Course title and number: 4410 Gerontology  
Term: Fall 2021  
Meeting times: Monday, 11a-11:50p Room 134

Instructor Information

Name: Leigh Ann Wyatt, BSDH, MA, MS  
Phone: 0: 214.828.8922  
C: 972-897-8188  
Email address: lwyatt@tamu.edu  
Office hours: 8:00a-5:00p  
Office location: 139A

Participating Faculty:  
Maureen Brown, BSDH  
Beth Ann Davis, BSDH  
Lisa Mallonee, BSDH, MPH, RD, LD  
Eric, Markinson, M.Div  
Mike Reed, DDS, FAGD, FASGD, ABSCD  
Kayla Reed, BSDH, MS  
Carli Smith, BSDH  
Leah Spittle, BSDH, MS

Course Description

This course will examine the unique considerations a dental professional will encounter when providing care to a geriatric patient. Social, psychological and biological aspects of aging will be discussed. Strategies for patient care will be outlined and discussed. Appropriate community referral agencies will be explored to aid the hygienist in providing assistance to the elderly patient.

Learning Outcomes/Competencies

2.3 Communicate effectively with diverse populations without discrimination.  
2.4 Employ the principles of scientific writing.  
3.3 Contribute to the knowledge base of dental hygiene.  
4.2 Identify the health needs of individuals and assist them in the development of appropriate and individualized self-care regimens.  
4.3 Encourage patients to assume responsibility for their health while respecting their goals, values, beliefs and preferences.  
5.1 Identify services and agencies that promote oral health and prevent oral disease and related conditions.  
5.3 Influence the public (consumer groups, businesses and government agencies) to support health care issues.  
6.1 Determine medical conditions that require special precautions or consideration prior to or during dental hygiene treatment.
6.4 Recognize predisposing, etiologic risk factors, and life style choices that may require intervention to prevent disease.
6.6 Determine the need for referral to the appropriate health professional.
7.1 Determine priorities and establish oral health goals with the patient/family and/or guardian as an active participant.
7.2 Acknowledge cultural differences in populations when planning treatment.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:
1. Evaluate theories of aging.
2. Examine their own beliefs and attitudes regarding older adults.
3. Discuss the social, psychological and physiological factors that affect the lives of the aging population.
4. Identify common diseases of elders, their manifestation, and the impact of these diseases on oral health.
5. Discuss the effects of normal and pathological aging on oral health.
6. Improve communication with older adult patients.
7. Analyze cultural differences in the definition of aging, the experience of aging and the treatment of aging.
8. Formulate a dental hygiene care plan for the senior adult in light of oral health disease.
9. Discuss alternative practice delivery methods for the homebound and long-term care older adult.
10. Identify resources and services that may be of assistance and support to the older adult.

Textbook and/or Resource Material

1. 4410 Gerontology Course Manual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage Worth</th>
<th>Due Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disease/Condition Project</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>09/08/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong> (Covers 8/23 thru 10/4)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10/11/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Paper (Well-Elder Interview)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11/1/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Email to Legislator</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11/29/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong> (Covers 10/18 thru 11/29)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12/6/21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Pertinent Course Information

Attendance and Make-up Policies:
Texas A&M University views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. Regular and punctual attendance is mandatory for scheduled or rescheduled classes, clinics, labs and related activities/events. The course director will check attendance at the start of the class/activity. Students who are not present at that time will be marked absent.
IMPORTANT: All absences must be reported to Pam Hines by PHONE at 214-828-8340 and must be received prior to the beginning of the class/activity.
Excused Absences

Illnesses or emergencies: It is understood that absences due to severe or contagious illness, injuries or emergencies may occur. An absence due to illness may require a medical confirmation note from a student's medical provider. For injuries or illnesses that require a student to be absent from class for three or more business days, a note from his or her medical provider must be provided. If a student has frequent sick days, the program director will require a medical provider's note for each absence.

Religious holy days: A student whose absence is excused under or the observance of religious holy day will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within 3 days after the absence. If the student fails to schedule and complete the exam or assignment within three days, a grade of zero will be given.

For additional information on excused absences, see Texas A&M Student Rule 7.1 at https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07.

Unexcused Absences

Tardiness and non-emergent appointments (illnesses not considered severe or contagious) scheduled during class time will be considered an unexcused absence. Quizzes and exams start at the beginning of class time. Students who arrive late will not receive extra time to take the quiz/exam. Students with unexcused absences or late arrivals will have TWO points deducted from their final course grade. No make-up quiz/test will be given if an absence is unexcused on a test day. Examinations will not be administered in advance for a planned/anticipated unexcused absence.

Virtual Classroom Expectations and Etiquette

Class attendance is mandatory.
Students are required to enter the virtual classrooms with the audio muted. Video must be activated at the beginning of the class session and remain on until the session concludes. Unless the instructor provides other directions, questions should be posted through the virtual chat/discussion board.

During class, students are expected to be alert, engaged, and sitting upright in a well-lit environment that allows their faces to be clearly visible. Students should attempt to minimize extraneous interruptions from other household members, including pets. Questions or concerns about the use of virtual meeting technology and/or accessibility should be presented to Carmina Castro or Jeff Lowry.

General Information

The designation of excused or unexcused absence will be determined on an individual basis by the Program Director and Student Affairs.

For any absences (excused or unexcused), it will be the student’s responsibility to review the lecture recordings for the class(es) missed. Additionally, the student must complete a make-up assignment(s) within 10 calendar days (including weekends) after returning to school. The make-up assignment will require the student to thoroughly answer the learning objectives for the class session(s) and define any listed terminology. The assignment must demonstrate the student has listened to the recording(s) and read the assigned reading. Make-up assignments must be typed, contain the title of the missed class session(s) and be sent via email within the 10-calendar-day deadline. Failure to complete the make-up assignment(s) within this time frame will result in TWO points being deducted from student’s final grade.

IMPORTANT: Failure to remediate all absences (excused or unexcused) by December 3, 2021 may result in an "F" for the course. To review the comprehensive Texas A&M University student attendance rule, go http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07.
**Cell Phone Policy:**
Electronic devices used in class for non-learning purposes can be distracting and may hinder learning. Students will be asked to put away such devices OR to leave the classroom if the devices become distracting to faculty or other students.

**Faculty Correspondence:**
In general, emails will be returned during regular business hours.

**Grading:**
It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for announcements and current grade postings. Any questions regarding grades must be brought to the attention of the course director no later than two weeks after grades are posted.

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**COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session Title/Topic</th>
<th>Instructor’s Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-16</td>
<td>Course Overview/Syllabus</td>
<td>L. Wyatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-23</td>
<td>Mobile Dentistry</td>
<td>M. Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-30</td>
<td>Theories of Aging</td>
<td>L. Spittle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-6</td>
<td><strong>Labor Day- Holiday</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-8</td>
<td>DUE: 09-8-21: Disease/Condition Research Due</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9-13</td>
<td>Age-Related Physical and Cognitive Changes</td>
<td>L. Wyatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-20</td>
<td>Age-Related Facial and Oral Changes</td>
<td>L. Wyatt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-27</td>
<td>Psychopathic Changes in Aging</td>
<td>L. Spittle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-4</td>
<td>Dementia and Dental Care</td>
<td>M. Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td><strong>Exam #1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-18</td>
<td>Misuse of Medications</td>
<td>K. Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-25</td>
<td>Elder Abuse</td>
<td>K. Reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-1</td>
<td><strong>DUE: 11-1-21 Reflection Paper (Well-Elder Interview)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11-8</td>
<td>Rapid Oral Health Decline (ROHD)</td>
<td>L. Spittle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>Nutritional Needs of Elders</td>
<td>L. Mallonee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-22</td>
<td><strong>Happy Thanksgiving</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-29</td>
<td>Hospice Care and Dignity in Death</td>
<td>E. Markinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-29</td>
<td><strong>DUE: 11-29-21: Formal Email to Legislator</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-6</td>
<td><strong>Exam #2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
“Conditions/Diseases of the Senior Citizen”
Identification and Simple Definitions

**Directions:** Using any source, identify up to 40 diseases/conditions that are known to affect, sometimes severely, senior citizens. On a separate sheet of paper, list the condition (one point if spelled correctly) and the definition (if defined correctly). Total points for this assignment that can be earned= 80 points. This paper will be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59pm of the due date to avoid any late point deductions (10pts/day).

**Example:**
**Bunion**- bony growth on foot that is usually painful and may require surgery so senior can wear a shoe on affected foot.

**Conditions:**

*/40*

**Definitions:**

*/40*
Well Elder Experience

The following project has been designed to allow you the opportunity to expand your knowledge and experience in dealing with the “well elderly” so that you will be better prepared to communicate and deliver dental hygiene care to this population. For those of you who have little experience in dealing with an older individual, this will help you identify and practice positive communication skills when dealing with this target population. This “well elder” experience will consist of some time, thought, and written documentation on your part. My hope is that this project will be a positive and rewarding experience.

Objectives
Completing this experience will enable the student to:
1. Demonstrate communication and interpersonal skills.
2. Recognize the value of attentive listening.
3. Discuss special considerations for communicating with the senior citizen.
4. Appreciate the life experiences of senior citizens.

General Guidelines
1. Choose a relatively healthy individual who is 70 years or older. This can be a family member, neighbor, friend, patient, assisted living resident, etc.
2. Set up a meeting and plan to spend at least 1.5 hours. During this time, you will talk and listen to the elder person using the prepared questions only as a guideline.
3. This is not to be conducted during clinic sessions.
4. Summarize the visit by including the answer to the questions on the “Summary of Visit with Elder” form. Do not answer the questions individually. The paper is to be written in paragraph form.
5. Paper must be typed, double-spaced, using Times Roman 11 or 12 point font. The paper is to be a minimum of three full pages. Full credit will not be given if margins and spacing are excessive.
6. 115 points will be removed if the paper falls short of the three page minimum.
7. The “Summary of Visit with Senior Citizen” will be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59pm of the due date to avoid any late points deduction (10pts/day it is late).

Oral History Questioning Techniques
1. Ask questions that encourage conversation rather than those requiring only a yes or no answer.
2. There will be some information you will not get, some sensitive issue cannot be approached even when trust is developed. You may be the wrong age or sex. That’s okay though, just expect it.
3. Take a low key approach. This helps ease both you and the informant into the interview role.
4. Show interest through body language but don’t crowd your informant. Interject remarks, take part in the conversation but don’t take over. Learn to be a good listener.
5. Know what questions you want to ask, but don’t be afraid to let your informant go off on a tangent.
   o Getting back on track:
     “Before you told me about this or that we were talking about so and so. Can you tell me how so and so were affected when the color TV became available?”
6. If you need to write down questions, put them on note cards (one or two to each card).
7. Be sensitive to the needs of the informant. Older people may tire easily. Cut off interview at first sign of fatigue.
8. Consider Ethical Issues:
   o Be honest about your intents.
   o Respect privacy and confidences.
   o Respect sensitive issues.
   o Don’t make promises you can’t keep.
   o Remember, secret recordings violate your informant’s right to know.
Let your informant see anything that will be published. Ask for permission to use tapes/photos to be displayed publicly.

**Oral History Questions**

The most useful questions will be those that you develop through your knowledge of yourself and your family. For your initial efforts you may find the following list of questions helpful. Use open ended questions, feel free to say “please tell me more about that” if you want to know more about a topic, and know that silence is ok.

1. How has your life in such areas as fashion, morality and technology? How do you feel about these changes?
2. What has been the greatest invention in your lifetime?
3. If you didn’t know your age, how old would you say you are? How old do you feel?
4. If you could do your life over again, what would you do differently?
5. What “Words of Advice” would you like to pass on to future generations in your family?


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**Summary of Visit With Elder**

**Directions:** Paper must be a minimum of 3 full pages typed, **double-spaced**, using Times Roman 11 or 12 point font. Complete the information on this summary sheet and include in your paper.

**Grading:**

*Include all of the following in your paper:*

- Elder’s initials
- Relationship to student
- Age
- Description of the interview: impressions and general reactions
- Describe the information you discovered about your elder’s past.
- Reflect and mention information that you connected with or that surprised you.
- Reveal any emotions the interview stirred within you.
- Examine how the interview changed and/or confirmed your perception of the elder healthy population.
- Include anything else that you would like to reflect upon.
This project will provide you with an opportunity to communicate a geriatric healthcare issue to your state legislator. You will pick ONE hypothetical scenario below. Other directions below hypothetical cases.

Hypothetical Case #1: House of Representatives Bill (HB405) recommends cutting funding to the “Meals on Wheels,” a non-profit organization that provides meals to elderly persons. From a survey of 50 recipients of Meals on Wheels, Congresswoman Dana Moon states the data suggests recipients are not eating half of the food provided (meat, vegetable, a piece of fruit, and a small carton of milk). Therefore, this house bill proposes elderly patients that can still drive to pay $7 dollars per meal. Only those who cannot drive will be eligible for enrollment of this program.

Hypothetical Case #2: Senate Bill (SB 1104) proposed by Senator Hornback suggests stopping the reimbursement of physicians who perform regular, in-office dementia/Alzheimer’s screening. The sponsor of the bill is concerned that physicians are performing screenings on too many patients in order to receive higher billing returns (more money in the doctor’s pocket). The Senate bill proposes that the cognitive tests should still be performed- but at no charge to the patient or Medicare. Concerned physicians state that many of their colleagues will no longer perform cognitive screenings since they take up significant time and there is potentially no reimbursement for it.

Hypothetical Case #3: A House of Representative sponsor (a dentist) is proposing (HB 201)- a bill that will prohibit dental hygienists from making any nursing home visits without direct supervision. The bill’s sponsor, Congressman Jody Johnson, is concerned that mobile dentists are not performing oral evaluations every 12 months, therefore causing the dental hygienist to perform illegally in the state of Texas.

Hypothetical Case #4: Senate Bill (SB7905) regarding reporting of elder abuse is being sponsored by Senator O’Neal. She is concerned that the reporting of elder abuse by dental health care providers has declined, while the population of elders is increasing. Senator O’Neal would like to institute mandatory a questionnaire and screening of elders (65+) for every patient that comes to a dental office/school. This SB is facing much opposition from dentists and other Legislators.

Project Directions

1. Carefully review all material related to a topic/issue to be sure you have your facts straight.
2. Identify your state senator (if a senate bill) or congressman (if a house bill). Choose the legislator from the state where you are registered to vote. Be careful to choose the correct legislator. In other words, federal issues need to be sent to the federal government representatives and state issues need to be sent to state representatives. Write a coherent, factual letter to your representative by email. If applicable, you may introduce yourself as a student dental hygienist. If you plan to practice in an underserved area or with underserved populations after graduation, let your legislator know this. Discuss briefly your position on the current bill or state why you believe a bill should be introduced.
3. State specifically what you want the legislator to do about your problem or request and ask for a reply regarding your representative’s perspective on the bill/issue.
4. Provide specific evidence or support for your argument. Evidence includes facts, figures, and opinions: for example, a story, first-hand knowledge, statistics, findings from recent research, expert opinion, and the like. Cite full responses in footnotes.
5. Your letter should be no more than 1 page, single typed, 12 point font. Upload to Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date.
Guidelines

Do . . . .

• Spell the government official’s or legislator’s name correctly and know his/her appropriate title (Representative, Senator, Delegate, Commissioner, Director, etc.). All elected officials should be addressed as “Honorable.”

• Run spell check and grammar check before sending the letter. No matter how knowledgeable or passionate you are about an issue, if you have misspelled words and grammatical errors it takes away from your credibility. You may also use the University Writing Center to review your work.

• Google how to write a formal letter (even though you are preparing it in email form).

• Write as an individual constituent. Because legislators pay the most attention to personal emails from their constituents, it is important that your letter express your own views.

• Limit letter to one page. Conciseness and brevity have impact when writing a letter. Because, legislators are so busy, they do not have much time to read through a long, involved letter in order to discover your point. If your letter is limited to one page, they can scan it quickly. If you have more information than will fit on one page, include it as an attachment for background material, clearly marked as such, and attach it to the letter.

• Cover only one subject and clearly identify it as such. For example, at the top of the page write, “Re: (name of bill or issue).” This will speed up the routing of the letter in the office.

• Be as specific as possible. Regardless of what you are writing about, be as specific as possible in describing it. Refer to a particular bill by number and what it will do. Show as much knowledge as you can, but don’t hesitate to write merely because you are not an “expert.”

• Include your name and return address on the letter. Use the address where you are registered to vote. If you aren’t registered, use your local address.

• Use this outline:
  ▪ Indicate who you are and the purpose or nature of your problem or request.
  ▪ State specifically what you want the legislator to do about your problem or request i.e., vote for or against legislation, add or remove amendments, change language in legislation, etc.
  ▪ Indicate why it is important to you that they take action regarding your problem or request.
  ▪ Put a “hook” in your letter. Ask for something that will require a substantive reply to your letter or communication. For example, ask a legislator if they are a cosponsor of legislation, ask for the status of pending legislation, or ask agency staff for the timetable for issuing regulations.
  ▪ Indicate your thanks, reiterate your most important message, and say that you expect a response.

Don’t . . . .

• Write letters that demand the legislator’s cooperation.

• Adopt a politically partisan tone in your letter.
  Use the legislator’s first name in the salutation of your letter unless you know them personally.

Resources

https://writingcenter.tamu.edu
http://www.senate.gov/
http://www.house.gov/
http://www.wheretodoresearch.com/ (has links to many national newspapers and government agencies)
http://www.firstgov.gov/ (you can register to vote through this site if you are not already registered)
http://www.congress.com/
http://www.aarp.org/legislative/
http://www.aarp.org (you can find almost anything you need re: geriatric issues through this site)
http://www.house.gov/house (use the search to find information relevant to your topic)
http://thomas.loc.gov (type in a word/phrase and search to find current bills relevant to your topic)
http://www.senate.state.tx.us/
# Appendix D

**Legislative Communication Project**

Date Due: 11.29.2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>0 points</th>
<th>1 point</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>3 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifies appropriate legislator who represents your district with correct address and title</td>
<td>Legislator not identified or incorrect address and title used</td>
<td>The legislator you identified does not represent your district or is addressed to the incorrect branch of government</td>
<td>Appropriate legislator identified with correct address and title</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes clear and persuasive argument</td>
<td>No argument of substance for support or opposition</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Argument vague and unclear or is weak to support position</td>
<td>Clearly stated, persuasive argument presented to support your position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses facts and figures or personal experience to support position towards bill</td>
<td>Uses only 1: facts, figures and personal experiences</td>
<td>Uses 2: facts, figures and/or personal experiences but presents as weak argument</td>
<td>Uses 2: facts, figures and/or personal experiences but presents as strong argument</td>
<td>Uses all 3: facts, figures of personal experiences and presents as strong argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly states the action you would like taken</td>
<td>Does not indicate the action you would like taken</td>
<td>Action you would like taken is ambiguous</td>
<td>Action you would like taken is clearly stated</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper summary and respect</td>
<td>Does not properly and respectfully close letter</td>
<td>Properly closes letter but does not state support or opposition to bill</td>
<td>Properly closes letter but does not state support or opposition to bill but does not use summary to directly support or oppose bill</td>
<td>Properly closes letter but does not state support or opposition to bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and Spelling</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3+errors</td>
<td>&lt; 2errors</td>
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</table>
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit http://disability.tamu.edu. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Dr. Paul Dechow, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Room 514, or call 214-828-8208 for additional information.

Academic Integrity

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the honor Code, to accept responsibility, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System. http://aggiehonor.tamu