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Ph.D. IN SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY
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SOCIAL GERONTOLOGY

The PhD in Social Gerontology allows students to take a critical social science perspective and an interdisciplinary approach to the study of aging. Students who complete the PhD in Social Gerontology will acquire theoretical and methodological expertise in social gerontology with a specific emphasis on an interdisciplinary social science perspective on aging and the condition of later age.

The PhD program in Social Gerontology will apply this perspective to analysing and understanding aging as a social and cultural process, construct, and outcome. It is the combination of these three perspectives, the ways that they interact with and build on one another, and a focus on both the social structural and cultural dimensions of aging that makes the program distinctive in its area. The PhD program in Social Gerontology differs from many doctoral programs in this area in that it allows students to develop and pursue broader research interests that may be outside the typical focus on functional health, demography and service management.

THE PROGRAM

The PhD in Social Gerontology takes 4 years to complete. Students are required to complete course work (six courses) in their first year of study. All doctoral students will be required to participate in a non-credit research and professional development seminar.

Students will take a comprehensive exam in their area of concentration in Social Gerontology. The purpose of the exam is to ensure that the student has a sufficient grasp of the relevant scholarly literature in her/his area of research interest and that she/he is able to synthesize and communicate this literature in a critically insightful way. The comprehensive exam will also have an oral component (defence of the written answers) and will be assessed by the supervisory committee.

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree will present a thesis which shows competence in original research and will be required to defend it during a final oral examination.

ADMISSIONS

Applications will be accepted starting in November. Admission to the PhD program requires an average of B+ or better, in a Master’s degree in a related aging and/or social sciences discipline. Applicants normally have demonstrated interest and experience in critical approaches to aging. Admission to the Ph.D. program in Social Gerontology will normally be on a full-time basis only.

Applicants are encouraged to contact faculty members in the Department regarding potential PhD supervision as well as the PhD program.

To apply, visit: healthagingandsociety.mcmaster.ca (Click “Graduate Program”).

All applications will be submitted to the Department’s Graduate Admissions Committee. You will be expected to include: (1) all academic transcripts sent directly from the issuing institution; (2) two confidential letters of recommendation from instructors most familiar with your academic work; (3) statement of interest (3-4 pages maximum); (4) a sample of writing; (5) resume/CV. If English is not your native language, an official copy of your TOEFL score or other evidence of competency in English must also be submitted.

FACULTY RESEARCH

Faculty members in the Department of Health, Aging & Society are actively involved in a wide range of different research projects. Areas of research in Social Gerontology include: (1) health and social care; (2) critical gerontology; (3) systems, services and policy; (4) diversity; (5) cumulative inequalities.

Examples of faculty research projects include:

- Aboriginal understandings of health & aging
- The negotiation of health care decisions by people with chronic illness
- Masculinity and men’s roles in care-giving
- Health and human resources for an aging population
- Inheritance and intergenerational relationships
- Media representations of health and illness
- The link between income inequality and population health
- The effects of urban redevelopment on mental health
- Equity in health care use and health policy
- Intervention research to promote preventive behavior in urban poor populations
- Community-based health activism, care and support
- Complementary and alternative forms of health care
- The relationship between music, the arts, and health
- Fitness cultures in aging

Please feel free to contact individual faculty members about their research (see the list of faculty and their contact information on this brochure).

CONTACT

For more information on the application process, visit the School of Graduate Studies website: graduate.mcmaster.ca/academic-services/how-apply.

For additional information regarding the PhD program, please contact Kristine Espiritu (Graduate Administrative Assistant): espirit@mcmaster.ca or 905.525.9140 x27035.