

**Jessica VanderWerf**

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[Orcid](#) [Research Gate](#) [USF Website](#)

## **EDUCATION**

May 2027 Expected PhD in Aging Studies, University of South Florida

May 2023 Masters of Science in Gerontology, St. Cloud State University (SCSU)

May 2021 Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, SCSU

## **RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

2024 **Graduate Research Assistant**, University of South Florida Department of Mental Health Law and Policy -[redacted]

In Progress.

Primary Advisor Lampe, N.

2024 **Student Leader**, University of South Florida Department of Aging Studies - Age Friendly Dissemination Project

Development and design of an "age-friendly newsletter" for public distribution.

Primary Advisor Black, K.

2023 **Lead Researcher** University of South Florida Department of Aging Studies - Emergency Medical Support and Aging Research.

Assessing benefits of fall prevention programs beyond reducing falls.

Primary Advisor Peterson, L.

2023 **Student Researcher** SCSU Gerontology Program - Age-Friendly University Research Team

Creating surveys to assess the age friendliness of community and university.

Primary Advisor Greenberg, P.

2023 **Student Researcher** SCSU Gerontology Program - Preceptor Research Team

Conducting surveys, coding qualitative data, and presenting research at conferences.

Primary Advisor Karasik, R.

2022 **Research Intern** SCSU Gerontology Program - Older Adults in Television and Movies

Writing and performing research with professors conducting a paper.

Primary Advisor Greenberg, P.

2021 **Student Summer Research Assistant** National Organization on Rare Disorders - N/A  
Coding qualitative data for a national survey on “rare disorder” healthcare access.

Primary Advisor Hemmesch, A.

2021 **Student Director** SCSU Survey Center College of Liberal Arts - Community Needs  
Research

Administering telephone surveys to gather information on issues affecting the greater  
Minnesota area.

Overseeing student callers, directing data collection and answering callers’ questions.

Primary Advisor Hemmesch, A.

2020 **Student Researcher** SCSU Department of Psychology - Research project on correlation  
between ageism and social media use.

Analyzed correlations between social media use and ageism using validated scales.

Primary Advisor Valdes, L.

2019 **Student Researcher** SCSU Honors College - Research Project / Poster Presentation

Research analysis on historical perspectives of disability, age-related attitudes, and their  
development over time.

Primary Advisors Tabakin, G and Andel, J.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

**VanderWerf, J.**, & Peterson, L. (2024, November 12-15)

Beyond Falls: How do Fall Prevention Programs Benefit the Community? [Poster presentation].  
Gerontological Society of America Annual Meeting Seattle, WA..

Karasik, R., Masters, J., Staley, M., Aisirfi-Boateng, I., **VanderWerf, J.** (2024, November 12-15)

Fortifying the Future of Gerontology and Geriatrics in Higher Ed: Part I – Hard Questions  
[Symposium]. Gerontological Society of America Seattle, WA..

**VanderWerf, J.**, Karasik, R., Greenberg, P. (2023, November 7-10)

Films In Higher Education [Poster Presentation]

Gerontological Society of America Tampa FL..

Hafner, C. Karasik, R. Greenberg, P. **VanderWerf, J.** Donorfio, L. (2023, November 7-10) Traditional and Nontraditional Internships: A Gerontology Student Perspective [Symposium]. Gerontological Society of America (GSA) 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting Tampa, FL..

Karasik, R., Greenberg, P., Kroeber, M., **VanderWerf, J.**, & Burgos-Zuniga, C. (2022 November) Aging Agencies' and Providers' Reasons for Hosting or Not Hosting Gerontology Interns [Poster]. 74th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America Indianapolis, IN..

Greenberg, P., Karasik, R., **VanderWerf, J.**, Burgos-Zuniga, C., & Kroeber, M. (2022 November). Creating an Age-Friendly University: The Case of SCSU [Poster]. 74th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, Indianapolis, IN..

**VanderWerf, J.**, Kroeber, M., Burgos-Zuniga C., (2022, April 19th) Age Friendly Universities [Poster presentation] Huskies Showcase Conference SCSU.

**VanderWerf, J.** (2021, April). Attitudes about Aging and Social Media [Poster presentation]. Midwestern Psychological Association Chicago, IL..

Oliver, M., Chamerski, L., Janssen, K., Rodriguez-Arzola, A., **VanderWerf, J.**, Chawla, U., Ugochukwu, E., Cottrill, J., Finan, A., Hemmesch, A. R., & Zerbib, S. (2021, April). Unleashed opinions: SCSU 2021 student spring survey results [Paper presentation Minnesota Scholars, MinnState Conference and Huskies Showcase Conference SCSU.

**VanderWerf, J.**, (2019, April) Disability and Ability [Poster presentation] Huskies Showcase Conference SCSU.

**TEACHING, TRAINING and INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Death and Dying	Online	University of South Florida	Undergraduate	Spring 2024 (48)* Spring 2024 (45)**
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Death and Dying	In-Person	University of South Florida	Undergraduate	Fall 2023 (40)* Spring 2024 (42)* Spring 2024 (43)* Spring 2024 (44)** Spring 2024 (45)* Fall 2024 (43) <sup>1</sup>
Aging and Community, Current Issues in Social Gerontology, and [redacted]	Hybrid	SCSU	Graduate	Fall 2022 (16)
Housing, Transportation and Aging	Hybrid	SCSU	Undergraduate	Spring 2022 (35)
Dementia and Aging	Hybrid	SCSU	Undergraduate	Fall 2021 (25) Fall 2022 (25) Fall 2023 (24)
Introduction to Gerontology	Hybrid	SCSU	Undergraduate	Fall 2021 (45) Spring 2022 (45) Fall 2022 (45) Spring 2023 (45)
Introduction to Psychology	In-Person	SCSU	Undergraduate	Spring 2019 (75)
Accessibility and Technology <sup>2</sup>	Hybrid	Catholic Charities of Minnesota & SCSU Student Accessibility Services.	Community Education	Fall 2021 Spring 2022 Fall 2022 Spring 2023 (1-16 students each session)
English As a Second Language (ESOL)	In-Person	TRIO Kirkwood-Community Outreach	Community Education	Summer 2017 (1-16)

Psychology, Sociology, Forensic Science, [redacted] Topics, Writing and Social Work <sup>3</sup>	In-Person	Kirkwood Community College	Undergraduate	Summer 2016 Fall 2016 Spring 2017 Summer 2017 One on One tutoring with students
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1: Marks the start of independent teaching at the University of South Florida.

2: Delivered customized training sessions on technology and accessibility for individuals with [redacted], tailored to the specific needs of the requesting group.

3: Completed 60 hours of training, certified to tutor undergraduate courses at various levels.

\*Teaching responsibilities included grading, delivering lectures, and meeting with students.

\*\*Teaching responsibilities classified as miscellaneous, such as observation or other tasks. This may include one-time guest lectures restructured as skill evaluations.

## PAPERS

**VanderWerf, J., Peterson, L., & Veal, B. (in progress\*). Understanding mental health within the framework of community paramedicine intervention in a Florida city.**

**VanderWerf, J., Peterson, L., & Veal, B. (in progress\*). Analysis of the effects of the community paramedicine program in a Florida county and city: Preliminary title.**

**VanderWerf, J., & Peterson, L. (in review). Chapter 6: Impact of disaster and COVID-19 in long-term care. In Health promotion in long-term care facilities: The present scenario and future demands.**

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Environmental Gerontology & Aging-in-Place within Industrial Gerontology.
- Mental Health, Aging & Policy.
- Comparative Aging Processes Across Communities.

## **INTEREST GROUPS**

### **Gerontological Society of America**

Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE), [redacted], Disasters and Older Adults Research Group, Qualitative Research Group, and Emerging Scholars and Professional Education (ESPO).

## **LICENSES AND TRAINING**

Minnesota Gerontological Society 2023  
[redacted] (3 Hours)

Family Mediation Training April, 2022  
St. Cloud State University (40 Hours)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative August, 2020  
Basic Social-Behavioral Educational (SBE) Basic

Alzheimer's Association August, 2020  
Online Training and Education Center (6 Hours)

St. Cloud State University - [redacted] January, 2020  
[redacted] (6 Hours)

College Reading and Learning Association December, 2019  
Level Two-Peer Mentor Advanced Certification (75 Hours)

Kirkwood Community College December, 2017  
Tutor Certification Level Two (60 Hours)

Kirkwood Community College Continuing Education November, 2013  
Certified Nursing Assistant License (Transfer) (75 Hours)

Dementia Integration Training November, 2013  
Center for Dementia Education (15 Hours)

Express Training Services November, 2013  
Certified Nursing Assistant License (75 Hours)

## **HONORS AND MEMBERSHIPS**

- Florida Council on Aging  
August 2023 - Present
- Student Accessibility Task Force - University of South Florida  
August 2023 - Present
- Southern Gerontological Society  
August 2023 - Present
- Gerontological Society of America  
December 2020 - Present
- Sigma Phi Omega, the International Academic Honors Society in Gerontology  
April 2020 - Present
- American With Disabilities Act Student Representative Accessibility Committee  
January 2020 - May 2023
- Leading Age  
October 2020 – Present
- Psi Chi International Honors Society (psychology honors society)  
August 2020 – June 2021
- St. Cloud State Undergraduate Honors Program  
August 2018 - June 2021
- Phi Theta Kappa, Community College Honors Society  
June 2017 - June 2018

## **CLUB AND COMMITTEE SERVICE**

- Collective Leadership**, Accessibility Student Network (ASN), University of South Florida  
January 2023 - Present
- Member**, Student Association of Aging Studies, University of South Florida  
August 2023 - Present
- Member**, Sigma Phi Omega, University of South Florida  
June 2023 - Present
- Graduate Student Advisor**, Sigma Phi Omega, University of South Florida  
August 2023 - June 2023
- President**, Gerontology Club, St. Cloud State University  
August 2021 - May 2023
- President**, Sigma Phi Omega Gerontology Honors Society, St. Cloud State University  
August 2021 - May 2023
- Member**, Library Advisory Board  
August 2021 - January 2023
- Vice President**, Psychology Club, St. Cloud State University  
June 2020 - June 2021

**Vice President**, Sigma Phi Omega Gerontology Honor Society, St. Cloud State University

November 2020 - June 2021

**Treasurer**, Non-Traditional Student Organization, St. Cloud State University

August 2019 - June 2021

**Student [redacted]**, [redacted], Kirkwood Community College

January 2017 - June 2018

## **RELATED EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

January 2024- Present **Research Assistant**- University of South Florida

August 2023 - Present **Graduate Assistant / Teaching Assistant**-University of South Florida

August 2021 - Present **Graduate Assistant**-St. Cloud State University

Perform research, assist with courses, respond to emails, organize events, bulletin board design, collect and assist with analyzing data and general office work.

June 2021 - July 2021 **SCRUBS Camp Counselor**-St. Cloud State University

Engage with middle school and high school with interactive activities to encourage interest in studying gerontology after graduation from primary education.

August 2019 - January 2022 **Orientation Leader**-St. Cloud State University

Lead events during orientation for new students at the beginning of each semester.

August 2019 - May 2021 **Peer Mentor**-St. Cloud State University

Provide referrals and help new transfer students adjust to campus. Other responsibilities include sending out weekly emails, meeting one-on-one with new students, and attendance at university events designed for transfer students.

June 2017 - June 2018 **Patient Support Staff**-Area Substance Abuse Council

Monitored people in drug and alcohol rehabilitation when counselors were not present. This included room checks, monitoring visits with families, running a set schedule, meal preparation, and one-on-one visits.

October 2016 - October 2017 **Certified Nursing Assistant**-Mercy Medical Center

Worked in a hospital setting providing direct patient care, cleaning, planning, and running events on-site, helping residents with exercise and walks, and getting residents to go on field trips; communicated with multiple departments to provide dynamic patient care, and assisted the nurses on staff.



April 2016 - October 2016 **Activities Assistant**-Dial Retirement Living

Provided direct patient care, helped residents with exercise and going on walks, planned and ran events on-site.

September 2015 - August 2016 **Direct Service Provider**-The ARC of East Central Iowa

Worked with adults with developmental disabilities to aid with activities of daily life, monitored field trips, wrote documentation for insurance billing purposes, taught cooking classes, and monitored activities.

March 2013 - June 2015 **In-Home Companion CNA**

Helped with bedtime routines for a woman with Alzheimer's Disease. Provided a consistent, stable presence and performed reminiscence work, and took her on walks. In addition, I made reports and had meetings with the family to keep them posted on how their loved one was doing.

August 2012 -March 2013 **Activities Assistant**-Parkland Nursing Home

Performed intake interviews, provided transportation, managed activities, planned events, taught classes (American Sign Language, exercise, art, and music), ran clubs and socials, filled in as weekend receptionist, provided one-on-one activities with residents, and oversaw field trips.

## **RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

November 2022, November 2023, November 2024- **Volunteer-Journal for the Academy of Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE)**

- Networking at the annual Gerontological Society of America meeting by attending symposiums and poster presentations for the purpose of soliciting new submissions for the AGHE.

May 2022 - May 2023 **Volunteer-Circle of Friends-Catholic Charities**

- Teaching older adults how to use technology/iPad, hosting weekly meetings via Zoom for older adults who live in rural areas, and making phone calls to assist older adults with various technology questions.

August 2021 - May 2023 **Volunteer-Beyond the Label**

- Serving on educational panels that attend college classes

June 2021 - Present **Volunteer-Alzheimer's Association**

- Helping at the annual fundraising and awareness walk with registering participants.

December 2021 - March 2023 **Volunteer-Good Shepherd**

- Assisting with activities at a local nursing home as needed (helping with events, parties) as needed.

June 2015 - Present **Volunteer-From the Heart**

- Sending between 20 and 30 letters (monthly) to elderly people all over the country to help combat senior isolation and loneliness.

August 2018 - December 2018 **Volunteer-Service Learning Experience**

- Visited, recorded, and wrote a biography of a local senior citizen.

June 2011 - June 2015 **Volunteer-Friends Across the Ages**

- Program pairs you with older adult(s) in local nursing homes that no longer have family involvement. Friends Across the Ages would coordinate parties, one hour to three hour visits a week, games and other events for older adults and volunteers.