STUDENT HANDBOOK
&
PROGRAM RESOURCE GUIDE
Master of Arts in Gerontology

School of Aging Studies
College of Behavioral and Community Sciences
University of South Florida
Fall 2021

The USF Graduate Catalog provides the principal authority for all policies affecting students; however, some policies set forth in the Graduate Catalog only represent minimum requirements of the State of Florida or the University. The Student Handbook is meant to be a supplement to the Graduate Catalog providing program requirements that may exceed the minimums identified in the Graduate Catalog. Students are ultimately responsible for their graduate education and assuring that they are in compliance with the requirements designated in the Graduate Catalog and the Student Handbook. **The School of Aging Studies offers two graduate degree programs: the M.A. in Gerontology and the Ph.D. in Aging Studies. This handbook is intended for use by students in the M.A. program in Gerontology. The Ph.D. Program in Aging Studies has its own handbook.**

Introduction

Gerontology is the study of the process of human aging in all its aspects: physical, psychological, and social. In the School of Aging Studies, particular emphasis is placed on educating Gerontology students who, in their professional careers, will work to sustain or improve the quality of life of older people. Many of our program graduates are employed in agencies providing services for older adults or have pursued research careers through subsequent doctoral education and to prepare interested students for doctoral programs in aging.

Opportunities

The M.A. in Gerontology program provides students with a broad and integrated background in the theories and growing knowledge base to support their specialization in the field of aging. The overall goal is for students to become familiar with the many important questions and challenges as well as the terminology and the methods of research and service provision to older Americans. The graduate programs also train students to recognize that there are multiple perspectives on virtually all problems that confront individuals working in the field of aging, and that no traditional discipline has a monopoly on answers. Graduates of the program possess the background and training to continue their education at the doctoral level or pursue other professional degrees.

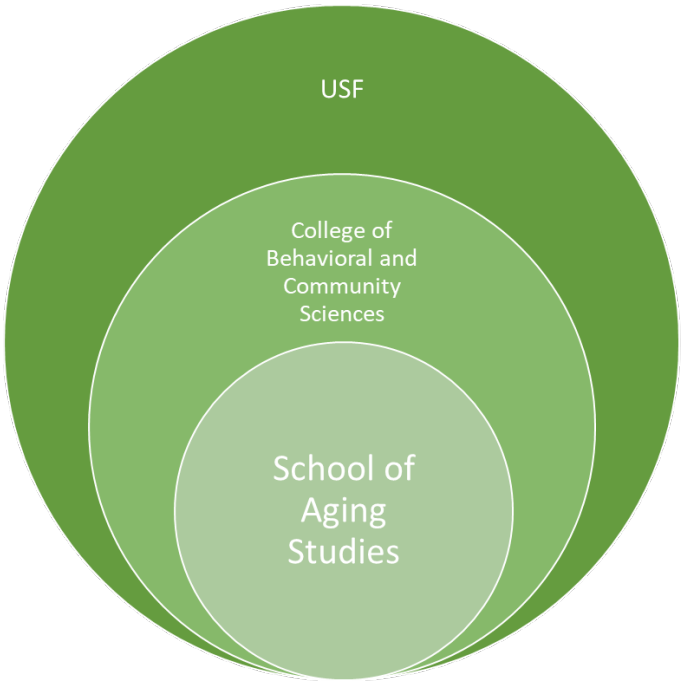
Program Alumni

MA alumni are among the best aspects of the program. Because of the diversity in ways the MA degree professionally advances our students, MA alumni take positions in a variety of settings and roles. MA alumni currently hold academic positions at the Ohio State University, Brown University, and Georgia State University, the Veteran's Administration, and other research entitites. Currently, program alumni are healthcare researchers, clinical researchers, program developers and managers, and geriatric case managers.

The USF Academic Environment

USF is located within a community that provides a natural laboratory for the study of aging. There is a history of outstanding programs in aging at USF, and a number of departments, centers, laboratories, and other units have concentrations in aging studies. The College of Behavioral and Community Sciences houses the School of Aging Studies, which established the first master's degree in gerontology in 1967, started undergraduate B.A. and B.S. degrees more than thirty years ago, and houses the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program in Aging Studies, which began in 1994. The School of Aging Studies consists of faculty members with training in gerontology, sociology, psychology, economics, public policy, and human development. The School of Aging Studies includes the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging, which conducts policy-related research, training, and demonstration projects. It provides a unique opportunity to transmit policy information directly to Florida government officials. The Training Academy on Aging, a program within the Policy Exchange Center, provides an array of educational programs for persons engaged in the delivery of services to older adults.

As one of the Florida universities with a public medical school, USF has a strong focus on biomedical research. The College of Medicine is the home to academic divisions of Geriatric Medicine and Geriatric Psychiatry, as well as the Memory Disorder Clinic. USF's focus on biomedical research in Alzheimer's disease includes the USF Health Byrd Alzheimer's Center and Research Institute and the Center for Aging and Brain Repair. The Senior Adult Oncology Program is housed at the Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. The College of Nursing has faculty with strong interests in gerontological nursing, training the next generation of nurses who will specialize in the health needs of an aging population. The Center for Hospice, Palliative Care and End-of-Life Studies supports research and education focused on important issues for terminally ill patients and their caregivers. The College of Public Health houses aging studies faculty in the Departments of Community and Family Health, Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Health Policy and Management, and Environmental and Occupational Health. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute offers many educational opportunities for older adults living in the Tampa Bay area, including a highly successful SeniorNet program.



M.A. in Gerontology

The School of Aging Studies offers the M.A. in Gerontology, with an optional internship program. In addition to completing a required core curriculum, students may select gerontology courses suited to their particular interests. All students in the M.A. in Gerontology program must pass a capstone project prior to graduating.

Course Requirements

For students in entering the program from Fall 2018 through Spring 2020:

The M.A. degree requires the satisfactory completion of 30 credit hours of course work, 15 hours of which must include core courses.

Core Courses (15 Credits, required of all students)

GEY 5476 Program Evaluation in an Aging Society (3)
GEY 6600 Human Development and Aging (3)
GEY 6613 Physical Change and Aging (3)
GEY 6626 Health, Ethnicity, and Aging (3)
GEY 6910 Directed Research - MA Capstone (3)

Elective Courses (15 Credits)

GEY 5504 Assisted Living Facility Management (3)
GEY 5630 Economics and Aging (3)
GEY 6206 Family Caregiving in Aging & Chronic Illness (3)
GEY 6222 Elder Abuse Assessment and Intervention (3)
GEY 6614 Aging and Mental Disorders (3)
GEY 6616 Mental Health Assessment and Intervention with Older Adults (3)
GEY 6617 Gerontological Counseling Theories and Practice (3)
GEY 5501 Health Care Operations in LTC (3)
GEY 5642 Perspectives on Death and Dying (3)
GEY 6321 Gerontological Case Management (3)
GEY 6607 Alzheimer's Disease Management (3)
GEY 6901 Directed Readings in Gerontology (3)
GEY 6934 Special Topics in Gerontology (3)
GEY 6940 Internship (variable hours)

For students in entering the program from Summer 2020 and beyond:

The M.A. degree requires the satisfactory completion of 30 credit hours of course work, 12 hours of which must include core courses.

Core Courses (12 Credits, required of all students)

GEY 6600 Human Development and Aging (3)
GEY 6613 Physical Change and Aging (3)
GEY 6617 Gerontological Counseling Theories and Practice (3)
GEY 6910 Directed Research - MA Capstone (3)

Preferred Elective Courses (18 Credits)

GEY 5476 Program Evaluation in an Aging Society (3)
GEY 5630 Economics and Aging (3)
GEY 5642 Perspectives on Death and Dying (3)
GEY 6206 Family Caregiving in Aging & Chronic Illness (3)
GEY 6626 Health, Ethnicity, and Aging (3)
GEY 6646 Gerontological Issues and Concepts (3)
GEY 6901 Directed Readings in Gerontology (3)

Other Elective Courses

GEY 5504 Assisted Living Facility Management (3)
GEY 6222 Elder Abuse Assessment and Intervention (3)
GEY 6614 Aging and Mental Disorders (3)
GEY 6616 Mental Health Assessment and Intervention with Older Adults (3)
GEY 6321 Gerontological Case Management (3)
GEY 6607 Alzheimer’s Disease Management (3)

M.A. Gerontology Advising Tracking Form
Fall 2018 through Spring 2020

The M.A. Program Advising Form is given to all students upon beginning the program for planning purposes. It helps each student view course options and make decisions regarding timing of coursework.

Required Core Courses (12 credits) (online)			
	Semester Completed	**Semester In-Progress**	**Future**
GEY 5476 Program Evaluation in an Aging Society			
GEY 6600 Human Development and Aging			
GEY 6613 Physical Change and Aging			
GEY 6626 Health, Ethnicity, and Aging			
Elective Courses (15 credits; choose 5 classes)			
	Semester Completed	**Semester In-Progress**	**Future**
GEY 5504 Assisted Living Facility Mgment			
GEY 5630 Economics of Aging			
GEY 5642 Perspectives on Death and Dying			
GEY 6206 Family Caregiving/Aging & Chron. Ill			
GEY 6222 Elder Abuse Assess & Intervention			
GEY 6614 Aging and Mental Disorders			
GEY 6616 Mental Health Assessment/ Aging			
GEY 6617 Geront. Counseling/Theory Practice			
GEY 6901 Directed Readings in Gerontology			
GEY 5501 Health Care Operations in LTC*			
GEY 6321 Gerontological Case Management*			
GEY 6607 Alzheimer's Disease Management*			
GEY 6901 Directed Readings in Gerontology*			
GEY 6934 Understand. Policy & Practice LTC*			
GEY 6940 Internship (variable hours)*			
Required Capstone Experience (3 credits)			
GEY 6910 Capstone Directed Research			

* Classroom/In Person Elective courses for students able to travel to the Tampa campus for scheduled class meetings.

M.A. Gerontology Advising Tracking Form
Summer 2020 and Beyond

The M.A. Program Advising Form is given to all students upon beginning the program for planning purposes. It helps each student view course options and make decisions regarding timing of coursework.

Required Core Courses (9 credits; 3 classes) (online)			
	Semester Completed	**Semester In-Progress**	**Future**
GEY 6600 Human Development and Aging			
GEY 6613 Physical Change and Aging			
GEY 6617 Gerontological Counseling Theories and Practice			
Elective Courses (18 credits; 6 classes)			
	Semester Completed	**Semester In-Progress**	**Future**
Preferred Elective Courses:			
GEY 5476 Program Evaluation in an Aging Society			
GEY 5630 Economics and Aging			
GEY 5642 Perspectives on Death and Dying			
GEY 6206 Family Caregiving in Aging and Chronic Illness			
GEY 6626 Health, Ethnicity, and Aging			
GEY 6646 Gerontological Issues and Conceptes			
GEY 6901 Directed Readings in Gerontology*			
Other Elective Courses:			
GEY 5504 Assisted Living Facility Management			
GEY 6222 Elder Abuse Assessment and Intervention			
GEY 6614 Aging and Mental Disorders			
GEY 6616 Mental Health Assessment and Intervention with Older Adults			
GEY 6321 Gerontological Case Management*			
GEY 6607 Alzheimer's Disease Management*			
Required Capstone Experience (3 credits; 1 class)			
GEY 6910 Capstone Directed Research			

* Classroom/In Person Elective courses for students able to travel to the Tampa campus for scheduled class meetings.

Capstone Experience

All students must complete a Capstone experience prior to graduating. After completing their core courses in the final semester before graduation, the student will enroll in GEY 6910 Directed Research. The Research Project Development Capstone experience will be an individualized experience for each student. Each student will develop a project to build upon their professional experience and career goals. The project must receive a grade of Pass in order for the student to graduate.

Internships

GEY 6940 Internship/ Field Placement (1-6 credit hours) is offered in the M.A. program, though only under special circumstances. For students residing in the USF service area, an internship or another directed research project with a faculty member may serve as the capstone experience and count towards credit for the degree. Please discuss this with the M.A. Program Director at least a semester before registering for the capstone.

Transfer of Coursework for M.A. Degree

Students may transfer graduate credits taken in other graduate programs at USF or at other universities, provided that those courses were not used toward a completed degree, per the USF Graduate School policy. Such transfer credits will be accepted only if the coursework is relevant to the course of study in the M.A. program, is judged to be of sufficient quality to merit acceptance as graduate credit at the University of South Florida, and has been taken within the last 5 academic years. Students in the M.A. Program who wish to transfer credits should submit a written request to the M.A. Program Director upon admission to the program. The written request should include a description, official transcript, and syllabus of the course for which the student wishes to obtain transfer credit and a justification describing how the course fits the student's academic goals. The M.A. Program Director will make the final determination on transfer of credits for M.A. students upon review of all submitted materials in accordance with USF policy.

Students may wish to waive requirements for one or more core courses, without transferring in an equivalent graduate course. The M.A. Graduate Program Director will determine whether the previous course is sufficient to merit its being waived, working with other faculty as needed. Waiving the requirements for taking a core course does not reduce the credit hour requirements of the M.A. degree. The student must replace the waived course with another course that will contribute to meeting the degree requirements.

Only six credits hours of the M.A. program coursework can be taken outside of Gerontology courses, and only with the permission of the M.A. Graduate Program Director.

Academic Performance

Masters students must maintain an academic average of 3.0 to remain in good standing in the graduate program. In order to stay in good standing, a grade of a B or higher needs to be earned in each class. Classes with grades of a C or lower may not count towards the program and may need to be repeated. Good academic standing as a graduate student is substantially different with higher standards than maintaining good academic standing as an undergraduate student.

Academic Probation

Students with academic averages that fall below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. These students have one semester to bring their academic average to 3.0 or better. Students failing to raise their academic averages to 3.0 or better will be terminated from the program. Students need to be aware that any course taken while in a graduate program, even if the course is not part of the student's graduate curriculum, will be counted in the graduate GPA. If you wish to take courses outside your major, be sure to either take them pass/fail or plan on getting at least a B, and not a B- or a C, in the course.

Any student who is not in good standing at the end of a semester shall be considered on probation as of the following semester. The college or major may also place students on probation for other reasons as designated by the college or major. Notification of probation shall be made to the student in writing by the department, with a copy to the College Dean. At the end of each probationary semester, the department shall recommend, in writing, to the College Dean one of the following:

- Removal of probation
- Continued probation; or
- Dismissal from the major.

Students on probation may only enroll in graduate courses (5000-7000 level) that are part of the approved degree major requirements as specified in the Graduate Catalog. Students with a GPA below 3.00 for two consecutive semesters will be prevented from registering for courses without the permission of the College Dean. The College Dean will notify the Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies in cases of academic dismissal. To be readmitted, the student will need to reapply for admission, meeting the admission criteria in place at the time.

Finally, graduate Students who receive an FF grade for failure due to academic dishonesty will be academically dismissed from the University and will not be eligible to apply to any graduate program at USF. Please review the USF Academic Integrity policy for more details.

Grades of Incomplete

An "**I**" grade not cleared within the next academic semester (including summer semester) will revert to the grade noted on the contract. "**I**" grades are not computed in the GPA, but the grade noted on the contract will be computed in the GPA, retroactive to the semester the course was taken, if the contract is not fulfilled by the specified date.

When the final grade is assigned, if applicable, the student will be placed on academic probation or academically dismissed (refer to Automated Academic Probation Procedures for information). Students cannot be admitted to doctoral candidacy or certified for graduation with an "**I**" grade.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance may be available through the Office of Graduate Studies, the College of Behavioral and Community Sciences, the Office of Financial Aid, or external sources. It is wise to check all sources to be fully aware of the programs for which you may qualify.

Scholarships

The School of Aging Studies offers scholarships for existing students in graduate degree programs in the Dr. Tom Rich Scholarship Award and the Harold L. Sheppard Endowed Memorial Scholarship. Students wishing to apply for any scholarships should contact Dr. Stanback.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The School of Aging Studies has limited funding to support Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Graduate TA's are awarded based on the student's academic achievement and the School's need for teaching assistants. For more information, contact the M.A. Graduate Program Director.

M.A. Program Resources

Key Personnel

While a number of faculty and staff contribute to the M.A. program, here are some key personnel with whom you will most directly work:

- Victor Molinari, Ph.D. ABPP, Interim M.A. Program Director and Program Advisor
- Megan Anthony, Academic Specialist

Academic Advising & Registration

Generally, students receive individual advising ahead of registration and on-going advising as needed or requested. Sometimes, a plan is established at the start of the degree and it guides progress. In other cases, advising will occur over email or through a Skype meeting on a semester-by-semester basis. No matter what, academic advising is available to you with the expressed goal of helping you navigate the degree in the best way for your professional goals.

Regardless of the frequency of advising sessions, students will receive an email about their prospective registration from the M.A. program advisor and be asked to respond with their class choices. Once the student and M.A. program advisor agree on the classes, students will be directed to contact the academic program specialist for a course permit to enroll in their courses. Graduate courses in the School are only available via permit, so please be sure to check your USF email and respond in a timely manner to avoid delays and potential late enrollment fees.

USF Information Technology

USF Academic Computing is the main campus support for computer and Canvas issues. A current list of USF supported hardware and software is available for your review here: https://www.usf.edu/innovative-education/resources/student-services/technical-requirements.aspx You are also advised to periodically check the website to make sure your device and its software are updated for optimal performance.

You are required to activate and use your USF student email for USF-related correspondence. Your USF email will be your USFNETID@usf.edu Please see for more information: http://www.usf.edu/it/documentation/netid.aspx You are also required to check your USF email and should get in the habit of doing so. M.A. program-specific emails will be sent to that account, and you are responsible for checking it on a regular basis.

MS Teams

Microsoft Teams is available for all active students. MS Teams combines persistent chat rooms, video/voice, file sharing, meetings, and many other features into one application. Teams is beneficial for meetings, class sessions, and remote communications. We recommend using it for any conversational or video conferencing

application. For training, help, and how to access MS Teams, you will go here: https://www.usf.edu/it/documentation/office365/microsoft-teams.aspx

Canvas

USF uses Canvas, a Learning Management System, to access enrolled courses. It is the platform for class discussions, turning in assignments, viewing syllabi, and communicating with instructors and other students. It can be accessed through the MyUSF website at https://my.usf.edu/ . The main Canvas website provides resources and guides to help answer any questions regarding the system. It can be accessed at https://community.canvaslms.com/

Professional Organizations

Being a member of a professional organization is a great way to elevate students' careers as professionals in Gerontology. Students can stay up to date with research and innovations, and network with experts in the field. A benefit to being a graduate student is that membership fees are often reduced.

Gerontological Society of America (GSA)

The oldest and one of the most well-known organizations is the Gerontological Society of America. GSA is a key player in gerontological research and policy. To learn more about this organization, their publications, and membership costs, please see https://www.geron.org/

Other professional organizations within Gerontology and in the field of aging are the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) and the American Society on Aging (ASA). Information can be found at https://www.americangeriatrics.org/ and http://www.asaging.org/, respectively.

Tips for Online Success

Being an online student can be different than previous academic experiences. To ensure success in the program, students should stay organized and wisely manage their time. Setting aside a certain timeframe each day for coursework is beneficial. It can be easy to fall behind in courses that require a large amount of self-directed learning. Keeping organized files on any electronic devices and tracking assignment due dates in a planner or an electronic calendar is also helpful. Communication is key: students should not be afraid to contact the professor with any questions or reach out to other students in the course.

USF Student Resources

The following table includes a list of University of South Florida resources that may be helpful to both online students and those residing in the Tampa area.

University Offices	Website	Phone Number
The School of Aging Studies Website - Details about faculty and how to contact them, information about recent graduates and alumni, and general knowledge about the various programs available within the School of Aging Studies.	https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/aging-studies/	(813) 974-2414
University Scholarships and Financial Aid Services Office - Information about the different types of available aid, enrollment requirements, and various financial forms	https://www.usf.edu/financial-aid/	(813) 974-4700
Information Technology Office - Guidance regarding your NetID, software downloads, and access to the USF computer store	https://www.usf.edu/it/index.aspx	(813) 974-1222
Office of Graduate Studies - Access to the tuition and fee calculator, Graduate Student Life Guide, and information about upcoming workshops and events	http://www.grad.usf.edu/	(813) 974-2846
Graduate and Professional Student Council - This organization makes an effort to connect graduate students from the various graduate programs at USF by offering academic and social events or programs.	http://www.gpsc.usf.edu/	(813) 974-7935
MyUSF - The gateway to OASIS and managing your NETID, this also provides links to important resources like Canvas, your email account, and USF Library services	https://my.usf.edu/	
USF Graduate Student Life Guide – Offers helpful information about USF, student services, and the Tampa area.	https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/documents/usf-graduate-student-life-guide.pdf	