Friendly Livable Communities

December 6, 2023

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2034 the nation will have more people age 65 or older than under 18. By 2060, nearly 1 in 4 people in the U.S. will be at least 65 years old. This demographic shift presents an opportunity for communities that are prepared. Well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages.

Objectives:

1. Define age-friendly, livable communities.
2. Identify the domains of age-friendly communities.
3. Identify examples of age-friendliness.
4. Discuss age-friendly strategies that benefit people of all ages and abilities.

Occupational Therapy Strategies to Age in Place

December 13, 2023

Occupational therapy encourages people across the lifespan to incorporate the therapeutic use of daily activities (or occupations) to thrive in one's everyday life. Occupational therapy provides a framework to encourage independence, harness existing strengths, and modify one's environment to work best for you as you age. In this class we will discuss such strategies and how to access occupational therapy services.

Objectives:

1. Explain a foundational understanding of occupational therapy.
2. Identify occupational therapy strategies, techniques, tools, and equipment to best adapt to and thrive in one's environment.
3. Summarize the home assessment process through case studies and discussion.
4. Describe how to access occupational therapy services.

We will have a winter recess after the December 13, 2023 class and resume on January 17, 2024.

Introduction to Gerontology & Social Theories on Aging will be offered again on January 10, 2024 for the Spring Cohort.

Unit 5: Equity & Justice in Aging

UNIT DESCRIPTION: In this seven-session unit, we will discuss how equity, justice, and access impacts older adults and family care partners. This unit will be taught by MSWs and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) educators.

LGBTQ+ Safe Space: Serving Aging Pioneers

January 17, 2024

This session will enhance the understanding and inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities while also looking at the realities of today's Rainbow seniors. We will first examine the variety of identities that make up the LGBTQ+ communities, and review what has been the rapid social change around LGBTQ+ identities. Much of that social change was led by brave people who started to come out of the closet in the 1950's who are now in need of elder services and care. Because of perceived barriers, these pioneers of change may find it hard to embrace their identities as they face the realities and vulnerabilities of needing assistance and care.

Objectives:

1. Review frameworks to contextualize understanding of gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality.
2. Explain historical contexts and differentiate generational experiences of LGBTQ+ older adults.
3. Reflect on language use and terminology as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community and LGBTQ+ older adults in particular.
4. Identify and discuss how aging services and long-term care communities can better support and affirm LGBTQ+ older adults.

Intergenerational Trauma & Resilience

January 24, 2024

What are the long-term effects of trauma across the lifespan both personally and interpersonally? Trauma and resilience are transmitted across generations of a family, yet trauma can be experienced at any point in one's life. This topic will define trauma and resilience, identify assessment tools, describe effective means of addressing and healing trauma, and explore the relationship between trauma and resilience.

Objectives:

1. Describe the impact of multi generational trauma and resilience on older adults.
2. List the variety of environmental factors that affect multi generational trauma.
3. Define trauma and resilience across the lifespan and how it is passed on and/or healed across the generations of a family.
4. Identify assessment tools and approaches to prevent additional harm when addressing trauma.
5. Summarize cultural ethno-relativism and a professional's responsibilities to develop the empathy, skills, and the knowledge necessary to work with diverse groups of older adults and their families.

Health Literacy for Health Equity

January 31, 2024

More than other populations in the United States, older adults utilize more health services and live with more chronic conditions. To prevent and manage health conditions, it is crucial for older adults and family care partners to access reliable health information in an effective manner. According to the CDC, “Differences in access to formal education and literacy training, the complexity and technical nature of health information, and the natural processes of aging may compromise older adults’ capacity to use health information and make sense of messages.” This class will explore strategies to improve health literacy and access for older adults and family care partners.

Objectives:

- List disparities of older adults and family care partners accessing and understanding health information.
- Identify strategies and tools to increase older adult health literacy.
- Reflect on your own verbal and written communication style and ways to communicate more effectively.

February 7, 2024

Objectives:

1. Define intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).
2. Explore the history of treatment of people with IDD.
3. Summarize aging demographic & health trends nationally and in New York State, particularly their relevance to older adults with IDD and their families/caregivers.
4. List solutions towards reducing health disparities for adults with IDD.
5. Identify programs that address the needs of older adults with IDD and their caregivers.

Indigenous Perspectives on Aging

February 14, 2024

How do we decolonize our understanding of aging and the value of elders? We will build deeper understanding of indigenous perspectives on aging and the role of elders in Native Hawaiian, Native Alaskan, and American Indian communities. We will discuss the intergenerational historical context and implications of the colonization of native land and identify ways in which aging services and long-term care communities can better support and work with Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, and American Indian older adults.

Objectives:

1. Differentiate between indigenous and non-indigenous views and perspectives on elders and aging in general.
2. Identify ways in which the knowledge and wisdom of elders is shared across generations.
3. Summarize the intergenerational historical context and implications of the colonization of native land.
4. Identify how aging services and long-term care communities can better support and affirm Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, and American Indian older adults. Additionally, reflect on the role of language and culture.

Still Kicking: Confronting Ageism & Ableism

February 21, 2024

Based on a talk by Ashton Applewhite, this course is designed to inform the emerging conversation around the intersection of ageism and ableism: how they work, how they differ and overlap, and why it matters.

Objectives:

1. Define and discuss ageism and ableism.
2. Acknowledge and understand our own prejudices as they apply to ageism and ableism.
3. Discuss the impact of ageism and ableism on communities and society as a whole.

Deaf Culture & Aging

February 28, 2024

This session will define and discuss Deaf Culture as it relates to aging and elderhood. The unique strengths and needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (DHoH) older adults as well as the impact of historic events and societal inequities will be shared. We will delve into the varied experiences of the DHoH Community, considering intersectional identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, etc. Students will identify and discuss how aging services and long-term care communities can better support and work with Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing older adults.

Objectives:

1. Define and discuss Deaf Culture as it relates to aging, elderhood, and long-term care.
2. Explain historical contexts and differentiate generational experiences of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing older adults.
3. Reflect on language use and terminology as it relates to DHoH Community.
4. Describe the varied experiences of the DHoH Community, considering intersectional identities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, etc.
5. Identify and discuss how aging services and long-term care communities can better support and work with DHoH older adults.

Unit 6: End-of-Life Care

UNIT DESCRIPTION: In this four-session unit, we will deepen our understanding of hospice and palliative care, how to access services, and how to best communicate about issues related to death, dying, and critical illness. This unit will be taught by hospice & palliative care physicians, a hospice chaplain, and a bereavement specialist.

Hospice & Palliative Care

March 6, 2024

What is the difference between hospice and palliative care? This class will explore the principles, components, benefits, and overlap between hospice and palliative care. Learn about the multidisciplinary care team, how to access and reduce barriers to hospice and palliative care services, and emerging trends in the field.

Objectives:

1. Define, compare, and contrast hospice and palliative care. Identify the principles, components, and benefits of each.
2. Explain how to access hospice and palliative care and strategies to talk with families and individuals who may benefit from hospice and/or palliative care.
3. Identify barriers to accessing hospice.
4. Identify emerging trends in hospice and palliative care.

Spirituality & End-of-Life Care

March 13, 2024

As a part of hospice benefit, chaplains are integrated as part of the care team to assess and care for a person's spiritual needs at end-of-life. This class will focus on the spiritual needs of people as they age and at end-of-life. Spiritual assessment tools incorporated in hospitals and community hospice will be identified. Discussion will explore how to establish guidelines for professional practice that address the spiritual needs of older adults, caregivers, and professionals in the field of aging.

Objectives:

1. Define the role of chaplains in hospital and community hospice settings.
2. Identify spiritual needs of people as they age and at end-of-life.
3. List spiritual assessment tools and guidelines for professional practice that address the spiritual needs of older adults, caregivers, and professionals in the field of aging.
4. Describe best practices in working with people of different religious and spiritual backgrounds.

Ethics at End-of-Life

March 20, 2024

Ethical issues have increasingly been debated as medical technology now has the capacity to prolong life almost indefinitely. Medical advancements have helped to prolong life, allowing more people living to older ages. How paternalistic should family members and society be when dealing with a person who is losing competency? At end-of-life, how do we best honor someone's self-determination and autonomy?

Objectives:

1. Identify the various types of advance directives and what they imply or direct ethically and legally.
2. Summarize issues of capacity and how that influences the use of advanced directives.
3. Describe the options available to families and health care professionals in the absence of advance directives or knowledge of the person's wishes.
4. List the ways to motivate adults to discuss their wishes with family, friends, or other competent individuals.

Grief & Bereavement

March 27, 2024

The topics of death, dying, bereavement, and grief are not frequently discussed in dominant U.S. culture, making it more difficult to cope when death or other losses occur. This class focuses on the topics of grief and bereavement, particularly as they relate to grief and loss experienced by older adults.

Objectives:

1. Define grief and bereavement.
2. Identify models of grief, the range of types of grief, including ambiguous loss, anticipatory grief, disenfranchised grief, etc.
3. Describe the role of bereavement services included in the hospice benefit and explore helping techniques for those experiencing grief.
4. List the ways in which loss, separation, and grief are influenced by or influence other psychological, social, and cultural factors.

Unit 7: Psychosocial Aspects of Aging

UNIT DESCRIPTION: In this three-session unit, we will delve into the more psycho-social aspects of aging including sexuality, mental health, and social, communication, and relational strategies when there is a critical or chronic condition. This unit will be taught by LMSWs, gerontologists, and a family therapist.

Sexuality & Aging

April 3, 2024

Sexuality and sexual needs are a normal part of life until death. This class provides context to understand human sexual anatomy and human sexual response through the life cycle and explore your own feelings, attitudes, and biases about sexuality and older age. The access to appropriate health care, health education, and support regarding sexual health at older age will also be addressed. Additionally, this course discusses sexuality as it relates to older adults living with chronic physical disabilities.

Objectives:

1. Summarize human sexual anatomy and sexual response throughout the life cycle.
2. Identify personal feelings, attitudes, and biases against older adults and their sexuality.
3. List the challenges of sexual needs and behaviors in congregate living.
4. Describe sexual assessment tools.
5. Identify key concepts in sex education for older adults.

Mental Health Assessment of Older Adults

April 10, 2024

Mental health care is a key component of quality of life. This session highlights causes of change in mental health status of older adults and how to best assess and then work with individuals to manage their mental health symptoms. The role of family, friends, care providers, and communities will also be taken into consideration.

Objectives:

1. Identify causes of change in mental health status for older adults.
2. Describe the symptoms and manifestations of mental health needs in older adults.
3. List the role of family, care providers and professionals in assessing and treating mental health issues.
4. Identify assessment tools that may be used with older adults.
5. List community resources for treating and managing mental health symptoms of older adults.

Wednesday, April 17th will be held for a make-up class.

Family-Framed Care: The Dynamics of Family Caregiving

April 24, 2024

Join us to explore the dynamics of giving and receiving care between family and friends. Families are complex with their own strengths and challenges, making each family caregiving circumstances unique. This class will explore the various elements impacting family caregiving, including navigating past and current patterns of interaction, accessing health and community resources, coming to terms with changes in family roles, and grieving the losses experienced by those giving and receiving care.

Objectives:

1. Define family-framed care.
2. Describe the impact of care partnering on relationships, jobs, and holistic wellness.
3. Identify the common difficult emotions experienced by family care partners, such as grief, resentment, depression, and anger, and how professionals, communities, and systems can best support care partners.
4. Summarize the perspective of the individual receiving care and the interdependent relationship of care partners.

Unit 8: Community-Based Services & Supports

UNIT DESCRIPTION: In this three-session unit, we will explore examples of community-based programs addressing health, wellness and safety needs of older adults. These units will be taught by an LMSW, a Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC), and a gerontologist/Master Trainer in multiple evidence-based programs for older adults, respectively.

Evidence-Based Education & Wellness Programming for Older Adults

May 1, 2024

A Matter of Balance, Aging Mastery Program, Chronic Disease Self-Management, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, and Tai chi for Arthritis, are just a few examples of evidence-based programs offered by community-based services for older adults. Peer support, social interaction, and trained facilitators serve as a means of intervention to promote emotional and physical wellness. Join us to learn about the history of this type of programming, identify the strengths and limitations of this type of programming, and experience a group activity from an evidence-based educational program.

Objectives:

1. Describe the history and purpose of evidence-based community education and wellness programming.
2. Identify strengths and limitations of this type of intervention.
3. Explain what prospective participants can expect from evidence-based programs.

Social Perspectives on Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementias (ADRD) & Community Supports

May 8, 2024

Alzheimer's disease has been deemed "the longest goodbye". For individuals living with Alzheimer's and related dementias (ADRD) and their family and friends, the disease progression affects social connections, interactions, and communication. Case examples and current research on best practices will additionally be discussed.

Objectives:

1. Summarize the anticipatory grief and ambiguous loss experienced by people living with ADRD and their care partners.
2. List communication strategies to best interact with and respect people living with ADRD.
3. Identify ways of social connection and communication in later stages of the disease.

Elder Abuse & Prevention

May 15, 2024

Approximately 1 in 10 Americans 60 years of age and older have experienced some form of elder abuse. Elder abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, exploitation, and neglect. We will identify the signs of all types of elder abuse and highlight current research regarding the causes of elder abuse. Additionally, we will share different interventions for older adults who are being abused and explore means of prevention.

Objectives:

1. Identify the types of elder abuse.
2. Describe the challenges older survivors of abuse may face.
3. List key facts about New York state elder abuse statistics.
4. Identify strategies and community resources to prevent, identify, and address elder abuse and neglect.

Substance Misuse in Older Adults

May 22, 2024

Misuse of substances, particularly alcohol and prescription drugs, among older adults is one of the fastest growing health problems in the United States. Classroom discussion will explore aspects of substance misuse identification, intervention, assessment, linkage, counseling, and intensive geriatric care management. Case presentations and didactic component will focus primarily on stigma and barriers to treatment for older adults.

Objectives:

1. Discuss substance misuse identification, intervention, assessment.
2. Identify resources and methods to support older adults struggling with substance misuse.
3. Explore benefits of counseling and intensive geriatric care management.
4. Examine the stigma and barriers to treatment for older adults.

Optional Certificate Conferral Ceremony & Celebration

May 29, 2024 at 4:00 PM