

FRHD*4190 - Assessment in Gerontology

Fall 2025

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

This course provides an examination and critique of current methods of assessing older adults. Tools to be considered include those for assessing dementia, depression, and pain. Students will examine diagnostic criteria that form the underpinnings of most tests and then examine each test for its psychometric properties and appropriate use. An understanding of the ethical principles governing assessment will be gained.

Credit weight: 0.5 credits

Course Hours: 2-2 (24 lecture; 24 lab/seminar)

Prerequisite(s): 12.00 credits

Co-requisite(s): FRHD*2060 or BIOM*4050

Restriction(s): This is a Priority Access Course. Some restrictions may apply during some time periods. Please see the departmental website for more information.

Department(s): Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition

Course Description

In your future careers as gerontologists and specialists in human and family development, you may be asked to provide an assessment of an older person's cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. Even more likely, you may be asked to interpret the findings of assessments carried out by other professionals to decide about the kind of assistance an older person might require. This course, then, has four purposes:

1. To examine the kinds of bio/pyscho/social disorders, disabilities and differences that may lead to a request for assessment of older adults.
2. To develop competence and critical thinking around the assessment process for older adults.
3. To embed a strengths based---orientation, concern for the worth and dignity, and an appreciation of the context of older adults and their families into the assessment process and personal assessment skills.
4. To explore and analyze the available assessment techniques for older adults and where appropriate, to provide instruction in how to select and administer to a test and in how to interpret the findings.

Lecture Schedule

Monday and Wednesday: 8:30am-10:20am in AD-S*VIRTUAL ((9/4 to 12/12). Zoom links will be posted in Courselink for each class meeting.

Please consult the course outline for details on synchronous learning (i.e. when we will meet during class time online) and learning activities to be completed independently during course time. Active engagement with the course content and Courselink site will be required each week.

Instructor Information

Kimberley Wilson (she/her), PhD, MSW
Email: kim.wilson@uoguelph.ca

Textbooks & Learning Resources

Required Resource(s): There are several required resources for this course. All are electronically through the University of Guelph library with access through Courselink. Additional readings and resources will be posted the course website on Courselink. **There are no costs associated with any of the resources required for this course.**

1. Lichtenberg PA (Ed.) (2010). Handbook of Assessment in Clinical Gerontology. 2nd Edition. San Diego: Academic Press.
2. Lichtenberg, P. A., Mast, B. T., Carpenter, B. D., & Loebach Wetherell, J. E. (2015). APA handbook of clinical geropsychology, Vol. 1: History and status of the field and perspectives on aging. American Psychological Association.
3. McInnis-Dittrich, K. (2013). Social work with older adults. Pearson Higher Ed.
4. Pachana, N. A., & Laidlaw, K. (Eds.). (2014). The Oxford handbook of clinical geropsychology. Oxford University Press, USA.

Recommended Resources(s): American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM---5®). American Psychiatric Pub. Available electronically through the University of Guelph library and Courselink.

Online Certifications: There are several required online trainings as part of this course. These contribute to your classroom engagement grade and are designed to enhance your knowledge and marketability upon graduation. With each you will receive a certificate of completion. Please visit the Content Tab in Courselink for more information about the following online courses.

Campus Resources: If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a [Program Counsellor](#) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the [Learning Commons](#) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Library Course Reserve (Ares)

For this course, you will be required to access course reserve materials through the University of Guelph McLaughlin Library. To access these items, select Ares on the navbar in CourseLink. Note that you will need your Central Login ID and password in order to access items on reserve.

For further instructions on accessing reserve resources, visit [How to Get Course Reserve Materials](#). If at any point during the course you have difficulty accessing reserve materials, please contact the e-Learning Operations and Reserve Services staff at:

Tel: 519-824-4120 ext. 53621 | Email: libres2@uoguelph.ca |
Location: McLaughlin Library, First Floor, University of Guelph

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course, successful students will be able to:

1. Describe the risk and resilience factors associated with biopsychosocial functioning in older adults.
2. Evaluate and select appropriate assessments for use with older adults.
3. Demonstrate competence and critical thinking around the assessment process for older adults.
4. Embed a strengths-based orientation concern for the worth and dignity, and an appreciation of the context of older adults and their families into the assessment process and personal assessment skills.
5. Work collaboratively with peers to enhance their own knowledge and perspective while appreciating the diversity of opinions of others.

Course Overview

Please note that this course is an elective and is scheduled in a synchronous online format. There is an expectation that students will actively engage in each online session. **This includes having your camera on throughout lecture as an essential part of your learning.** If there are any special circumstances that prevent you from having your camera on you are encouraged to speak with your professor to discuss alternate ways to engage.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Below is an outline of the scheduling of class time for our lectures and labs. This is intended to be an iterative schedule, recognizing as it currently stands is ambitious and asks a lot of students. Our discussions will be fluid and will cater to the needs and interests of the class and scheduling may be revised to accommodate new interest, guest speakers, and areas requiring additional attention. **Additional scheduling details will be posted on Courselink throughout the semester.**

Date	Topic	Readings
Monday Sept 8	Welcome, introductions, overview of the semester	
Wednesday Sept 10	What do we mean by assessment in gerontology?	Page xi – xvi (Lichtenberg) Pages 82–89 (McInnis-Dittrich)
Monday Sept 15	Basic concepts in test and measurement Assessment values	Online readings Geropsychological Assessment (P&L);
Wednesday Sept 17	The interview as an assessment strategy Conducting a biopsychosocial assessment	Interviewing Older Adults (P&L) Pages 89–109 (McInnis-Dittrich)
Monday Sept 22	Assessing Functional health	Online readings
Wednesday Sept 24	Mood disorders: focus on depression	Chapter 1 (Lichtenberg) Late-Life Depression (P&L)
Monday Sept 29	Delirium	Chapter 7(Lichtenberg) CCSMH Resources Chapter 22 (Lichtenberg et al.)
Wednesday Oct 1	Assessing Cognitive impairment	Chapter 6, 19 (Lichtenberg) Evaluation & Treatment of Geriatric Neurocognitive disorders (P&L)
Monday Oct 6	Assessing Cognitive impairment	Readings continued from Oct 4 th
Wednesday Oct 8	Suicide risk assessment	CCSMH Guideline Suicidal Ideation in late life (P&L)
Mon Oct 13	Fall Reading Break – no class scheduled	
Wednesday Oct 15	Mid-semester check in and case assessment prep	No readings
Monday Oct 20	Case Assessment #1 (20%)	
Wednesday Oct 22	Anxiety	Chapter 2 (Lichtenberg) Late-Life Anxiety (P&L)
Monday Oct 27	Consent & Capacity	Chapter 22 (Lichtenberg) *caution
Wednesday Oct 29	Pain	Chapter 24 (Lichtenberg) Pain in persons with dementia ... (P&L)
Monday Nov 3	Substance Use Disorders	Substance Use, Misuse, and Abuse (P&L) CCSMH Guideline
Wednesday Nov 5	Falls	Online resources
Monday Nov 10	Clinical Rounds (25%)	
Wednesday Nov 12	Clinical Rounds (25%)	
Monday Nov 17	Communication skills: supporting people with aphasia	Online resources
Wednesday Nov 19	Assessment of Family dynamics	Chapter 11 (Lichtenberg)
Monday Nov 24	Assessment in Reality	No readings! *
Wednesday Nov 26	Summary and Integration	No readings!
Friday Nov 28	CASE ASSESSMENT #2 (30%)	

Assessment Breakdown

Assessment	LOs Addressed	Due Date	% of Final
Engagement	1,2,3,4,5	Ongoing	25
Case Assessments	1,3,4	See above	50 (20%; 30%)
Clinical Rounds	1,2,3,4,5	See above	25
Total			100%

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Fall 2025 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: **November 28**. After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Late Assignment: Late assignments will be accepted up to 5 days following the due date and will receive a penalty of 10% per day EXCEPT under documented grounds for compassionate consideration. Assignments submitted more than one week late without documented grounds will receive a grade of zero. If you are going to hand an assignment in late, you must contact your course instructor to inform them when you will be submitting your assignment.

Submission of Assignments - Turnitin Software: In this course, your instructor will be using Turnitin, integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool, to detect possible plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph.

All submitted assignments will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing academic misconduct. In this course, you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced the outside sources and materials in your assignment.

Receipt of Grades: After you receive a grade on [CourseLink](#), please review your feedback. Any inquiry or dispute over the grade must be made within two weeks from the date they are posted. If you fail to protest any grade during this time limit, changes to the grade will not be considered. [Grades will be based on the Grading Procedures outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.](#)

Experiential Learning Component

Experiential Learning (EL) at the University of Guelph means learning through action. EL activities provide students with the opportunity to apply course material to real-world, meaningful contexts.

This course has integrated the following Experiential Learning Components: [Course-Integrated Learning](#). Upon successful completion, this experiential learning course will be reflected on the student's Professional and Career Development Record (PCDR). Learn about the PCDR and experiential learning at www.uoguelph.ca/pcdr.

CSAHS Academic Misconduct Policy

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar. The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and **it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct** and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Instructors **shall not** determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam.

Instructors **can** determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct.

Standard Statements for Undergraduate Courses

Academic Integrity: The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility: The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 days in advance, and no later than the first business day in November, March or July as appropriate for the semester. Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the [SAS website](#).

Accommodation of Religious Obligations: If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations](#).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments: Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date: Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the [Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses](#).

Email Communication: As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing: The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the [Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness](#). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a [Student Wellness Navigator](#) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our [mental wellbeing resources](#). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness: Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials: Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources: The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement: When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).