SDSU | San Diego State University

School of Social Work

SDSU innovators wanted School of Social Work









Bachelor of Arts Degree in Gerontology Prospective Student Information

2025/26

Cultivating the knowledge for global change...one community at a time.

Welcome

The Department of Gerontology became part of the School of Social Work in 2011. The School of Social Work was founded in 1963 and has been continuously accredited by the Council of Social Work Education since 1966. Gerontology is a field of academics and professionals dedicated to understanding the unique needs of older adults and their families. Gerontologists explore the physical, mental, and social changes older individuals experience as they age. They also work to understand the mutual impact between society and older persons and what programs and services are available to this group. Ultimately, gerontologists assist older persons to make the most of their life either by making lifestyle changes or exploring their potential and creativity.

The Mission of the Baccalaureate Program

The mission of the Baccalaureate Program is to prepare entry-level generalist practitioners for responsible, competent, evidence-based gerontology practice and to provide the required base for advanced gerontology education. It subscribes to the stated philosophy and the overall mission of the School of Social Work by offering an integrated and coherent curriculum emphasizing professional values, ethics, knowledge, and skills that enable program graduates to work in a variety of settings serving the aging population.

Program Goals

One of the primary goals of the gerontology program is to provide students with a broad base for comprehensive understanding of the impact of society's changing demographics on every aspect of their social and professional lives. It is through research, teaching, and community involvement that faculty members from numerous disciplines provide for the intellectual development of students, the enhancement of community programs, and the assurance of a better quality of life for older people in the community, the state, and the nation. The goals of the Baccalaureate Program are to:

- Provide academic programs and experiences through courses and field experiences, leading to an undergraduate degree in a Major and Minor in Gerontology.
- Provide interdisciplinary education and training that meet the diverse needs of older people in California and in the U.S.
- Prepare students for careers in a variety of gerontological settings such as senior centers; senior service organizations; area and state agencies on aging; supportive senior housing; public, non-profit and corporate settings; and health & long term care facilities.
- Provide students with knowledge of the aging network and programs on the local, state, and federal level.
- Provide students with knowledge and skills to identify and understand stereotypes and attitudes toward older adults, and emphasize their places and contributions in society.
- Prepare students with knowledge needed in describing, assessing and critiquing various programs, intervention and services designed for older adults.

Department of Gerontology

Program Outcomes

- Describe the processes of physical (biological), psychological, and social aging and related theories of aging.
- Know about the diverse needs of the older population in terms of age, gender, race and ethnicity, and/or diverse abilities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the aging network consisting of programs and policies for the aging population.
- Describe and understand your own attitudes and beliefs about old age and older adults, and reflect and analyze stereotypes towards older adults in the portrayal of aging by society.
- Understand basic concepts or research methods necessary to describe and discuss efficacy and effectiveness of the services and programs for older adults as guided and informed by empirical evidence.
- Develop effective written, oral and interpersonal communication skills with individuals, caregivers, families, and community members through professional field experiences.
- Demonstrate case management skills such as interviewing, assessment, and report writing.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding necessary to describe, assess, and critique various programs, intervention and services to meet the needs of the growing aging population.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for the needs of older adults and their families by engaging in policy formation, implementation, and analysis.
- Understand the ethical complexities that surround issues with respect to aging.



Hepner Hall

Located in the heart of San Diego State University.

The Department of Gerontology is located in Hepner Hall. Built in the early 1930's, it is one of the six original buildings constructed when the University moved to its present location in 1931. These six original buildings represent an effort to use the model of a Spanish village to create an academic village for San Diego State University. The buildings were designed around a courtyard, and feature white stucco walls, red tile roofs, many arches, several towers and wrought iron and wooden decorative touches characteristic of most Spanish missions in California. Hepner Hall is considered an "Historical Site". It is named after the third President of SDSU, Dr. Walter Hepner. Dr. Hepner, along with the second president, Dr. Edward Hardy, envisioned the original six buildings (Hepner Hall, Hardy Tower, Little Theater, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and Physical Plant) as "monastery of education" which includes training, as well as cultural and physical education, amid a serene setting conducive to learning.

Why Consider San Diego?

Did you know?

- San Diego State University (SDSU) was established in 1897 and is a comprehensive university that has been classified as a R1 institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.
- SDSU is the second largest of 23 campuses in the California State University system and is one of the largest Universities in the Western United States (5th largest in California).
- SDSU, a Hispanic-Serving Institution and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution, has a diverse student body of about 39,000. The main campus is situated on 283 acres atop a mesa in San Diego.
- SDSU ranks #1 in the research output in the entire CSU system.
- The architectural richness of the campus reflects a combination of historical "mission" theme and contemporary design. For more information about SDSU visit www.sdsu.edu.

A National Reputation for Academic Excellence

SDSU, designated a "R1 by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education", is ranked among the top 6.7 percent of higher education institutions in the United States. As you pursue your bachelors degree, you will learn from distinguished faculty, engaged in teaching and research.

Research Opportunities

During fiscal year 2023-2024, faculty members were awarded a record-breaking $229.8 million in grants and contracts. SDSU's teacher-scholar model ensures that you receive instruction from and collaborate on research projects with top faculty. Furthermore, our interesting geographic location, cosmopolitan context and widely diverse population provide unique opportunities for field work and applied inquiry.

San Diego Community: An International Hub

Known for its near-perfect climate, 70 miles of beaches, 93 golf courses, the world famous San Diego Zoo and Sea World, and breathtaking deserts and beaches to explore. San Diego is also recognized globally as a growing academic and research Mecca. San Diego's geographic location and diverse population help make the area a dynamic international hub.



Bachelor in Arts in Gerontology Program

Overview

BA Gerontology Program Virtual Tour

The 120 unit undergraduate Gerontology major is designed to apply a wide variety of gerontology practice settings. The preparatory coursework for this major includes a basis in the liberal arts requiring classes in human biology, economics, public health, psychology, sociology, statistics, and gerontology. The upper division curriculum is intensive and exciting. It encompasses coursework in Gerontology practice, human behavior, cultural pluralism, social policy, macro level practice, and research. A field work practicum is also required. The minor in Gerontology consists of 18 units and is strongly recommended to all students with majors in the social and behavioral sciences who wish to broaden their competencies in a related discipline.

Program Details

A detailed program description may be found in the **Gerontology section of the SDSU General Catalog.**

Applying

Applicants to the BA program must complete the CSU Undergraduate application. Select option from, "first time freshmen" or "transfer." SDSU accepts applications until capacities are reached. All new students in the Gerontology program are considered pre-majors and are assigned the pre-major code. The code will stay in effect until students complete the 21 unit preparation for the major course work described in the catalog. Students must meet with the undergraduate advisor and complete a change of major form to declare a major or minor in Gerontology. The pre-major courses, i.e., SWORK 110, are available to community college students through "cross enrollment." SDSU currently has an articulation agreement with Cuyamaca College (SW 110), San Diego City College (HUMS 110), and Palomar College (SWHS 120).

The following link enables incoming freshmen to "map out" their major academic plan: SDSU MyMap. Please plan to attend the freshmen or transfer orientation. Please see the Undergraduate Advisor if you are a transfer student for assistance with mapping out your academic plan.

Useful Websites

You may apply on-line for university admittance and scholarships. Following is a list of web sites that will provide you general and specific information on particular programs and activities:

- Gerontology: http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/degrees-programs/undergraduate-programs/bachelor-of-arts-in-gerontology/ba-gero-overview/
- Admissions Information: http://www.sdsu.edu/admissions
- Admissions Application: http://www.csumentor.com
- Financial Aid & Scholarships: https://sacd.sdsu.edu/financial-aid
- Housing and Residential Education: https://housing.sdsu.edu/
- University Catalog: http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/catalog/quickref.html
- Campus Tours: http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/admissions/tours_events/index.html
- Student Life & Leadership: http://sll.sdsu.edu
- Faculty Advancement and Student Success: https://studentsuccess.sdsu.edu/

Department of Gerontology
Main Office: Hepner Hall HH119
619-594-1481

Preparation for the Pre-Major/Major/Minor

Pre-Majors

All new students to this program are considered pre majors and are assigned the pre-major code. The code will stay in effect until students complete the 21 unit preparation for the major coursework described in the catalog at http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/catalog/quickref.html. Admission priority will be given to those transfer students who have completed the seven pre-major course requirements prior to enrolling in SDSU.

Majors

All pre-major courses must be completed before declaring a major. Students must declare a major to take the upper division GERO courses. Students must change to the major code prior to my.SDSU at my.sdsu.edu registration or the computer will not permit access to any upper division gerontology course. To declare a gerontology major, students must also:

- Must have completed all the GERO prerequisites.
- Have a minimum overall SDSU campus GPA of 2.0 and be in good academic standing (cannot be on probation or disqualified) at the University.
- Have passed the Upper Division Writing Requirement.

Foreign Language Requirement

Competency (equivalent to that which is normally attained through three consecutive semesters or five quarters of college study) is required in one foreign language as part of the preparation for the major. Native speakers from countries where English is not the principal language and who have finished high school or equivalent in that country will satisfy the requirement.

For more information on foreign language requirements, please refer to Graduation Requirements in the SDSU General Catalog.

Declaration of Pre-Major, Major/Minor or Transferring

For students who want to declare pre-major/minor to Gerontology, please contact Dr. Jennifer Cosio at jcosio@sdsu.edu or Christie Jimenez at cojimenez@sdsu.edu.



Field Practicum

Field education is an integral part of the curriculum and a core requirement for the SDSU Gerontology Undergraduate Program. The Undergraduate Field/Practicum learning experiences consist of two courses, three units each (GERO 400A and GERO 400B), scheduled over two semesters. GERO 400A is a required course, which consists of a field practicum where students complete 200 hours of internship. Students may take GERO 400B as an elective or may choose a different elective but GERO 400B is not required to take. The practicum placements are in different agencies with different site supervisors, each of which must be eligible and meet the School approved gerontology criteria, curriculum, and standards. During both courses, gerontology students conduct their internships under the professional supervision of qualified site supervisors.

GERO 400A/B allow each student to integrate classroom theory and knowledge and begin to practice skills while developing professional competence and identity in the field of gerontology. The course content includes the use of gerontology theory in actual practice situations, skill building, and professional standards in ethics, values, and diversity when working with varied older adult populations.

During the last twenty years, partnerships have been formed with older adult serving agencies and programs throughout the San Diego County area. The select group of gerontology practicum agencies have involved public and private, non-profit and for profit, multidisciplinary inpatient and outpatient settings, including government entities, senior care networks, skilled nursing facilities, residential care, adult protective services and senior teams, hospitals, hospices, community mental health clinics, etc.

In order to qualify for the Gerontology Undergraduate Practicum, students shall meet the following criteria prior to enrolling in GERO 400A or GERO 400B:

1. Must have Major Status (all pre-major courses have been completed before declaring Gerontology Major).
2. Completed and passed GERO 310, GERO 360, and GERO 370 before applying for GERO 400A.
3. Must have senior status, class level 4 (at least 90 earned units).
4. Must have a Major GPA of 2.0 or higher.
5. Must have a minimum SDSU campus overall GPA of 2.0 and be in good academic standing.
6. Must pass Agency Interview and receive Agency Confirmation (including passing additional agency screening and clearances processes).
7. Gero students must start the application process to secure a practicum placement at least 6 months prior to the semester they plan to enroll in GERO 400A.

To obtain additional information please visit http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/field/program-descriptions/gerontology-undergraduate/#objectives.

Four Electives Required in Gerontology Major

Approved electives can be in the gerontology department or another department. There are four required and five choices within the School of Social Work including GERO 400B, GERO 499, SWORK 382, SWORK 483A, and SWORK 590. Please refer to page 9 for other approved electives.

San Diego State University
Hepner Hall: HH 119
San Diego , CA 92182-4119
Phone (619) 594-6865

Over Enrollment

If the above eligibility criteria results in a larger pool of students available than field education resources will allow, the Department of Gerontology will use the Limit of Enrollment policy to rank each student. SDSU campus GPA (not overall GPA which includes transfer units) will be used. Students who have entered SDSU for the first time in the spring term and have no SDSU GPA will automatically be placed on the waiting list. At the end of the spring term, their GPA will be reviewed relative to available field resources. The rankings will be used to determine the number of students permitted into available field placements. Students who meet all eligibility criteria but are ranked below the actual number of available resources will be considered as priority students for the following year. This means, they will automatically be placed first in the next round of placements (one year later) as long as they remain in good academic standing with the University and still meet the eligibility criteria set forth above. Students must re-apply and must attend the Field Practicum Information Meeting. It is the student's responsibility to meet all required Field Placement Process deadlines.

Course Sequence

Please refer to the course sequence guide on page 9.

Graduation Requirements

Please see the current SDSU General Catalog for additional information about graduation requirements such as: graduation writing assessment, foreign language, and general education.

Financial Aid

SDSU strives to make education affordable for all its students. For more information about financial aid, work study, loans, grants, etc. please visit: https://sa.sdsu.edu/financial-aid

Scholarships

There are a several scholarships applicable for Gerontology majors available on SDSU's Aztec Scholarship portal: https://sa.sdsu.edu/financial-aid/scholarships/sdsu-aztec-scholarships

The portal allows students to apply for university scholarships via one application. The Office of Financial Aid coordinates the SDSU scholarship application and awarding process with core committees from the various colleges, departments and organizations responsible for selecting recipients. The general application in Aztec Scholarships is open from March 1 to August 15 for awards in the upcoming academic year (summer, fall, and spring).

Policy on Life / Work Experience

The School of Social Work does not accept life/work experience in lieu of any course requirements or academic credit. The School does not accept transfer credit based on life/work experience. Students will have to take courses for any life/work experience for which they thought that they were going to receive academic credit.

Gerontology Undergraduate Advising

Gerontology Undergraduate Advising

Dr. Jennifer Cosio, MSW
Office hours: by appointment via
EAB Navigate or email at
jcosio@sdsu.edu

Christie Jimenez, MSW
Office hours: by appointment via
EAB Navigate or email at
cojimenez@sdsu.edu

Gerontology Curriculum Task Group Chair

Dr. Jong Min
Office Hours: by appointment
(619) 594-6893
jwmin@sdsu.edu

Field Education Faculty

Amanda Lee, LCSW
Director of Field Education (MSW Division and Gero)
Office hours listed in HH-119
(619) 594-5144
amanda.lee@sdsu.edu

Maria McClean
Administrative Support Assistant
Hepner Hall 119 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
(619) 594-5197
mmcclean@sdsu.edu

Career Services for Social Work Students

Should you need assistance with preparing for the internship or job searching process, please contact Esmeralda Sanchez, essanchez@sdsu.edu. She is the Career Services Coordinator specially servicing our students from the School of Social Work.

Catalogs

Catalogs are also available in the Bookstore on campus or at https://catalog.sdsu.edu.

Electronic Communications

Information about the University (including the entire Undergraduate Catalog) can be found at: www.sdsu.edu. The address for the Department of Gerontology, which is part of the School of Social Work, can be found at socialwork.sdsu.edu.

SDSU Undergraduate Social Work students contact our School of Social Work office at SOCWORK@sdsu.edu to participate in the school's e-mail information network.

All students must use an SDSU email account for all SDSU related communication. To access your SDSU email account, please go to: https://it.sdsu.edu/help/google

Admissions

For Admissions information, please visit the Office of Admissions for more information at admissions.sdsu.edu. You can apply via the Cal State Apply system online at www.calstate.edu/apply. To attend in the fall you must submit an application **October 1 – November 30**. SDSU School of Social Work does not currently offer spring admission.

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Sequence of Coursework

I. Pre-Major – 21 units

- ❑ GERO 101 (Fall and Summer)
- ❑ GERO 250 (Spring)
- ❑ CFD 135
- ❑ BIOL 100 (Any Human Biology)
- ❑ PSY 101
- ❑ PH 101
- ❑ SW 110 (Fall and Summer)

One must have a grade of "C" or better in each gerontology pre-major course with a minimum overall GPA of 2.0 to be eligible to declare a gerontology major.

If taking course at a community college, check for equivalent course number by using http://www.assist.org/

II. Major (Need to declare major status before taking these courses)

Upper Level Gerontology Courses – 24 units

- ❑ GERO 310 (Fall)
- ❑ GERO 360 (Spring)
- ❑ GERO 370 (Spring)
- ❑ GERO 400A (Fall or Spring)
- ❑ GERO 402 (Spring)
- ❑ GERO 520 (Fall)
- ❑ SWORK 381 (Spring)
- ❑ SWORK 391 (Fall and Spring)

2. Gerontology Practice and Field Course – 3 to 6 units/senior year

- ❑ Must have attained senior status (90 units) by the end of spiring semester prior to entering field
- ❑ GERO 400A
- ❑ GERO 400B (optional elective)

3. Upper Division Electives – 12 units

Choose Four

- ❑ ENS 433
- ❑ PSYCH 380
- ❑ GERO 400B
- ❑ GENS 420
- ❑ SWORK 483A (Fall)
- ❑ SWORK 382 (Fall)
- ❑ GERO 499
- ❑ SWORK 590

Additional upper division electives:
(adjustments will be made for CFD 335, COMM 321, PH 362 and PSYCH 456)

- ❑ Foreign language requirement complete
- ❑ Writing Proficiency
- ❑ International Requirement



Department of Gerontology Tips

Tip 1:

To begin your research, go to the SDSU website (www.sdsu.edu), select "Academics" and access the following links under:

- Academic Calendar (provides important information on semester dates)
- General Catalog (provides on-line access to catalog)
- Class Schedule (provides listing of classes arranged by departments)

Tip 2:

Once admitted to SDSU, understand that there is one type of advising:

Gerontology Advising

Provides guidance on course sequence for gerontology pre-major and major courses.

For freshman and sophomore students, please contact Christie Jimenez at cojimenez@sdsu.edu. For junior and senior-level students, please contact Dr. Jennifer Cosio at jcosio@sdsu.edu or schedule an appointment via your EAB Navigate, which can be found on my.SDSU at my.sdsu.edu. It is also very important to access the Department of Gerontology's website (http://socialwork.sdsu.edu/degrees-programs/undergraduate-programs/bachelor-of-arts-in-gerontology/ba-gero-overview/) to keep updated on departmental changes.

Tip 3:

The following links will provide information regarding next steps, SDSU's online application status check, housing, financial aid, and more.

First-Year Student

If entering as a First-Year Student https://admissions.sdsu.edu/first-years.

Transfer Student

If entering as a Transfer Student http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/admissions/transfers/index.html.

Note: If entering as transfer, it helps to take SW 110 at City College (HUMS110) or at Cuyamaca College (SW110) or cross enroll prior to transferring to SDSU.

Tip 4:

Gerontology is an impacted major. It requires successful completion of "pre-major" coursework and then declaration of the major. See course sequence handout for more information on courses.

Important: Check your transcript on my.SDSU to see if your status is "Gerontology pre-major." If not, you will need to contact your Gero Advisor.

Tip 5:

Stay focused on your plan for graduation. Both Academic Advising Advisors and the Department of Gerontology will help you plot your plan. For more information, please contact Dr. Jennifer Cosio at jcosio@sdsu.edu or Christie Jimenez at cojimenez@sdsu.edu. You can also schedule an appointment with the advisors via your EAB Navigate, which can be found on my.SDSU at my.sdsu.edu.

Gerontology Faculty Research

Our distinguished faculty are committed to the latest research on the aging population. Current areas of research are as follows:

Dr. Anita Harbert's (Emeritus Professor) research relates to social welfare policy as it affects the service needs of disadvantaged elderly, particularly in the areas of health care alternatives, elder abuse, family support and nutrition. Dr. Harbert has been involved in the comparative analysis of international service needs and systems of delivery for the elderly in different countries.

Dr. Jong W. Min's primary areas of research focus on health disparities, long-term care research and policy, civic engagement, program evaluation on mental health programs for the homebound and vulnerable seniors, and interdisciplinary geriatric education and training.

Dr. Eunjeong Ko's research focuses on end-of-life decision making, cancer communication, and advance care planning among minority older adults.

Dr. Mario Garrett's research focuses on the psychology, health and economic well being of American Indian and Alaska Native elders and indigenous populations throughout the world with 18 years of continuous federal and international funding.



School of Social Work Student Associations 2025-2026

Asian Pacific Islander Social Work Association (APISWSA) - Dormant

Awareness of the API culture within the social work profession; to recognize API social work professionals; to network and provide outreach and community service. **Contact Advisor: Dr. Jong Min,** jwmin@sdsu.edu

Black Social Work Association (BSWA)

Awareness of black culture within the social work profession; to recognize black social work professionals; to network and provide outreach and community service. **Contact Advisor: Dr. Norman Jackson,** ndjackson@sdsu.edu

Graduate Social Work Association (GSWA)

The GSWA interfaces between the student body and the administration and faculty of the School of Social work. GSWA officers make effort to identify the needs and concerns of students and bring those issues to the attention of the faculty. Additionally, the GSWA organizes both academic and social activities for graduate students. **Contact Advisor: Prof. Shelly Paule,** slpaule@sdsu.edu

Indigenous Social Work Alliance (ISWA)

The purposes of this organization are to educate the community about Native American/Indigenous identifying cultures, promote social and educational development of Native students, exchange ideas and traditions with members of the Native community, advocate for social justice issues in relation to Social Work and Child Welfare, and foster leadership among Native students and non-Native students in the field of Social Work. **Contact Advisor: Prof. Tamara Stohauer,** tstrohauer@sdsu.edu

Intergenerational Gerontology Alliance

To empower students in becoming leaders and advocates who are prepared to meet the needs of our dynamic aging population. We are an academic resource for gerontology students as well as an opportunity to interact, learn from, and network with alumni and other aging professionals in our community. All majors are encouraged to participate. **Contact Advisor: Amanda Lee,** amanda.lee@sdsu.edu, and **Prof. Norman Jackson,** njackson@sdsu.edu

Latino Social Work Student Association (LSSWSA)

To educate and mobilize social work students in the areas concerning the Latino population. Promote and improve the perception of the Latino culture. Group is also to provide support for the Latino social work students. **Contact Advisors: Dr. Dahlia Fuentes,** dahlia.fuentes@sdsu.edu

OUTreach

LGBTQIA+ peers and allies who are San Diego State University students come together to provide support and community outreach. **Contact Advisor: Dr. Norman Jackson**, ndjackson@sdsu.edu

Continues on next page

Social Action Committee (SAC)
To educate and mobilize social workers in San Diego county to improve the social condition in the community and promote social justice. **Contact Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Cosio,** jcosio@sdsu.edu

Student Association of School Social Workers (SASSW)
The purpose of the organization is to integrate, educate, while advocating and empowering social work students who are interested in the school social work profession. **Contact Advisor: Prof. Paul Brazzel,** pbrazzel@sdsu.edu

Student Social Work Association at SDSU – Imperial Valley - Dormant
The purpose of the Student Social Work Association at SDSU – Imperial Valley is to educate, advocate for, and empower social work students, the social work profession and the Imperial Valley community. **Contact Advisor: Prof. Ernie Zuniga,** ezuniga@sdsu.edu

Social Workers of Color Student Coalition (SWC)
The SWC is open to BSW and MSW students. It is for anyone who self-identifies as BIPOC within our department to have a space that fosters community and gives a voice to the experiences within the field of social work, the BSW and MSW programs, and SDSU and the community at large. **Contact Advisor: Prof. Kayla Whaley,** mmwhaley@sdsu.edu

Undergraduate Social Work Association (USWA) - Dormant
To foster student interaction in Social Work administration activities on campus and in the community. **Contact Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Cosio,** jcosio@sdsu.edu

*** College Health and Human Services Student Council (CHHSSC)**
To unite all the college's student organizations on a board. It meets on a biweekly basis. The function is to support and advocate for students and organizations within the CHHS. The CHHSSC also has an AS Representative for SDSU.

**NOTE: This club is college-wide, not necessarily specific to the school.*



SDSU | San Diego State University

School of Social Work
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive
San Diego, CA 92182
socialwork.sdsu.edu

G1631 (B) BA Gero Prospective Student Info June 5, 2024