There is a need for trained professionals to work in the numerous fields related to gerontology, elder care services, and geriatric medicine. Oregon and the nation’s population are undergoing a dramatic increase in the percentage of older adults. According to data compiled by the Administration on Aging, by the year 2030 there will be approximately 70 million Americans age 65 and over, up from 40 million in 2010. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that Oregon’s older adult population is increasing at a rate of 3.5% as compared to the national median of 2.6%.

In addition to the growing older population that will require specialized services, there are also unmet workforce training needs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, employment in home health care services are expected to increase 69.5% between 2004 and 2014, during the same time period, community care services for the elderly are expected to see a 54.8% increase in the need for qualified employees. People from a broad range of career fields who have received training in geropsychology will be very marketable and provide important services for our community. The aging population is driving much of the increased need in the medical field. An understanding of Geropsychology will help people who go into the following professions: medical assistants (52.1% increase expected between 2004 and 2014), physical therapists (36.7%), physical therapy assistants (34.1%), as well as nurses and many other human service careers. An integral component of the proposed minor is a practicum option, which will allow students to get real-world experience in the area of Geropsychology. The practicum experience will also help students navigate the transition from college student to a productive member of the workforce.

The goal of the Gerontology program will be to prepare students to work in fields that interface with older adults. As the name implies, the major will include coursework in the interdisciplinary field of gerontology. Coursework will draw from the following areas: psychology, health, political science, communications, and business. The major reflects a degree of flexibility allowing students to customize a program that not only provides a solid foundation in gerontology, but also allows for course choices that will assist them in preparing for a specific career or future post-graduate education. For example, students could take up to three classes in business (i.e., accounting, marketing, and human resources), which can help them prepare for the many career opportunities that require background and training in gerontology and business.

**Gerontology Faculty Members**

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Dr. Joel Alexander  alexanj@wou.edu  
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### BA/BS Degree in Gerontology

#### Required Courses 42 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSY 201</td>
<td>General Psychology I</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 202</td>
<td>General Psychology II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 301W</td>
<td>Introduction to Research Methods</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSY 320</td>
<td>Introduction to Geropsychology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERO 360</td>
<td>Cognitive &amp; Physical Changes in Aging</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>GERO 410</td>
<td>Practicum I</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>GERO 411</td>
<td>Practicum II</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERO 430</td>
<td>Palliative Care &amp; Chronic Illness</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERO 455</td>
<td>Social Ties &amp; Aging</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GERO 460</td>
<td>Retirement/LTC Housing for the Elderly</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Elective Courses 16 hours

**Elective Portion A**

- GERO 370 Aging & Mental Health 4
- GERO 407 Seminar 4
- GERO 409 Practicum 4 (4 hrs can count toward major)
- GERO 440 Health Care Operations 4
- GERO 470 Regulatory & Clinical Operation of Long Term Care 4
- GERO 480 Alzheimer's Disease & Other Dementias Management 4
- PSY 420 Advanced Topics in Geropsychology 4

**Elective Portion B** (select at least two courses)

- PSY 423 Interviewing & Appraisal 4
- PSY 439 Positive Psychology 4
- PSY 445 Introduction to Industrial Organizational Psychology 4
- PSY 446 The Psychology of Leadership 4
- PSY 451 Behavioral Neuroscience 4
- PSY 460 Cognitive Neuroscience 4
- PSY 461 Psychopharmacology 4
- PSY 483 Adulthood & Aging 4
- PSY 484 Death, Dying & Grief 4
- ANTH 395 Medical Anthropology 4
- BA 211 Financial Accounting 4
- BA 310 Principles of Marketing 3
- BA 391 Human Resource Mgmt. 3
- HE 227 Community & Public Health 4
- HE 325 Nutrition 4
- HE 375 Epidemiology 4
- HE 411 Health Communication 4
- HE 434W Diseases 4
- HE 485W Bioethics & Public Health 4
- HST 484 Health, Medicine & Gender in Historical Perspective 4
- PS 350 Introduction to Public Policy 3
- PS 430 The Aging Society 3
- PS 433 Healthcare Politics & Policy 3

#### Course of Study

The Gerontology major should be planned with a gerontology advisor. The Gerontology major consists of 58 hours of focused coursework beyond introductory coursework. There are no hidden prerequisites in the required coursework.

The following are examples of some of the numerous employment opportunities in the following fields that would be beneficial to someone trained in gerontology:

- Long Term Care Administration
- Skilled Nursing Care Administration
- Senior Center Operations & Management
- Occupational Therapy
- Home Health Care
- Physical Therapy
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Teaching
- Nursing
- Nursing Assistants
- Recreational Therapists
- Social Work
- Research That Focus on Older Adults' Needs and Interests
- Public & Private Institutions That Provide Health, Education, & Social Services to Older Adults
- Senior Care Services
- Hospice
- Palliative Care
- Public Policy & Advocate Work for Older Adults