Chun Zhang Creaser is currently an Assistant Professor in the Human Services Child and Family Studies concentration at the University of Illinois Springfield. She earned her Ph.D. in Education, of Family, Youth and Community, in the College of Education and Human Development, at the University of Minnesota. She earned her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Chun focuses on studying the ecological and environmental influence of immigrant families’ lives, such as how globalization impacts immigrant parent-child learning and development, parent-child conflict management, racial and cultural identity construction, as well as learned resilience, across lifespan. She has been actively involved in the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) through annual conference presentations and paper reviews. She had reviewed conference papers for NCFR’s Family Policy Section, Family and Health Section; Research and Theory Section and International Section; Ethnic and Minority Section.

Chun’s teaching focuses on Child and Family Studies, such as HMS 537 Treating Children from Diverse Population and HMS 567 Family Dynamics and Interventions. Her teaching philosophy involves three elements: knowing who her students are, understanding where they stand, and determining how to teach to help them reach their goals. Adult students often bring their lived experiences (e.g., cultures) with them while they are exposed to new information, so learning and developing often occurs when new knowledge interacts and connects with their existing experiences and knowledge. Her ultimate goal is focusing on engaging in teaching that promotes students' academic excellence.

Chun loves hiking and camping during Summer, and enjoys snow ski and swimming in Winter.
What attracted you to the HMS department at UIS and more specifically the field of gerontology? While I was in my final year of undergraduate at UIS, I needed to take some electives and met with Dr. Peck to see if I could take gerontology classes as electives. I was specifically interested in gerontology due to a long history of volunteering at nursing homes with my grandparents. When deciding which graduate program I would like to complete, the human services degree at UIS was my first choice.

Are there personal or professional experiences with the elderly have been significant in your life? While completing my BSW, I volunteered at Addus Healthcare helping with adult day care services, and I also worked at AARP Illinois where I benefited from witnessing senior advocacy on the macro level. Both of these experiences were valuable to my professional development and the strengthening of my desire to work with older adults. I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing firsthand the devastation financial exploitation can wreak on an older adult family member, but through my position at AARP, I was able to see legislation that added financial exploitation as part of the legal definition of elder abuse. This meant that there were legal ramifications for the individual who had financially exploited my family member.

What are your career interests and goals? I currently work for a mental health agency through SIU School of Medicine and truly enjoy working with individuals with a chronic mental illness. After I complete my human services degree, I plan to continue on to complete my masters in social work. Eventually, I would like to pursue an administrative position that would allow me to also provide clinical services in a medical setting. While doing this, I would also like to help develop a program that can better bridge the gap between mental health and senior services.

What motivates you personally and professionally? I am incredibly blessed to have a supportive husband and daughter. My daughter inspires me daily to be the best version of me possible, and I aspire to show her that anything is possible with determination and hard work. Additionally, my clients look to me as a source of hope and guidance; these individuals motivate me to continually learn so that I may better serve them.

If you could go back and give yourself some advice of when you first entered the program, what would you tell yourself? I would encourage myself (or any student) to take a class they might enjoy outside the gerontology concentration. While deciding which elective to take, I settled on Alcohol and Substance Abuse which has proven to be informative and applicable to my daily work as a caseworker. I am excited to learn new material that has a direct impact on my day-to-day experiences in addition to preparing me for future interactions with clients.

Do you have a favorite gerontology class you have taken? If yes, what made it special?

I have enjoyed all of the gerontology classes I have completed. I am currently taking Perspectives on Aging, which has been interesting and applicable to my current professional position. I am discovering areas of gerontology I had not yet considered, and the psychosocial approach to gerontology is fascinating.

**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

**Sarah M McCoy**

Gerontology Concentration

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**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT**

**Sarah M McCoy**

Gerontology Concentration
Personal Background:
"Born and raised in Springfield Illinois, I have one brother and one sister - all living locally. Married - with one daughter and one granddaughter. Attended University of Evansville-Evansville, Indiana majoring in social work. I graduated from Sangamon State with a BA in Child, Family and Community Services.”

Professional Snapshot:
I started my career working for Big Brother/Big Sister and enrolled in the HDC Program at UIS. Here I completed a 40 hour training for domestic violence counselor and 40 hour training for sexual assault worker.

Women’s issues have always been a deep interest for me. I went to work for Sojourn Shelter and completed internship at the Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault.

Completed 40 hour training for CASA and obtained a job at the Sangamon County Child Advocacy Center where I completed the training to become a Forensic Interviewer.

I was serving on the Board at MERCY Communities and a job opening became available. I left the Board and became the Program Director 10 years ago.

MERCY Communities:
MERCY Communities provides housing and supportive services to foster the independence of homeless and at-risk mothers with children. Founded in 1999 MERCY Communities has grown from its 10 unit flagship transitional living program to serving 26 families today in both transitional and permanent housing programs. The goal is to provide housing but with supportive services and learning opportunities that promote independence and self-sufficiency.

Advice to students aspiring for a career in human services:
“I think developing good listening skills is key to working in the field. It’s important to focus on a conversation and pay attention. Paying attention to what is said, how it is said and why it’s being said. It is also important to learn to listen without judgment.”
Here are five reasons why you should consider taking a gerontology course:

**Reason 1**

Over the next twenty years, there will be a demographic tsunami of older adults from the baby boomer cohort. Administration on Aging statistics document the increase of adults age 65+: 1900: 3.1 million, 2000: 35 million, in 2030 projected to be: 72 million. The 85+ age group is currently the fastest growing segment of our population. These numbers reinforce that all disciplines will be working with older adults and their families in some capacity.

**Reason 2**

If you are an Alcohol and Substance Abuse major, a study done by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicates that the aging of the baby boom generation is resulting in a dramatic increase in levels of illicit drug use among adults 50 and older. These increases may require the doubling of substance abuse treatment services needed for this population by 2020. Understanding the multifaceted challenges of an older adult who is receiving treatment will enhance your effectiveness as a practitioner.

**Reason 3**

If you are a Child and Family Studies major, 34.2 million Americans have provided unpaid care to an adult age 50 or older in the last 12 months (Family Caregiver Alliance). The average caregiver is age 47, female, and working outside the home. In Illinois, 220,088 children under the age of 18 are living in a grandparent-headed home. (Illinois Department on Aging) Taking a course in gerontology will provide you with a foundation to be able to understand the impact caregiving has on family and children.

**Reason 4**

If you are a Social Service Administration major, the growth in the older adult population will increase the demand for all types of services. Administrators will be challenged to integrate the demand for older adult services in conjunction with existing programs. Having a knowledge base of the programs that provide services to older and adults and their families will be beneficial to program administrators and their staff.

**Reason 5**

Personal Application: With the increase in life expectancy, there is a high likelihood that many of us will be caring for aging family members (parents and grandparents) for extended periods of time. Taking a course in gerontology will enhance your knowledge of the aging process and better equip you with the challenges that lie ahead.

Upcoming gerontology courses offered during the Spring and Fall 2017 semesters include: **HMS 508 Psychology of Aging**, blended format, four on campus class sessions (Spring 2017) and **HMS 563 Sociology of Death, Dying, and Bereavement**. (Fall 2017) Discuss with your academic advisor if integrating a gerontology class into your overall degree plan might be beneficial when there is a need to fulfill an elective course requirement.
Feedback is a process that all supervisors and managers must provide to their employees. Feedback is often seen by both supervisees and supervisors, as something to dread. In his review of the literature, James (2015) states that feedback is a complex process yet is found to yield constructive gains in learning and change. Methods that work best when giving feedback should be focused on the task rather than the person receiving the feedback. In addition, feedback is best received when it is given in a supportive manner rather than a negative manner. Such negative feedback is often perceived as “I am a poor case manager” which leaves the supervisee demoralized and without a path toward learning. For example, rather than, “you are a thorough person, but you have not done well over the past few weeks,” you might indicate, “your interview skills are facilitative of the interviewee providing a lot of important information.” How might you do a more thorough representation of what you learned during the interview in your report? James’ (2015) review of the literature suggests constructive feedback accompanied by support and specificity offers the best chance of learning.

Two styles of giving feedback are sandwich and interactive feedback. Some of you may be familiar with sandwich style feedback in which constructive criticism is sandwiched between two related strengths. Often, Sandwich style feedback is used to make giving critical feedback more comfortable, however, corrective comments may be lost in the middle. Interactive feedback attempts to elicit input and involvement from the supervisee or learner. In the remaining paragraphs, I will combine Sandwich style feedback with interactive feedback. Integration of these two styles of feedback may improve the effectiveness of feedback that precipitates learning or change and leads to a more effective performance.

The first important guide to giving sandwich feedback is to prepare what you plan to say. For example, the strengths should be linked to the constructive criticism. If a case manager does an excellent job of thoroughly interviewing new consumers or clients, state this as one of his or her strengths. This strength can be used to lay the foundation for needing to improve the timeliness of documenting the information gained during the interview. The last part of the feedback should be another strength and should include the supervisees input. For example, in using the above scenario, you might discuss the case manager’s facilitative and observational skills.

In closing, remember that feedback should be given on a regular basis, like monthly when you are supervising. It is even more effective to pull the case manager into your office to discuss what you observed close to the time the behavior occurred. Also, remember to call each employee aside to discuss a positive behavior. Make it a point to observe your supervisees each month to get to know them and to have more of a basis on which to give feedback. During these day of bare bones funding, complimenting staff to show appreciation, helping them face the difficulties inherent in large caseloads and creating a supportive environment in which they can thrive will result in improved morale and a reduction of burnout and an improvement in retention.

Greetings,

It has been my honor to teach in the Social Services Administration concentration. I feel passionate about the field, the SSA concentration, my students, and my teaching. Having the privilege of teaching at UIS, as well as, working with students have taught me a lot over the past nine years for that, I am grateful.

Dr. Sommers
HUMAN SERVICES INTERNSHIP SUGGESTIONS

By: Dr. Carol Rankin

Where can I do my internship?
Do I have to do an internship?
Can I do an internship at my place of work?
How long is the internship?
If I have an internship, do I have to go to the internship class?
What forms do I need to have filled out before I start my internship?
Do I have to complete my internship in one semester?
Can I do an internship at more than one place?

You can find the answers to these questions and more by going to the HMS website. A description of the internship is listed under “Curriculum” and then “Degree Requirements”. You can also find FAQ internship information listed under “Students”.

If you are a semester away from during your internship we want to congratulate you on reaching this step in your degree. You have prepared a long time and have put in many hours to do your internship. We know you are excited and anxious about starting your internship. We are excited for you to get started.

Typically, the best time to begin preparing for your internship is at the beginning of the semester prior to your internship. There are varying requirements depending on your concentration. Requirements are based on the focus of your concentration. For example, students in the ASA concentration are required to complete a 500 hr. internship. All other students are required to complete 400 hrs.

How do you begin the process? After reading the information on the website, explore with your advisor what is required for your concentration and where you might like to do your internship. Your advisor can provide information about contacting the agency where you would like to complete your internship. Different placements may have preferences about how to contact them. Many require a professional resume and often a placement interview. Prospective field placements want to know of your interest and competencies.

Once the field site has accepted you, you need to complete several forms that establish a working agreement between you, the field site, and the university. In order to begin accruing your internship hours, you need to have completed and submitted the forms to your adviser. The forms require your adviser’s signature, your field site supervisor’s signature, and your signature. Following are the forms that need to be submitted: Request for Insurance, Preliminary Placement, Internship Contract, and Internship Application. In addition to these forms you need to submit a copy of your resume and provide a copy of your field site supervisor’s resume.

So, educate yourself about the requirements of your internship and contact your adviser at the beginning of the semester before your internship. Help us help you achieve this important step in your degree!
The Sigma Phi Omega Eta Chapter Gerontology Honor Society's annual meeting was held on the UIS Campus, Friday October 28. Alumni, current students, family members, UIS administrators, and emeriti faculty were in attendance. Guest speaker was Dr. Sara Cordell, Associate Professor, English and Modern Languages, her presentation was entitled, "Love and Loss Through the Eyes of William Shakespeare." Congratulations to the new members!
Sona Thomas has been working with HMS Department since Spring 2016. She holds a minor in computer science from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad. She is currently studying Masters in Management Information System and expected graduation is Spring 2017.

Sona has a passion for working with kids and taking care of the elderly. She is a dreamer at heart, friends describe her as a people's person. She is happy to be working with the HMS department and is looking forward to another wonderful year!

FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP BY HMS CONCENTRATION

GERONTOLOGY SUGGESTED CONFERENCES:


Dr. CAROLYN PECK SCHOLARSHIP

Community Presentation:

Dr. CHUN ZHANG CREASER SCHOLARSHIP

Presentation:

Beyond being authoritarian, taking a closer look at Chinese immigrant parent-child conflict management from a dynamic perspective. National Council on Family Relations annual conference, Minneapolis, MN.

Dr. CAROL RANKIN SCHOLARSHIP

Presentation:

For upcoming conferences/workshops: www.iaodapca.org

Applying motivational interviewing techniques in the field. 22nd Annual Prevent Child Abuse Illinois Statewide Conference, Oct. 20, 2016, Springfield, IL.
SPRING 2017 GRADUATION PROCEDURE

Students graduating in Spring 2017 must submit an online Graduation Application via Student Self-Service by **February 17, 2017** (Spring 2017). Please make sure to verify that all curriculum information is listed accurately before submitting an online Graduation Application (including major, minor, concentration, etc.).

Please find the online Graduation Application procedure at ([https://apps.uillinois.edu/](https://apps.uillinois.edu/) - “Graduation” tab)

“Registration for classes-Spring semester, 2017 are now open. Please meet with your advisor prior to the end of Fall semester”

2017 ACADEMIC YEAR CALENDAR

**Spring Semester 2017 (Census: January 30, 2017, Monday)**

- January 16, 2017, Monday – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Campus Closed
- January 17, 2017, Tuesday – Full-Term and First-Half Classes Begin
- March 11, 2017, Saturday – Mid-Point
- March 13-17, 2017, Monday-Friday – Spring Recess
- March 15, 2017, Wednesday (Noon) – Mid-Term Grading Deadline
- March 20, 2017, Monday – Last-Half Classes Begin
- May 6, 2017, Saturday – Last Day of Classes
- May 8-13, 2017, Monday-Saturday – Finals Week
- May 13, 2017, Saturday – Semester Ends/Commencement
- May 17, 2017, Wednesday (Noon) – Final Grading Deadline

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Sona Thomas, Graduate Assistant to the Department, creates the newsletter under the guidance of Dr. Chun Z Creaser, Assistant Professor of Child and Family Studies concentration.
Thank you and we hope you enjoyed this semester’s edition!