



Human Services - Gerontology Concentration

About this Composite Major

The Human Services major prepares students to meet the growing demand for human service workers, whose occupations encompass a broad range of helping professions. The program combines courses from the disciplines of communications, sociology, and psychology to provide an overall understanding of the field. The curriculum is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of human behavior and to develop the skills necessary to function as a human services professional.

As more people are living longer and having diverse life experiences, there is an increasing demand for professionals with expertise in Gerontology, the study of aging and the life course.

Meet a Student



"I have been able to learn more about communicating with people of different backgrounds, and what we can do to better understand human behavior. I have gained skills that involve understanding people who have different ethnicities, disabilities, and other forms of diversity...The human services program is a great program with professors who understand and care about your education." - Marilyn Quintero, class of 2020

"My internship was one of the best experiences I have ever had. My supervisor allowed me to lead some of the

activities with the residents and I found myself really enjoying the job. This internship confirmed to me again that I was headed in the right direction." - Elizabeth Boettger, class of 2018

Career Opportunities



The Gerontology concentration in the Human Services major prepares graduates to work in a variety of settings, including:

- Social service agencies
- Government agencies
- Health care institutions
- Nonprofit organizations
- Long-term care facilities
- Retirement communities.

The multidisciplinary curriculum, which includes courses in communication, gerontology, psychology, sociology, and recreation and leisure studies, is designed to enhance critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills relevant to professions addressing aging-related issues and topics.

Recent graduates have found employment as:

- Case managers
- Directors of residential facilities
- Personnel specialists
- Probation officers
- Parole officers at local agencies.

Other career possibilities include:

- Social services liaison
- Group activities coordinator



- Home health aide
- Intake interviewer
- Client advocate
- Family support worker
- Residential counselor
- Life skills instructor
- Community organizer
- Youth worker
- Social work assistant
- Social work (with completion of a master's degree in social work)

Explore Human Services

- National Organization for Human Services (<https://www.nationalhumanservices.org/>)
- North Dakota Department of Human Services – Adults & Aging Services (<http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/>)
- American Society on Aging (<https://www.asaging.org/>)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics – Community and Social Service Occupations (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/home.htm>)

Practical Experience

Completion of an internship is required. Majors who have a cumulative GPA of 2.50 are eligible to apply for semester-long internships, for which students earn 3-12 credit hours. The internship provides supervised training in various regional agencies and service organizations. Students have completed their internships in various places, including: the Sheyenne Care Center and other long-term care facilities, Open Door Center, Barnes County Social Services, and Abused Persons Outreach Center.

Contact Information

Department Chair & Faculty Contact

Dr. Emily Fenster, emily.fenster@vcsu.edu, (701) 845-7313

Department Location

McFarland Hall 315

Schedule your visit today!

<http://visit.vcsu.edu/>

(701) 845-7101 or (800) 532-8641

Plan of Study

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
English Composition (Gen Ed)	3	Art and Music (Gen Ed)	3
MATH 210 (Gen Ed)	3	English Composition (Gen Ed)	3
SOC 110	3	Lab Science (Gen Ed)	4
Speech Communication (Gen Ed)	3	PSYC 111 (Gen Ed)	3
Computer Science and Literacy (Gen Ed)	3	Wellness (Gen Ed)	2
UNIV 150	1		
	16		15

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
Additional Humanities or Social Science (Gen Ed)	2	Additional Electives	3
COMM 216	3	GERO 256 (offered through DCB)	3
Lab Science (Gen Ed)	4	SOC 130	3
Literacies (Gen Ed)	3	SOC 220	3
Social Science (Gen Ed)	3	PSYC 250	3
	15		15

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
Additional Electives	3	Additional course (if only taking 3 credit internship)	3
MGMT 302	3	COMM 483	3
PSYC 370	3	SOC 340	3
SOC 251	3	SOC 441	3
SOC 320	3	SOC 497	3
SOC 330	3		
	18		15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
Additional Electives	3	Additional Electives	3
COMM 311	3	Additional Electives	3
PSYC 360	3	PSYC 310	3
RLS 290 (offered through DCB)	3	PSYC 470	3
SOC 422	3	SOC 354	3
SOC 491	1		
	16		15

Total Credits 125

Please note: This plan is intended for general information only. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their academic advisor each semester before registration.



Learning Outcomes

1. **Knowledge of Society & the Field:** Students will develop an understanding of the interaction between individual and societal forces; why knowledge of social and historical context, norms, institutions, and inequalities are important to the field of human services; and their role as emerging professionals in the evolving human services field.
2. **Confidence in Assessment, Critical Evaluation, & Theory:** Human services students will apply theories, evaluate studies, and conduct research in course projects tailored to give practical experience that connects to a broad range of professional opportunities.
3. **Application of Knowledge, Skills, & Values in Applied Settings:** Students will complete internships and coursework that integrate their academic knowledge, skills and values as emerging professionals within real world, applied settings.