Welcome back to the 2008-09 academic year at MSU! A number of changes in the Gerontology Program curriculum are being planned during the next year. If they are approved, these changes will not affect current students, but new students enrolling in undergraduate and graduate programs in Gerontology. At the undergraduate level, to be consistent with national gerontology program standards, the number of credits for completion of the Gerontology Minor and undergraduate certificate will increase from 18 to 21, to include an internship component. For the Master’s program, three tracks are planned to be offered, Track 1: Interdisciplinary Aging Studies, comprising current courses required for the M.S. in Gerontology, Track 2: Gerontology: Management of Aging Services and Track 3: Gerontology: Management of Health Services. The latter two tracks will include additional courses from other programs and departments not currently offered, to emphasize the aging services and health services focus of each track.

In addition to courses offered on campus at MSU, the Gerontology Program will be offering courses through Extended Learning next spring. Our first course in the Twin Cities, PSYC 466/566 Psychology of Aging, which I will be teaching, will be offered at MSU’s new location at 7700 France Avenue in Edina. After having not been taught for a number of years, we will also be bringing back GERO 601 Seminar in Gerontology, focused on global health issues and aging, as an online class through Extended Learning next spring. This course will be taught by Dr. Bikash Nandy from Health Sciences.

During the past two years that I have been Gerontology Program Director, it has become clear that Gerontology graduate students have many questions about requirements for the program. In an attempt to address many of these questions, the Gerontology faculty recommended that a Gerontology Graduate Handbook be developed for the program. Using the Graduate Handbook for the Sociology and Corrections Department as a guide, I drafted such a handbook earlier this fall. Once the program receives approval for proposed curriculum changes, this handbook will be available for graduate students in the Gerontology Program to begin using.

Please join me in welcoming three new graduate students, Natalie Burnell, Ting-Yuan Shiue and Yashbir Rana, to the Gerontology Program at MSU. See the “Spotlight on Gerontology Students” section of this newsletter to read more about them, as well as other Gerontology Program students, to learn more about their life stories.

Finally, one way to get to know other graduate and undergraduate students who share your interest in aging is to attend twice-a-month meetings of the MSU Gerontology Club. Meetings will be held on alternate days and times this fall, so if one day and time does not work for you to attend, hopefully the other one will. The next Gerontology Club meetings are scheduled for Thursday, October 9th from 1-2 pm and Wednesday, October 22nd from 11 am–12 noon. Hope to see you there!
Sigma Phi Omega

Sigma Phi Omega is the National Honor and Professional Society in Gerontology. It was formed in 1980 to recognize the excellence of those who study aging. Sigma Phi Omega seeks to promote scholarship, professionalism, friendship, and services to older persons, and to recognize exemplary attainment in aging studies and related fields.

The Minnesota State University Beta Mu chapter is currently welcoming new members. If you are interested in joining Sigma Phi Omega or want to be informed about our upcoming events, contact Katie Griep at katherine.griep@mnsu.edu or Jim Tift at james.tift@mnsu.edu.

Gerontology Club

The Gerontology Club had their first meeting on Wednesday, September 24th. We are very excited to announce the new 2008-2009 club officers at Minnesota State University:

- President—Katie Griep
- Vice President—Paulina Camacho
- Secretary—April Kinner
- Treasurer—Sanjay Sarkar

We had great attendance and some really good, fun ideas for the semester! Some activities we will be participating in include a bake sale on October 9 from 11-1 p.m. in the CSU, video conferences held by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Rake the Town on October 25th, volunteer activities at long term care facilities throughout Mankato, and much more!

The Gerontology Club is open to all MSU students who may have an interest in learning about the study of aging. Meetings are held twice a month in the Sociology Department conference room (AH 113) unless otherwise stated. The next meetings will be on Thursday October 9 at 1 p.m. and Wednesday October 22 at 11 a.m. It is never too late to join, so anyone interested is welcome to attend! If you need more information, contact Katie Griep at katherine.griep@mnsu.edu. Or check out our bulletin board located in Armstrong Hall by the Sociology Department for upcoming meeting dates and come sit in on a meeting!
Gerontology is a multidisciplinary field of study that draws upon perspectives of many diverse academic fields. For this reason, students choose a minor or masters in Gerontology for different purposes. We decided to ask the MSU gerontology students to find out why they chose the gerontology minor or masters program, and how they plan to integrate it with their major and/or future career plans. Below are some of the many ways that a Gerontology minor or masters degree can be incorporated with different academic majors and careers.

**Paulina Camacho** is a second year graduate student in the Gerontology Masters program. Her undergraduate degree was in Anthropology with a minor in Latin American Studies from Minnesota State University, Mankato. She first became interested in gerontology after taking an anthropology of aging course and really enjoying it. Also, when her grandmother became sick and eventually died, she realized how unprepared some families can be when dealing with an older adult. Paulina plans to work in long-term care after graduating this Spring.

After receiving her undergraduate degree in Nursing from Taiwan, **Ting-Yuan Shiue** is now a first year graduate student in the Gerontology Masters program. She chose the masters program because she wanted to improve her knowledge of gerontology and utilize that to take care of older adults in the future by becoming a nurse or manager in a hospital or nursing home. Ting-Yuan's long term career goal is to become a professor so she can teach people in the community about older adults.

Getting his undergraduate degree in Physical Therapy and a graduate degree in Orthopedic Rehab from India, second year student in the Gerontology Masters program, **Sanjay Sarkar**, said he chose this program because he is a Geriatric Physical Therapist and wanted to have more knowledge and a better understanding on geriatric issues. After completing the Masters program in the Spring, Sanjay would like to be a researcher and an academician in geriatric physical therapy and to endorse and advocate for a better quality of living for the geriatric population. He believes that more evidence based research is needed to promote the study in aging and that awareness is essential in a world where the geriatric population is increasing rapidly in order to encourage positive and successful aging.

**Senior Leah Atherton** is a Business Management major who chose a minor in Gerontology after becoming interested in elders from working in a retirement community and nursing home for six years. She plans on integrating the Gerontology minor with her future career plans of becoming a manager or administrator for a retirement home since the baby boomers will be needing a place to live.
Tentative Spring 2009 Course Schedule

**Gerontology Courses**

- **Gero 198/694 Individual Study in Gero**
- **Gero 200 Aging: Interdisciplinary Perspectives**
- **Biol 4/517 Biology of Aging and Chronic Diseases**
- **FCS 4/574 Management for Families & Special...**
- **Rpls 4/582 Leisure Needs of the Aging**
- **Sowk 4/519 Social Work and Aging**
- **Nurs 340 Gerontological Nursing**
- **Nurs 351 Altered PSY Mod Clinical 1**
- **Nurs 460 Community Health Clinical**
- **Gero 497 Internship**
- **Gero 4/698 Practicum: Nursing Home Administration**
- **Gero 601 Current Health Issues in Aging**
- **Gero 694 Alternative Plan Paper**
- **Gero 697 Internship**
- **Gero 699 Thesis**

**Nursing Home Administration Courses**

- **Mgmt 200 Intro to MIS**
- **Mgmt 330 Principles of Management**
- **Mgmt 440 Human Resource Management**
- **Acct 210 Managerial Accounting**

**About 1 in every 8, or 12.4 percent, of the population is an older American**

Mediterranean Diet Cuts Death From Chronic Diseases

Article written by Steven Reinberg
HealthDay Reporter

People who eat a strict Mediterranean diet are at less risk of developing heart disease, cancer, Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease, Italian researchers report.

A so-called Mediterranean diet is rich in olive oil, grains, fruits, nuts, vegetables and fish, and includes a moderate amount of red wine but is low in meat, dairy products and other alcohol. "This study helps us to support all the recommendations and the nutritional guidelines on the benefit of Mediterranean diet on mortality from all the causes, as well as on the incidence of cardiovascular, neoplastic and degenerative diseases," said lead researcher Dr. Francesco Sofi, from the Department of Medical and Surgical Critical Area at the Thrombosis Centre at the University of Florence.

The report was published in the Sept. 11 online edition of the British Medical Journal. For the study, Sofi’s team collected data on 1,574,299 people who participated in 12 international studies of dietary habits and health. People in these studies were followed from three to 18 years.

People who adhered strictly to a Mediterranean diet had significant improvements in health. These people saw an overall drop in mortality of 9 percent, a 9 percent drop in death from cardiovascular disease, and a 13 percent reduction in cases of Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease, and a 6 percent drop in cancer. These findings confirm the current guidelines and recommendations from all major scientific institutions that encourage a Mediterranean-like diet for the prevention of major chronic diseases, the researchers concluded.

"The Mediterranean diet has been reported to be associated with a favorable health outcome, with no differences among countries, gender and study quality," Sofi said. "By improving diet, we would reach a significant improvement of health quality and duration of life." Many studies have demonstrated that eating a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish, nuts, seeds, olive oil and a moderate amount of red wine is good for health, said Dr. David L. Katz, director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale University School of Medicine.

Upcoming Events

**What:** Minnesota Department of Human Services is having a video conference entitled “Approaches for Clients with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss”.

**When:** Thursday October 16, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

**Where:** Blue Earth County Human Services 410 S 5th Street, Basement Level - Voyager Room in Mankato, MN. Pre-registration is required at http://agingtraining.dhs.state.mn.us/

**What:** Positive Aging Conference

**When:** Wednesday November 12th, 2008 from 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

**Where:** University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

**What:** Rake the Town 2008

**When:** Saturday October 25, 2008 beginning at 9:00 a.m.

**Where:** VINE Faith in Action

Find the registration form at www.vinevolunteers.com

**What:** Gerontology Club and Sigma Phi Omega Meeting

**When:** Thursday October 9, 2008 from 1 - 2 p.m.

**Where:** AH 113 - Sociology Department conference room

**What:** Community Presentations by palliative care physician Dr. Ira Byock

**When:** Thursday November 13th, 2008 from 2 - 4 p.m.

**Where:** The Best Care Possible Through End of Life; 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

**What:** The Four Things That Matter Most.

**Where:** The Best Care Possible session is located at South Central College Conference Center with a $25 fee. The Four Things That Matter Most will be held at Mankato East High School Auditorium free of charge. For more information contact ISJ Hospice at 507-385-2618.
On Tuesday he woke up early in the morning to eat breakfast before walking out to meet the mayor and members of the press at his home, Yoko-yama said. The cash gift he received is given annually to the city's oldest resident.

Japan has one of the world's longest life expectancies, nearly 86 years for women and 79 years for men, which is often attributed to the country's healthy diet rich in fish and rice. The number of Japanese living past 100 has more than doubled in the last six years, reaching a record high of 36,000 people this year. The country's centenarian ranks are dominated by women, who make up 86 percent of the total.

Japan's centenarian population is expected to reach nearly 1 million — the world's largest — by 2050, according to U.N. projections.

The world's oldest person is 115-year-old Edna Parker, who was born on April 20, 1893, and lives in a nursing home in Indiana.