GRNT 6600. Current Issues in Gerontology Fall 2009
Dr. Dena Shenk Tuesdays 5:00-7:50 pm

Office & Office Hours: Barnard 222 (in office suite 225), Tuesdays 1:00-4:00 and by appointment
Telephone: 704-687-4349 (leave a message on my voice-mail)
E-mail: Dshenk@uncc.edu
Messages: Can also be left with the Gerontology Program Secretary, (Fretwell 235) or in my mailbox in the Department of Anthropology, Barnard 224.
Class Website: http://library.uncc.edu/display/?dept=reference&format=open&page=430

Required texts:
Additional readings are available through electronic reserves, MOODLE or websites as indicated in the course schedule.

Class Format:

1. This course will be run as a graduate seminar. Students are expected to complete reading and course assignments in preparation for each class meeting and to come prepared to raise questions and be actively and consistently involved in class discussions.

2. The first third of this graduate seminar will focus on key issues in the field of gerontology, using an ethical framework for dealing with the issues involved in working with and caring for older adults.

3. During the second third of the semester, guest faculty will visit the class. Each guest will give a presentation highlighting key issues on a subject area related to their field of expertise. The remainder of the class session will be a guided discussion of the broader topic. You must come prepared to take part in the discussion by completing the background reading. Additional readings may be assigned.

4. Three Reaction papers: a 3-5 page essay written on your reactions to a topic discussed in a given class session. The paper should be turned in by the class period following the week on which you have written your paper and should include your thoughtful reflections on the readings and class discussion. These papers must all be typed and you will write three of them during the semester. Each student will write one paper on one of the class sessions on ethical decision-making (September 2-September 23), and one on the topics covered between October 7 and November 4. Everyone will submit a paper on November 18 on one or more of the chapters read for that date. Each reaction paper is worth 10% of your course grade and will be graded using the following rubric:

   Perceptive discussion of topic
   Effective analysis
   Clarity of ideas
   Clarity of writing
   Effective grammar and punctuation

5. Each student will select and research an issue or topic that will be delineated and defined in conjunction with the professor during the first three weeks of the semester. These topics should focus on the ethical aspects of some issue related to the field of gerontology. The following broad ideas are provided to help you get started in exploring possible topics but you are encouraged to be creative and select a topic that really interests you:

   Ethical and legal rights of longterm care residents and longterm care decision-making
   End-of-life issues and care
   Issues related to social services, homecare and hospice
   Chemical or physical restraints
   Family caregiving issues
   Special care populations: ethical issues for individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease, Developmental Disabilities or Mental Retardation
GRNT 6600 Syllabus – page 2

Health care reform and managed care in relation to older adults
Rationing healthcare based on age

6. Each student will prepare a presentation of his/her research findings, focusing on the major viewpoints on this topic or issue. These presentations will be given in-class on November 18, December 2 and 9. The presentation counts as 15% of your course grade and will be graded using the following rubric:

   - Effective review of the relevant literature
   - Clear presentation of the ethical viewpoints
   - Appropriate presentation of personal views
   - Clarity of presentation
   - Effectiveness of presentation

8. A final written paper is due in class on Tuesday, December 2. These papers will generally include a review of the current literature on the topic and coverage of the major ethical viewpoints on the issue or topic you have chosen. Each student will also develop his/her personal views on the subject, which should be clearly discussed in the paper. I will be pleased to read earlier drafts of your paper as you develop it, but whether or not you choose to take advantage of this option, your final paper is due in class on December 2. The paper is worth 30% of your course grade and will be graded using the following rubric:

   - Effective review of the relevant literature
   - Clear presentation of the ethical viewpoints
   - Adequate presentation of personal views
   - Clarity of writing
   - Effective use of grammar and punctuation

**Academic Integrity:** As a student at UNC Charlotte, you have certain rights and responsibilities under the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. The Code defines these responsibilities and guarantees you certain rights that ensure your protection from improper accusations of academic integrity violations. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Students who violate the UNC Charlotte code may fail their course and/or be expelled from the University. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at: [http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html](http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html). Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course.

**Disability Services/Special Needs:** If you have a documented disability and require accommodation in this course, contact the Disability Services office, located in Fretwell building, room 230. Phone 704/687.4355 (voice/TDD). Information about available services can be found at [http://www.uncc.edu/disability-services](http://www.uncc.edu/disability-services). Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations. Please initiate this process and inform me during the first two weeks of class.

**Participation/Attendance policy:** as stated in the UNC Charlotte Catalog "students are expected to attend punctually all scheduled sessions in the courses for which they are registered and are responsible for completing the work from all class sessions. Absences from class may be excused by the instructor for such reasons as personal illness, religious holidays, or participating as an authorized University representative in an out-of-town event. Whenever possible, students are expected to seek the permission of the instructor prior to absences." In this case, try to inform me in advance if you are going to miss a class and make arrangements with a classmate to get notes and find out what you missed. Attendance is necessary but not sufficient for full credit for participation.

**Course Grades: **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction papers</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Grade Ranges:**

- A=90-100
- B=80-89
- C=70-79
- U<70
**Course schedule**

August 25

**Introduction to the Issues and Course Structure**
6:30-8:00 Library session, Atkins 125 (Frada Mozenter, Social Sciences Reference Librarian, Atkins Library - 111C)

September 1

**Ethical Framework, Introduction to Ethical Principles and Demographics**

**Reading:** Ferraro, chapters 1, 2 & 3

http://www.aoa.gov/AoAroot/Aging_Statistics/Profile/index.aspx (Profile of Older Americans: 2008)

Peterson, The shape of things to come: global aging in the 21st century.

September 8

**Issues of Decisional Capacity, Competency and Autonomy**

**Readings:**
http://www.fairview.org/healthlibrary/content/sha_deciscap_sha.htm (Decisional Capacity)
http://www.bioethics.gov/background/dresser.html (Treatment Decisions for Dementia Patients)
irb.ucsd.edu/DecisionalCapacityAssessment.pdf (Research Protocols)


September 15

**Self-Determination and Limits of Life: DNR and Advance Care Directives**

**Problem Statement for Final Paper Due**

**Readings:** Brody, Baruch & Englehardt, Advance Directives, Ruark & Raffin, Initiating and Withdrawing Life Support: Principles & support in adult medicine

**websites** on end-of-life planning:
http://www.ncmedsoc.org/pages/public_health_info/end_of_life.html (Ken Burgess article about overhaul of advance directive laws, living will form, healthcare power of attorney, MOST, DNR, Artificial Nutrition and Hydration)
http://www.ahrq.gov/research/endliferia/endria.htm
http://depts.washington.edu/bioethx/topics/dnr.html
http://www.chcr.brown.edu/dying/ncprofile.htm

September 22

**Euthanasia and Ethical Perspectives on End-of-Life Decision-making**

**Guest:** Dr. Rosemarie Tong, Mecklenburg County Medical Society Distinguished Professor in Health Care Ethics, Dept of Philosophy

**Reading:** Rosemarie Tong, Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and Palliative Care

September 29

**Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Aging**

**Reading:** Cohen-Almagor, Non-voluntary and involuntary euthanasia in the Netherlands: Dutch perspectives

Winakur, chapters 1-7 (through page 77)

*Submit initial list of annotated references for final paper*
October 6

No class October 13 – Fall Break

October 20  

**Aging and the Lifecourse**  
*Guests:* Dr. Julie McLaughlin, Department of Sociology and  
Dr. Jan Warren-Findlow, Department of Public Health Services  
*Reading:* Wilmoth & Ferraro, chapters 10, 13 & 14  
Winakur, chapters 8-15 (pp 78 - 149)

October 27  

**Nutrition, Exercise and Aging**  
*Guest:* Dr. Michael Turner, Associate Professor of Kinesiology and  
*Reading:* Wilmoth & Ferraro, chapter 7 & 8  
Winakur, chapters 16-22 (pp.150-218)

November 3  

**People with Dementia**  
*Reading:* Wilmoth & Ferraro chapters 5 & 11  
Winakur, chapters 23-28 (pp.219- 274)  
Downs, Dementia in a socio-cultural context: an idea whose time has come

Read about the Mollie Orshansky case:  
Carol D. Leonnig and Sari Horwitz, Washington Post, May 28, 2002, Caught Between Dueling Guardians; N.Y. Relatives in Tug of War With D.C. Court Over Retiree's Care  

November 10  

**Student Presentations on Research Papers**  
*Reading:* Wilmoth & Ferraro, Chapters 4, 6, 9, 12 and 15  
Reaction papers

November 17—GSA Conference, San Francisco

November 24  

**Student Presentations on Research Papers**

December 1  

**Student Presentations on Research Papers**  
Final Papers Due

December 8  

**Student Presentations on Research Papers**

December 15  

**Student Presentations on Research Papers**  
*Reading:* Ferraro, Chapter 16