



Course Unit: Theoretical Foundations of Gerontology and Palliative Care

Semester	Winter
Hours per Week	2
Contact Hours (total)	24 h
Individual Study	20 h

Language of Tuition/ Assessment	English
Group Size (max)	12
ECTS Credits	2
Lecturer	Christopher Klinger, MPA (University of North Carolina)

Outline: Gerontology broadly deals with aging, older people and age as a category of (social) structure. The first part of the course focuses on defining gerontology and palliative care as well as on a wide range of theories related to aging and the life course/their linkages to health and social policy. In line with an increase in the number of deaths in Germany, estimated to grow by another 1/3 to 1.01 million by 2030, the second part of the course reviews death and dying in contemporary society – also from a palliation perspective.

Objectives: Theoretical foundations of gerontology and palliative care are introduced – learners will be able to critically analyze and use theory knowledgeably in their writing, research and practice. Further enhancement of presentation and (written) communication skills in English in preparation for work and/or studies abroad to exploit cultural diversity as a benefit for a company or institution.

Content: Introduction to gerontology and palliative care, (social) theories of aging and the life course. Interdisciplinary aspects of gerontology for research and practice. Critical gerontology and linkages to health and social policy. Universal Design and assistive technologies. History and principles of hospice and palliative care service provision – including pain and symptom management, advance directives, living wills and bereavement care.

Prerequisites: Openness to critically engage with aging, death and dying. Command of the English language.

Methods: Short lectures, seminar discussion, student presentations and literature analyses.

Evaluation: Individual presentation (30%) and term paper (70%) on a specific theory or critical enquiry on an agreed-upon topic in the aging and/or palliative care realm.

Literature: Bengtson, V., Gans, D., Putney, N., & Silverstein, M. (Eds.). (2009). Handbook of Theories of Aging (Second Edition). New York, NY: Springer.

Selected course readings provided by the instructor.