

California State University, Sacramento
GERO 123 (Sections 01 and 02) – Research on Aging & the Life Course
Gerontology Department, College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies
Spring 2023

Class Time (find your section):

- Section 01: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:15pm
- Section 02: Thursdays, 3:00-4:15pm

Class Location: Amador Hall 220

Final Exam: Due Friday, May 19 (in Canvas)

Course Format: Hybrid

Units: 3

Prerequisites: None

Professor: Catheryn Koss, JD, PhD

Office: Amador Hall 553D

Office Hours (in-person or virtual): Tuesdays &

Thursdays, 1:00-2:30pm, or by appointment

Phone: 916-278-4341

E-mail: koss@csus.edu

Welcome to *Research on Aging & the Life Course*. Over the semester, we will become better consumers and producers of research on aging and the life course. We will practice finding, analyzing, evaluating, and applying existing gerontological research published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. We will also gain hands-on experience conducting research. Skills we will develop include defining a research question, selecting and adapting data collection tools, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, and presenting results in narrative and visual formats. Along the way, we will learn about how gerontological theories frame and guide research and tackle some special logistical and ethical challenges researchers face when conducting research with and about older adults.



CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Analysis, evaluation, and application of existent gerontological research. Hands-on practice carrying out aging-related research projects, including defining the research question, selecting data collection tools, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, and presenting results in narrative and visual formats. Special emphasis on connecting gerontological theory, research, and interdisciplinary practice, accommodating participants with sensory, physical, or cognitive limitations, and ethical issues.

GENERAL EDUCATION (AREA B5)

This course fulfills the Area B5 General Education (GE) requirement by meeting the following criteria:

Area B-5: Further Studies

Students will be able to do one or more of the following:

- *Cite critical observations, underlying assumptions and limitations to explain and apply important ideas and models in one or more of the following: physical science, life science, mathematics or computer science.*
- *Recognize evidence-based conclusions and form reasoned opinions about science-related matters of personal, public and ethical concern.*
- *Discuss historical or philosophical perspectives pertaining to the practice of science or mathematics.*

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES & ASSESSMENT

At the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. recognize evidence-based conclusions and form reasoned opinions about science-related matters of personal, public and ethical concern (GE Area B5)
2. find and use common information resources, engage in specialized library research, use computers, and seek out appropriate expert opinion and advice (GE Area B)
3. use mathematical ideas to accomplish a variety of tasks (GE Area B)
4. analyze, evaluate, and apply published research findings
5. explain how gerontological theories frame and guide research
6. identify and address barriers that may limit participation in research studies by certain groups, such as members of racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ elders, older adults with disabilities, and elders living in long-term care facilities
7. adapt quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to accommodate participants with sensory, physical, or cognitive limitations
8. explain and evaluate basic research design (i.e., research question, theory and hypotheses, participant selection, data collection and analysis)
9. clearly report research findings in narrative, tabular, and graphic formats
10. analyze ethical issues, including participant consent, confidentiality, mandatory reporting of abuse, and conducting research in institutional settings and/or with vulnerable populations

Expected Learning Outcomes will be measured by the following:

- Weekly on-line and in-class learning activities (ELOs 1-10)
- Five graded on-line assignments (ELOs 1-10)
- Final exam (ELOs 1-6, 10)

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no required text. All required course materials will be available on-line through Canvas. Not all course materials will be posted at the beginning of the semester. Some information will be posted after specific material is covered. Please check Canvas regularly.

To access course materials and complete your assignments, you will need a computer with an internet connection, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. You can download a [free student version of Microsoft Office](#). Although I would prefer you use Microsoft Word and Excel, you may complete most of the coursework with Google Docs and Google Sheets. The support I can provide in these programs is more limited.



Our classroom has computers you can use during class time. You may also [borrow a laptop computer](#). To get the technology and support you need to succeed in this course, contact [Information Resources and Technology](#) at (916) 278-7337, or email servicedesk@csus.edu.

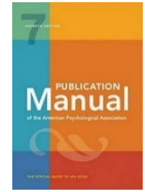
Here are some recommended books that you may find helpful as you work through the course material (optional, all print books available from the CSUS library)

- *Scientific Inquiry in Social Work* by Matthew DiCarlo (ebook available): <https://scientificinquiryinsocialwork.pressbooks.com/>
- *Understanding and Evaluating Research: A Critical Guide* by Sue McGregor

- *Research Design in Aging and Social Gerontology* by Joyce Weil
- *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research* by Russell Schutt

APA FORMATTING & CITATION GUIDELINES

We will be using formatting and citation rules published by the American Psychological Association (APA) in the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. You may choose to purchase a copy of this book. The manual is also available from the CSUS library. Be sure to use the 7th edition published in 2020.



Another good source of help with APA citations is the Purdue University On-line Writing Lab website: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

CSU, Dominguez Hills has created a nice website and video about APA citations in papers: <https://libguides.csudh.edu/citation/apa-7>

Be very cautious about copying and pasting citations from on-line sources. They are often incorrect. If you do copy and paste a citation, check to see that it conforms to APA citation formatting rules.

CLASS CORRESPONDENCE

The best way to communicate with other students or with me is through Canvas email. You may also email me at koss@csus.edu. If you email me directly, **please include “GERO 123” in the subject line and sign your full name (not just your first name)**. It may also be helpful if you let me know the section you are in (either by number or what day of the week we meet). I will strive to respond to messages within two business days.



CLASS MEETINGS

During class, I will review the previous week’s materials, with special emphasis on content that students struggled with in the prior Learn & Practice. We will also carry out hand-on activities designed to deepen your understanding of key concepts and give you practice applying what you are learning.

If you are not able to attend class on the day your section is scheduled to meet, you may attend class during the other section’s class time. Please email me ahead of time to let me know you will be attended a different class time.

OFFICE HOURS ARE FOR YOU!

If you would like to visit one-on-one with me either in person or virtually, my office hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. If these office hours do not work with your schedule, I am also happy to make an appointment to visit with you. Please just email me at koss@csus.edu or through Canvas to set up an appointment.



You may log into virtual office hours by clicking on the following link:

<https://csus.zoom.us/j/2507778940>

Or, you may join by telephone by calling the following number and then entering in the meeting ID:

Dial (669) 900-6833

Enter Meeting ID: 250 777 8940

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

To succeed in this course, you will need to:

- Start early so you have enough time to do your best
- Review, reflect on, and apply feedback
- Complete all practice and graded assignments carefully and timely
- Carefully read and follow directions
- Ask questions and seek help



Part of becoming a better researcher is to engage in self-reflection. To be an effective team member, it is also important that we learn how to give and receive constructive feedback. I will strive to do the following and I ask that you also try to:

- Be kind enough to recognize what we did well and brave enough to acknowledge areas where we could do better
- Frame feedback in affirming and non-personal terms
- Appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another
- Value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- Keep confidential discussions that are of a personal nature
- During and after discussing distressing topics, take care of yourself and one another

Your success is important to me. We will all need accommodation because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we will develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

There are many services offered by CSUS to help you succeed in this course and throughout your academic career. I encourage you to take advantage. Links to the following resources are also available in Canvas.



[Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support \(CARES\)](#)

If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. The CARES office is located in the University Union, 1st Floor, Room 1260. You can contact the office by calling (916) 278-5138 or emailing cares@csus.edu.

[Academic Advising](#)

The Academic Advising Center offers new student orientation, mandatory freshman advising, and advising on General Education and graduation requirements for all students.

[IRT Service Desk \(Service Desk\)](#)

The Information, Resources, and Technology (IRT) helpdesk provides assistance to students, faculty and staff in their use of campus technologies.

[Services to Students with Disabilities](#)

Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided. SSWD is located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Please feel free to set up an appointment with me to discuss your approved accommodation. This syllabus and course materials are available in alternate formats upon request. In addition, as your professor, I feel I have a responsibility to actively support culturally diverse learners with a wide range of learning styles and abilities and to be responsive in my teaching practices. Feel free to discuss your progress in this course with me at any time.

[Student Affairs](#)

If you need help discerning who to see to get a question answered, advice on which classes to take, or information about how to obtain financial aid, Student Affairs may be able to assist you.

[Student Health and Counseling Services](#)

Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling; athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.

[University Library](#)

The Sac State University Library provides access to a wide array of workshops, research guides, subject specialists, databases, electronic journals, and other electronic resources.

[Reading & Writing Center](#)

The University Writing Center can help you at any stage in your reading and writing processes: coming up with a topic, developing and organizing a draft, understanding difficult texts, or developing strategies to become a better editor.

ACTIVITIES & ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW

All due dates are listed in the Week-at-a-Glance in Canvas. Unless instructed otherwise, please submit all assignments electronically through Canvas. If you do not know how to submit assignments in Canvas, you can get help from [IRT](#).



Do not wait until the last minute to submit your assignments. If you have difficulties submitting an assignment, please email your friendly professor immediately so we can resolve the situation.

Weekly On-Line and In-Class Practice Activities (5 points each)

Throughout the semester, you will be exposed to and practice applying course content through weekly on-line practice assignments (Learn & Practices, accessible via Canvas) and in-class activities. These are designed to give you the freedom to practice and make mistakes without worrying about your grade.

You will be able to see correct answers and feedback immediately after you submit each Learn & Practice. You will receive full points for making a good faith effort and completing each week's Learn & Practice on time, regardless of whether you answered questions incorrectly. A good faith effort involves attentively watching the videos from beginning to end, carefully reading the assigned texts, and doing your best to answer the questions. If I see evidence that a student has not made a good faith effort, I may deduct points from the Learn & Practice.

Similarly, you will receive full points for making a good faith effort to engage in the in-class activities. A good faith effort involves attending the entire class meeting as well as actively listening and participating in individual and group activities. If I see evidence that a student has not made a good faith effort, I may deduct points from that week's in-class activity.

Some class meetings will not have any in-class activities for points, but will be open for students who would like to work on assignments with support. Check the Week-At-A-Glance and Class Meeting pages in Canvas for more information.

Graded Assignments (50-65 points each)

There will be five graded on-line assignments worth between 50-65 points each. These assignments are designed to demonstrate your knowledge and ability to apply what you are learning in this course. Two of the graded assignments will include written components (one with a minimum of 500 words and one with a minimum of 1,000 words) to be graded based on rubrics accessible in Canvas. Be sure to carefully read the instructions and rubrics.

Final Exam (100 points)

The final exam will be untimed and completed in Canvas. You will be able to work on the exam during the last week of the semester as well as during Finals Week. It will be due Friday of Finals Week.

Below is a table showing the point distribution for the course:

Assignment	Number and Point Value	Total Points
In-Class Activities	8 activities, 5 points each	35 + 5 extra credit
Learn & Practices	15 weeks, 5 points each	75
Graded Assignments	5 assignments, 50-65 points each	290
Final Exam	1 exam, 100 points	100
TOTAL		500 + 5 extra credit

GRADES & GRADE CORRECTIONS

The following grading scale will be used to calculate course grades:



Letter Grade	Total Points
A	468 and above
A-	449-467
B+	428-448
B	418-427
B-	398-417
C+	383-397
C	368-382
C-	348-367
D+	333-347
D	318-332
D-	298-317
F	297 or below

When calculating course grades at the end of the semester, I will round up. For example, if your total points at the end of the semester is 467.25, I will round up to 468.

If you feel a grade or points posted are not correct or if you have a question about the grade or points you received, you have one week after the grade or points are posted to contact me in writing. After one week the points or grade will be final.

The University's Grading Policy can be found at: <https://www.csus.edu/um anual/acad/umg05150.htm>.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Disruption

Unforeseen events may prevent the course from proceeding as planned. If the faculty member is not available during the semester or campus is closed, students will be contacted and advised how the course will proceed. This may include a change in instructor or modality.



Attendance

You must be present to earn points for in-class activities. Your presence in class is important both for your own and other students' learning. You can miss one in-class activity without affecting your grade (if you participate in all in-class activities, you will get 5 extra credit points). There will also be some extra credit that can be used to make up missed in-class activity points. However, repeatedly missing class will likely negatively impact your final grade by making it more difficult to do well on graded assignments and the final exam. If you have a disability and need to miss class because of this disability, please let me know so we can develop a reasonable accommodation.

Late Work

Turning work in by the due date is important because it allows me to provide you and other students with timely feedback.

Unless otherwise specified, practice activities and assignments submitted after the due date will receive a **10% grade deduction for each day late**. For example, an assignment that would have earned 90% of the possible points if turned in on time will earn only 80% of the possible points if turned in one day late. The first late day starts immediately after the time the assignment is due. For example, if an assignment that is due by midnight Sunday is turned in at 2pm on Monday, it will be treated as being turned in one day late. **Graded assignments that are more than five days late will generally not be accepted and will receive no points.** This rule is necessary because I need to release the answers and feedback to the students who did complete the assignment.

Exceptions to this late work policy may be made in exceptional circumstances, such as serious illness or the death of a close loved one. If you have a really, really, really good reason for not being able to submit a practice activity or assignment on time, please let me know as soon as possible. I may require documentation of the extenuating circumstances.

Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Misconduct

The University requires faculty and staff to report any personal disclosures of sexual misconduct including rape, dating/domestic violence and stalking to the Title IX Coordinator. Students who do not wish to report their experience to me or the Title IX Coordinator may speak to someone confidentially by contacting [Student Health and Counseling Services](#).

Student Rights and Responsibilities

For more information about your rights and responsibilities as a CSUS student please refer to the [Student Rights and Responsibilities policy](#).

Understand When You May Drop This Course or Take an Incomplete

It is your responsibility to understand when you need to consider disenrolling from a course. Dates and deadlines for registration and dropping a course are posted online: <https://catalog.csus.edu/financial-registration-information/registration/>. For more information about the process and consequences of dropping a course, please read the [University's Drop and Withdrawal policy](#).

Under emergency/special circumstances, students may petition for an incomplete grade. For more information about when you may receive an incomplete, see: <https://catalog.csus.edu/academic-policies/>

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use citations and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes, on the Internet, or from an interview. Violation of university policies on academic integrity may result in failure of the course or the



assignment, and could end in suspension from the university. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

CSUS Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporating another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge. The following would constitute plagiarism:

- Word-for-word copying.
- The mosaic (to intersperse a few words of one's own here and there while, in essence, copying another's work)
- The paraphrase (the rewriting of another's work, yet still using the fundamental idea or theory) – unless you cite the paraphrase.
- Fabrication (inventing or counterfeiting sources).
- Ghost-written material (submitting another's effort as one's own).

It is also plagiarism to neglect quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged. Plagiarism and acts associated with it are cause for disciplinary and/or legal action. At Sac State, “**cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means.” **Plagiarism** is a form of cheating. At Sac State, “plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person’s contribution.” Source: Sacramento State University Library

Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the Office of Student Affairs. Refer to the University’s Academic Honesty Policy for additional information and guidance: <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-100.htm>.

COMMITMENT TO INTEGRITY

As a student in this course (and at this university) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom. Both the [Student Code](#) and [Hornet Honor Code](#) will be strictly enforced in this course and it will be expected that each student is both aware of and familiar with the requirements and penalties. All aspects of your course work are covered by the University’s student code and Hornet Honor Code, and any violation(s) will be reported to the University.