



# SAMANTHA

## GERONTOLOGY

### ABOUT MY MAJOR

I am a double major with Gerontology and Biology. Gerontology is the study of aging or older adults. I love the balance between my majors: Gerontology is a person-centered approach and Biology has an emphasis on science and physiology. Gerontology is about learning to empathize with people and learning personal stories. It's not memorizing facts.

We have an aging population, so having skills to support older adults and those with dementia or Alzheimers is essential. We are trying to educate people that aging isn't something to shy away from. Helping older adults feel valued is really important and pretty special.

### ADVICE FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Get to know your professors and ask them for help when needed because they really want you to succeed. Connect with them and go to their office hours, because this can set you up for success going forward. Don't shy away from not reaching out because that might be a chance for you to learn about something that you didn't know was an option when you were a freshman and end up finding something new.

### MINORS

I have a Chemistry minor, which pairs well with Biology. With Gerontology, the Psychology or Mental Health minor pairs well with the mindset of prevention.

Family Services pairs well with Gerontology. The Family Services classes I took helped me gain more knowledge on where someone might be coming from and to be more open to their story. If I am a medical provider someday, I hope to really empathize and connect and not just assume someone's story.

## STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

I am a student-athlete, so I am involved with the Women's Athlete Leadership Committee. I'm also involved with the Women in Healthcare Club and served as President of the Pre-Physician's Assistant Club. We also bring people who are in the workforce to talk to us and learn what their perspective is to actually work in their fields. We have had dentists, physician assistants, physicians which have been really helpful. We did a lot of volunteering in both clubs, which was meaningful and also gave me the opportunity to network with people. I also got to meet people from different organizations, which is important to set yourself apart and show you are ready to build those connections.

## INTERNSHIPS

Dr. Elaine Eshbaugh in Gerontology started the Dementia Simulation House on campus. I completed my internship there. I sent emails, scheduled visits, helped with community outreach and presentations, and educated people. In Biology, I completed a summer undergraduate research program on campus last summer.

## JOBS

UNI has set me up for success no matter which career direction I choose. I am going to Nursing school next year, which I am excited about, but know is not my end journey. I might pursue Nurse Practitioner later or pursue my Master's degree in Gerontology. I could be a nursing home or a long-term care facility administrator. Each state has an Area Agency on Aging, which is a non-profit group who provides dementia support and other resources.