Gerontology

Undergraduate Emphasis Program

The population of those age 65 and over in the U.S. is growing.
This group is predicted to increase from 13% to 20% of the
country's residents by 2030. Shifting demographics means an
increased demand for individuals with training and experience
working with older adults and aging issues in almost every field.

UWL's Gerontology emphasis is a multi-disciplinary program
designed to assist students planning to enter fields directly
involving older persons and it is open to undergraduate
students in any major. The study of gerontology will also
help students to prepare for their own aging process and
experiences with aging in their personal and professional lives.

What is gerontology?
Gerontology is the study of aging. Aging is a multifaceted
human experience that begins at birth. Every individual
undergoes changes in their social lives, cognitive health,
emotional responses and physical bodies as they develop. At
UWL, Gerontology is an emphasis, meaning this topic can be
interwoven with any academic area of interest that a student
majors in, such as economics, exercise and sport science,
health education and promotion, philosophy, political science,
psychology, therapeutic recreation or sociology.

Gerontology jobs
Because of the breadth of gerontology, students need the
skills and knowledge of a traditional major and then apply
those skills to the field of aging. Jobs depend upon the major
field completed.

For instance, students may leave campus with a degree
in therapeutic recreation plus the Gerontology emphasis
and obtain employment working directly with older adults
in therapeutic recreation. Others use their degrees to
work in research, planning, management of services or
may have more indirect contact with older adults through
policy development. Some pursue advanced degrees with a
gerontological focus including, but not limited to a doctoral
degree, master's in business, law degree, occupational
therapy or physical therapy degree. Jobs could include:

- Public policy professionals
- Business professionals
- Healthcare professionals
- Psychologists/counselors, social workers
- Legal professionals, attorneys
- Journalists
- Health educators
- Medical ethicists
- Physical educators
- Researchers
- Urban planners

What distinguishes UWL's gerontology program?

- Unique program, growing demand
  The Gerontology emphasis prepares students for careers
  and life in a rapidly changing world, impacted by shifting
demographics. An aging population means increased
demand for individuals with training and experience
working with older adults and aging issues in almost every
field. The Gerontology emphasis is one of a limited number
of Gerontology programs in Wisconsin.

- Program flexibility
  The Gerontology emphasis is cross-disciplinary and
flexible, enhancing career readiness. The emphasis
includes 15 credits of coursework. At least six credits must
be taken from the core and the nine remaining credits can
be selected from the core, supportive courses or other
gerontology-related coursework, such as internships,
approved by program coordinators.

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