Course Syllabus
Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health
Spring Semester 2016
Section 1: Monday, 12:00 – 1:55pm, Room A215 Crabtree
Section 2: Monday, 4:00-6:00 PM, Room A719 Crabtree
(version 2016/09/12)

Instructor: Candy Kammerer, PhD
Office: 619 Parran
Phone: 624-7265 (work)
E-Mail: cmk3@pitt.edu (please put course number or title in the subject line of the e-mail)
Office hours: Mondays: before or after class or by appointment

Catalog Description:
This is the final course in the public health core curriculum. Students will learn and apply a problem solving methodology to analyze current public health issues from local, national, and global perspectives. Working in interdisciplinary groups, students will recommend interventions and evaluation methods to address specific problems.

Goal of the Course:
The goal of this course is to integrate the knowledge you have gained and then synthesize and apply that knowledge to (1) assess case studies in public health ethics, (2) evaluate historical, current, and proposed examples of public health interventions and (3) identify a current issue in public health in Western Pennsylvania region, understand the determinants, creatively develop an intervention and methods to assess the intervention, and give a 3.5 minute “elevator speech” on it (4) use systems-thinking (via modeling methods) to assess public health issues.

Rationale:
The purpose of this course is to use core competencies expected of Master of Public Health degree holders and to hone problem-solving skills needed for contemporary public health practice. Students will explore historical and contemporary public health problems from an interdisciplinary perspective. This course will address real life problems.

Objectives:
Upon completion, students will be able to:
• Evaluate historical, current, and proposed examples of public health interventions
• Use problem-solving methodologies (e.g., problem analyses, logic model, budget, and 3.5 minute presentation) to address public health issues.
• Use systems thinking (e.g., modeling) to assess complex public health issues.

MPH competencies:
The Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) has developed a set of competencies in which all MPH graduates should be prepared (http://www.asph.org/userfiles/version2.3.pdf). This course will assist MPH students in development of cross-cutting competencies in the following domains: communication and informatics, diversity and culture, leadership, professionalism, program planning, and systems thinking.

Teaching Philosophy:
This class is the culmination of the Core Curriculum in Public Health and as such, it emphasizes active participation, honing of learned skills, group activities, and continued learning.
Because we all know different things and have experienced different events, all questions and viewpoints are encouraged and respected in the classroom and in groups. Furthermore, because public health is a team sport, the importance of being an effective team-member is critical. And part of this course is honing your skills to work productively as a team, respect all viewpoints, and find ways in which to accomplish your goals. You will need these skills in the workplace.

However, should a problem arise in the functioning of your group that you are unable to resolve – please contact me. You are still learning and are not required to be experts in intergroup dynamics.

The classes will consist of a few short lectures, short presentations by students, followed by in-class group activities and discussions. The assignments are designed to hone your individual problem-solving skills, improve your ability to think independently and critically, and facilitate interactions among peers in a multidisciplinary group.

**Student Expectations in the Classroom**

Please turn off cell phones and do not record lecture or presentation unless you have received prior approval from the instructor.

Please respect for your fellow students and do not use your laptops during presentations. However, please bring your laptops to class for the student group activities because you may need to access internet material and take notes of group discussions.

**Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to adhere to the school’s standards of academic honesty. Any work submitted by a student for evaluation must represent his/her own intellectual contribution and efforts. The GSPH policy on academic integrity, which is based on the University policy, is available online at [http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=126](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=126). The policy includes obligations for faculty and students, procedures for adjudicating violations, and other critical information. Please take the time to read this policy.

Students committing acts of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, cheating on exams, misrepresentation of data, and facilitating dishonesty by others, will receive sanctions appropriate to the violation(s) committed. Sanctions include, but are not limited to, reduction of a grade for an assignment or a course, failure of a course, and dismissal from GSPH. All student violations of academic integrity must be documented by the appropriate faculty member; this documentation will be kept in a confidential student file maintained by the GSPH Office of Student Affairs. If a sanction for a violation is agreed upon by the student and instructor, the record of this agreement will be expunged from the student file upon the student’s graduation. If the case is referred to the GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board, a record will remain in the student’s permanent file. Repeat violations automatically will be referred to the Hearing Board.

**Plagiarism**

*University of Pittsburgh policy:* “Integrity of the academic process requires that credit be given where credit is due. Accordingly, it is unethical to present as one’s own work the ideas, representations, words of another, or to permit another to present one’s own work without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources.

A student has an obligation to exhibit honesty and to respect the ethical standards of the profession in carrying out his or her academic assignments. Without limiting the application of this principle, a student may be found to have violated this obligation if he or she:

10. Presents as one’s own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.

11. Submits the work of another person in a manner which represents the work to be one’s own.”

*Source:* [http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html](http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html)
Therefore, you must clearly indicate which thoughts are yours and which thoughts belong to others by citing your sources. If you are uncertain, please contact the instructor. Plagiarism detection software will be used in this course. If plagiarism is detected, you will automatically receive a grade of zero for that assignment.

Disabilities:
If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for specific courses.

Course website: All readings and course material will be found on Courseweb (http://courseweb.pitt.edu).

Textbooks:
There is no required textbook for this course. All documents (including syllabus) and other resource materials will be available on CourseWeb or distributed in class.

Evaluation/Grading:
There are 12 assignments in this course – all assignments are listed in the Assignments section on Coursweb. All assignments must be submitted in class or to the assignment box or to your group’s site, on or before 11:59PM on the due date. A few assignments are due in class. Points will be subtracted for late assignments. Please follow the directions for the specific assignment.

If you are unable to attend one of the classes, you must notify the instructor and members of your group beforehand and provide whatever materials are necessary, e.g., questions for the book club discussion or presentations, materials for your group discussions, etc.

Assignment #1: “What I Want to Accomplish in Public Health” (5 pts)
Write 1 page maximum (1.5 line-spaced) on one change in public health that you would like to accomplish during your public health career and why.

Assignment #2: Identify one public health issue
You may choose ANY issue public health issues from Western PA or nearby area EXCEPT
(a) obesity
(b) low birth weight/high infant mortality
Fill in the “Identify Problem” template (on Courseweb) for Issues in Public Health, and bring this list for in-class discussion with your group. Remember the long-term goal will be to make a "Pittsburgh Innovation Challenge" (PINCH) type presentation for public health. BE SURE TO INCLUDE REFERENCES, and BE SURE AT LEAST ONE REFERENCE IS PEER-REVIEWED (use APA style, NOT just web-links). Please identify references so that I can assess them **without going to the website**. If you access an online website or database, state when you did so because sometimes online databases change.

Assignment #3: Logic model
Logic model quiz – in class (5 pts)

Assignment #4: Determinants (group) (5 pts)
Template and additional directions on Courseweb.

Assignment #5: Critique and Ranking of public health intervention (5 pts)
We will practice critiquing proposals. In class.
Assignment #6: Logic Model plus Budget + Cost Effectiveness  (20 pts)
Each group should submit a set of determinants (with one logic model plus budget (and budget justification) and cost-effectiveness. See details and the “Budget” template available under Assignments on Courseweb.

Assignment #7: Ethics Homework and in-class discussion  (5 pts)
We will discuss examples of ethics situations in class.

Assignment #8: Group presentation of public health intervention  (45 pts total)
Each group will present its public health intervention using the tools and methodologies learned in public health. The presentation will be 3.5 minutes maximum and should include: brief description of problem, examples of the intervention, and budget (especially cost/benefit).
(A) Presentation  (20 pts)
(B) Evaluate self AND fellow group members.  (15 pts)
(C) Instructor evaluation  (10 pts)

Assignment #9: Book Club
#9: Book report (20 pts)
Select one of the following books to read. We will also discuss the books in class and excerpts from the other books in class. Each student must participate in the discussion of their book and submit a 1-2 page response (1.5 line-spaced) to questions assigned by the instructor for their book and the excerpts. (The questions are on Courseweb under Assignments).

The book choices are:
Monique and the Mango Rains: Two Years with a Midwife in Mali; Kris Holloway, Waveland Press, 2006
- “This tender, revelatory memoir recalls the two years Holloway spent as an impressionable Peace Corps volunteer in the remote village of Nampossela in Mali, West Africa…. Holloway's moving account vividly presents the tragic consequences of inadequate prenatal and infant health care in the developing world and will interest all those concerned about the realities of women's lives outside the industrialized world.” (Publisher’s Weekly)

- “A surgeon at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and an assistant professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Atul Gawande succeeds in putting a human face on controversial topics like malpractice and global disparities in medical care, while taking an unflinching look at his own failings as a doctor. ….. He conveys his message—that doctors are only human and therefore must always be diligent and resourceful in fulfilling their duties—in clear, confident prose….” (Bookmarks Magazine)

- “Robert D. Putnam vividly captures a dynamic change in American society—the widening class-based opportunity gap among young people. The diminishing life chances of lower-class families and the expanding resources of the upper-class are contrasted in sharp relief in Our Kids, which also includes compelling suggestions of what we as a nation should do about this trend. Putnam's new book is a must-read for all Americans concerned about the future of our children.” (William Julius Wilson, Lewis P. and Linda L. Geyser University Professor, Harvard University)
Assignment #9: Systems thinking modeling exercises (20 pts)
Two assignments (10 points each) using the program NetLogo.

Assignment #10: (10 pts)
Table top exercise

Assignment #11A&B: Public Health in the News AND erroneous statistic (10 pts)
One example of Public Health in the News and one misleading/erroneous statistic from your field.
Details under Assignments on Courseweb.

A. For the Public Health News item, please include:
   (1) the title/headline of the item, the media source, and the date and a one or two sentence
description. (an internet link is required). If you copy this required information verbatim, please put it
in quotes. (an internet link is required).
   (2) why you chose this item as "public health"
   (3) What is the evidence base for this item (if there is any). What other evidence you would like to
   know before you decided whether this item was accurate or actionable.
   (4) You will upload this information the DAY BEFORE YOU WILL PRESENT IT in class.

B. For the Erroneous/Misleading Statistic, please include:
   (1) The erroneous statistic and the source and the date. If you copy this required information
verbatim, please put it in quotes. (an internet link is required).
   (2) Why the statistic is incorrect
   (3) What is the real evidence base for this item (if there is any).
   (4) You will upload this information the DAY BEFORE YOU WILL PRESENT IT in class.

Extra credit: Class evaluation (5 pts)
   (MUST BE completed by Monday, December 5)
Summary of assignments and total points:

Assignment #1: What I Want to Accomplish in Public Health (1-2 paragraphs) 5 pts
Assignment #2: Identify 1 public health problem (individual) 5 pts
Assignment #3: Logic Model quiz 5 pts
Assignment #4: Determinants 5 pts
Assignment #5: PHI Ranking Exercise 5 pts
Assignment #6: Logic Model+Budget+Justification+cost-effectiveness 15 pts
Assignment #7: Ethics case homework 5 pts
Assignment #8: Public health intervention (group project)
   (A) Overall presentation/intervention 20 pts
   (B) Fellow group member evaluation 15 pts
   (C) Instructor evaluation of each student’s activity 10 pts
Assignment #9: Book club report & discussion 20 pts
Assignment #10: Modeling exercises using NetLogo
   (A) Homework 1 10 pts
   (B) Homework 2 10 pts
Assignment #11: Public Health in the News
   Misleading/erroneous report/statistic in your field 10 pts
Assignment #12: Tabletop exercise on emergency preparedness 10 pts

Total 150 pts

Extra Credit: class evaluation survey 5 pts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>151-155</td>
<td>&gt;100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>141-150</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>135-140</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>130-134</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>120-123</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>109-114</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>105-108</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;104</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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</table>
# Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health
## Weekly Class schedule – Fall 2016
### SOME DATES MAY CHANGE – PLEASE CHECK COURSEWEB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Preparation for Class/Assignments</th>
<th>In-class Activities</th>
<th>Assignments to submit the day before class (unless stated otherwise)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUG 29</td>
<td>Course overview</td>
<td>Readings: • A guide for health priorities. • Quick guide to planning meetings</td>
<td>Review goals of course, learning objectives, and syllabus</td>
<td>Assignment #1: Public health accomplishment (5pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Identify a public health issue</td>
<td>Article on public speaking</td>
<td>Public speaking</td>
<td>Assignment #2: Public health problem (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Run a meeting</td>
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<td>Public Health in the News</td>
<td>Turn in your Group’s Public Health Problem at end of class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public speaking</td>
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<td>Misleading/erroneous statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP 5</td>
<td>Labor Day holiday</td>
<td>Assignment #1: Public health accomplishment (5pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP 12</td>
<td>Leadership &amp; Determinants</td>
<td>Read leadership articles/characteristics</td>
<td>In class leadership activity</td>
<td>Assignment #3: Logic Model quiz (done in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>Bring public health problem ideas to class</td>
<td>Lecture on determinants</td>
<td>Assignment #4: Determinants</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP 19</td>
<td>Logic Model + Budget + cost-effectiveness</td>
<td>Readings: McCawley_Loic Model KelloggFndHandbook (Intro and Chap 1)</td>
<td>Lecture on Logic model + budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>In-class budget exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEP 26</td>
<td>Discussion of determinants</td>
<td>Work on your group’s public health intervention</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 3</td>
<td>Ranking and Critiquing Example Intervention Proposals</td>
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<td>Example interventions will be presented – we will critique them in class</td>
<td>Assignment #5: Ranking exercise (done in class – 5 pts)</td>
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<td>(Week 6)</td>
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<td>Assignment #6: Logic Model + Budget + Justification (15 pts)</td>
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<td>OCT 10</td>
<td>Ethics in Public Health</td>
<td>Readings: Childress article</td>
<td>Read about ethics before class.</td>
<td>Assignment #7: Ethics Hmwk</td>
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<td>(Week 7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas lectures</td>
<td>In-class discussion of ethics homework cases – be prepared to discuss the cases</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT 18</td>
<td>PHI intervention</td>
<td>All groups will present for 3.5 minutes maximum</td>
<td>Assignment #7A: (20 pts) – in class</td>
<td>All groups will present for 3.5 minutes maximum</td>
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<td>(Tues)</td>
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<td>Also submit #7B – peer evaluation online (submit by Nov 30, 10 pts)</td>
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<td>Oct 24</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
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<td>(Week 9)</td>
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<td>OCT 31</td>
<td>Discussion of wicked problems (books and documentary) and modeling</td>
<td>Upload NetLogo on your computer before class</td>
<td>We will discuss NetLogo.</td>
<td>Assignment #8: Book club report (15 pts paper +5pts discussion)</td>
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<td>(Week 10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV 7</td>
<td>Modeling</td>
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<td>Discussion of NetLogo results</td>
<td>Assignment #10A: Modeling exercise (10 pts)</td>
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<td>(Week 11)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV 14</td>
<td>Modeling</td>
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<td>Discussion of NetLogo results</td>
<td>Assignment #10B: Modeling exercise (10 pts)</td>
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<td>(Week 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV 21</td>
<td>Thanksgiving</td>
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<td>Week 32</td>
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<td>NOV 28</td>
<td>Discussion of preparedness</td>
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<td>Assignment #11: Public Health in the News (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
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<td>DEC 5</td>
<td>Tabletop exercise</td>
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<td>Assignment #12 Tabletop in class</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEC 12</td>
<td>Final exam week</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extra Credit: Competency assessment completed by Monday, December 5 (5 pts)</td>
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