

COU302 Counselling Older Australians

School: School of Law and Society

2026 | Trimester 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This graduate level course aims to introduce the student to contemporary issues that impact the older Australian person. The effect of aging on the physical and mental wellbeing will also be explored, ethics, and the evidence based interventions when working with older Australians will be practiced.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – weekly 1 hour online asynchronous learning activities to introduce weekly learning objectives to the students. Activities can include recorded lectures, videos, interactive activities, and online discussions.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Weekly 2 hour on campus tutorial designed to consolidate weekly learning objectives, and practice relevant skills / prepare for upcoming assessments.	2hrs	Week 2	10 times
Information session – online learning activity facilitated by the tutor	1hr	Refer to Format	Once Only

1.3. Course Topics

- What is 'aging'?
- Ethical Considerations
- Opportunities and Challenges to aging in Australia
- Social aspects of aging
- Impact of aging on physical and mental wellbeing
- Evidence based interventions for working with older australians
- End of Life care

1.4. Mature Content

Adult themes

2. What level is this course?

300 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Comprehend contemporary social issues impacting the older Australian	Knowledgeable
2 Understand the impact of aging on Australians, physically and mentally	Knowledgeable
3 Have an appreciation of the unique ethical considerations when working with older Australians	Ethical
4 Apply known issues and problems of aging in Australia, to the Indigenous context	Empowered
5 Demonstrate competency in applying evidence based interventions for common issues and complaints of older Australians with the end-goal of improved mental health and wellbeing.	Empowered
6 Demonstrate developed academic integrity and research skills for life long learning.	Sustainability-focussed

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of "pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites".

5.1. Pre-requisites

COU180 and COU176

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Students will be asked to provide their essay plan, with found references, for the tutors to provide early feedback.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Activity Participation	Individual	10%	minimum 16 hours	Refer to Format	In Class
All	2	Essay	Individual	30%	1500 words	Week 6	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Artefact - Professional, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	15 minutes and 1000 words	Week 9	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	4	Artefact - Professional	Group	30%	12-minute in-class group presentation of the program pitch; plus 5 minutes of question time. Preparation and submission of an associated one page visual intervention plan, in the format of a poster.	Week 12	In Class

All - Assessment Task 1: Participation

GOAL:	Students will participate for a minimum of 80% of their on-campus tutorials. Failure to meet the minimum participation requirements will result in a failed grade for this task.				
PRODUCT:	Activity Participation				
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:					
FORMAT:	Tutor to record participation each week, in LMS				
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Demonstrate professional dispositions through tutorial participation 3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.	Learning Outcome assessed	1	Demonstrate professional dispositions through tutorial participation 3
No.	Learning Outcome assessed				
1	Demonstrate professional dispositions through tutorial participation 3				
GENERIC SKILLS:					

All - Assessment Task 2: Essay: The Social Construction of Aging

GOAL:	To describe and evaluate the social construction of aging, drawing on key recommended readings and an independent literature search (e.g., How aging is constructed within Australian society and by professional practices?)													
PRODUCT:	Essay													
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:														
FORMAT:	Students are to consult both required and extended journal articles on aging, to develop an argument regarding the social construction of aging in Australia. Students will then plan their essay to demonstrate their central thesis, emphasising persuasive expression. The essay is to be prepared within Cadmus, and submitted online, through plagiarism detection software.													
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Demonstrate advanced understanding of the social construction of aging</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Demonstrate ability to generalise known knowledge and skills related to counselling older Australians, to diverse populations.</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Demonstrate graduate level academic integrity and research skills.</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Demonstrate advanced understanding of the social construction of aging	1	2	Demonstrate ability to generalise known knowledge and skills related to counselling older Australians, to diverse populations.	4	3	Demonstrate graduate level academic integrity and research skills.	6	
No.		Learning Outcome assessed												
1	Demonstrate advanced understanding of the social construction of aging	1												
2	Demonstrate ability to generalise known knowledge and skills related to counselling older Australians, to diverse populations.	4												
3	Demonstrate graduate level academic integrity and research skills.	6												
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving													

All - Assessment Task 3: Role Play/Critique

GOAL:	Students are to demonstrate a conversation with an older Australian using life review questions. Students also review their life review interview, and write a brief critically reflective essay on their counselling skills when working with older Australians.													
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Professional, and Written Piece													
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:														
FORMAT:	Students will record, via zoom, their life review conversation with consent, and including trauma informed principles. This recording is saved and downloaded as an MP4 file, for submission online Secondly, students watch their recording and provide critical reflection of skills using Kolb's reflective cycle to shape their argument. This is prepared within Cadmus, and submitted online, via plagiarism checkers.													
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Demonstrate evidence-based interventions with an older Australian including critical evaluation of own skills.</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Demonstrate evidence-based interventions to older Australians in an ethical and safe manner</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Demonstrate professionalism and academic integrity in both written and role play formats.</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Demonstrate evidence-based interventions with an older Australian including critical evaluation of own skills.	5	2	Demonstrate evidence-based interventions to older Australians in an ethical and safe manner	3	3	Demonstrate professionalism and academic integrity in both written and role play formats.	6	
No.		Learning Outcome assessed												
1	Demonstrate evidence-based interventions with an older Australian including critical evaluation of own skills.	5												
2	Demonstrate evidence-based interventions to older Australians in an ethical and safe manner	3												
3	Demonstrate professionalism and academic integrity in both written and role play formats.	6												
GENERIC SKILLS:	Collaboration, Applying technologies													

All - Assessment Task 4: Therapeutic Program Proposal: Industry Simulation

GOAL:	To design and propose a group-based counselling intervention program for older Australians, suitable for implementation in a community based aged care or primary care setting.																			
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Professional																			
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:																				
FORMAT:	<p>Students will work in groups of four to design a group-based counselling intervention program for older Australians, suitable for implementation in a community-based aged care or primary care setting.</p> <p>Each group will present their proposed intervention as a live in class pitch</p> <p>In addition, groups will create a one-page visual intervention plan in a form of a poster. This poster will be displayed during the group pitch and submitted as a stand-alone professional artefact. It must be clear, well-organised, and sufficiently detailed to be understood independently by an audience who has not attended the presentation.</p> <p>As part of the online submission, group members will be required to submit an individual project contribution statement using a provided template.</p> <p>This assessment mirrors real-world professional practice and is designed to prepare students for developing service proposals - an activity commonly undertaken by counsellors when introducing new service possibilities across contexts such as aged care, community mental health, palliative care, and dementia support.</p>																			
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Critically consider therapeutic approaches that support key factors for aging well (psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually).</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Demonstrate advanced understanding and application of the ethical considerations when designing a treatment plan aimed at achieving aging well goals for older Australians</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Demonstrate ability to generalise known knowledge and skills related to counselling older Australians, to diverse populations.</td> <td>4 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Demonstrate professionalism and academic integrity in both oral and written presentation formats.</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Demonstrate advanced academic integrity skills according to APA 7th ed. conventions.</td> <td>6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Critically consider therapeutic approaches that support key factors for aging well (psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually).	2	2	Demonstrate advanced understanding and application of the ethical considerations when designing a treatment plan aimed at achieving aging well goals for older Australians	3	3	Demonstrate ability to generalise known knowledge and skills related to counselling older Australians, to diverse populations.	4 5	4	Demonstrate professionalism and academic integrity in both oral and written presentation formats.	6	5	Demonstrate advanced academic integrity skills according to APA 7th ed. conventions.	6	
No.		Learning Outcome assessed																		
1	Critically consider therapeutic approaches that support key factors for aging well (psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually).	2																		
2	Demonstrate advanced understanding and application of the ethical considerations when designing a treatment plan aimed at achieving aging well goals for older Australians	3																		
3	Demonstrate ability to generalise known knowledge and skills related to counselling older Australians, to diverse populations.	4 5																		
4	Demonstrate professionalism and academic integrity in both oral and written presentation formats.	6																		
5	Demonstrate advanced academic integrity skills according to APA 7th ed. conventions.	6																		
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Information literacy																			

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the [Library](#) at no additional cost.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Required	Edited by Maree Bemoth,Denise Winkler	2022	Healthy Ageing and Aged Care	2	Oxford University Press

8.2. Specific requirements

Not applicable

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)