Introduction

This course provides an overview of the social and behavioral sciences in public health, with specific emphasis on the ecological model of community health problem analysis and development of effective interventions. The course content is organized around the competencies set out by the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health for the social and behavioral sciences. It includes selected social and behavioral theories and models used by public health professionals to plan, implement, and evaluate programs and policies for the improvement of community health.

Course Rationale

New challenges from chronic and communicable diseases, environmental threats, and man-made and natural disasters continue to face public health. Dramatic demographic shifts are occurring in the U.S. as well as around the world. Within this framework of dynamic change it is essential that decision-makers gain a better understanding of how to prevent, delay, or reduce the overall impact of these conditions on the health of the public.

Education in the traditional core areas of epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, public health biology and infectious diseases, and the social and behavioral sciences is essential for public health professionals. However, given the current state of the world and considering the future, the social and behavioral sciences, including the associated focus on health communication, public health ethics, community-based participatory practice, and cultural competence, are becoming increasingly important to those working in the field of public health. In recent years there has been a growing recognition that the...
social and behavioral sciences play a critical role in public health practice and in public health academics and training. Disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and health education have emerged as important and essential subspecialties in both public health practice and research educational and training programs.

Public health professionals play a major leadership role in a range of systems. To be most effective they must look beyond biological risk factors to the complex nature of the influence of social, behavioral and environmental factors on the public’s health and welfare. As highlighted in the 2002 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, “Who will keep the public healthy?” public health professionals in leadership roles “…need to understand the theoretical underpinnings of the ecological model” in order to develop research and programs and policies that address multiple determinants of health.

Students in this class will gain an understanding of the importance of using social and behavioral sciences theory and information to 1) examine public health problems; 2) develop and plan programs and policies to address public health problems; 3) implement, manage and evaluate programs and policies; 4) conduct community-based applied research; 5) communicate information to policymakers and the public; and 6) advocate for program development and policy change.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1) describe at least three social and community factors in onset of and solutions to public health issues
2) identify at least five structural/system causes of social and behavioral factors affecting health
3) identify at least three theories, concepts and models used in behavioral and social sciences
4) apply at least five levels of the social ecological framework to program planning and interventions
5) identify at least three issues, assets, resources and challenges at the individual, organizational and community levels
6) apply evidence-based approaches to develop and evaluate interventions
7) the merits of social and behavioral interventions
8) apply ethical principles to planning, implementation and evaluation
9) outline the steps in planning, implementing and evaluating public health policies and programs for at least one planning model
10) describe the process for identifying critical stakeholders
Teaching Philosophy

My job is not to tell you the truth. There are many truths, depending on our experiences, attitudes, background and the context. My job is to create a safe environment in which you can explore topics that intrigue you and that may challenge you, with the goal of inspiring you to think beyond where you have thought before and to entertain perspectives with which you may not be familiar. I know some stuff, you know some stuff; I believe that you learn as much from each other as you learn from me, and that I learn as much from you as you learn from me. Learning comes from many places, so let’s explore those places together.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity:
Students in this course are expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh’s Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity.

Disabilities:

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TDD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

Cell Phones:

Please be courteous to the instructor and your fellow classmates and refrain from cell phone use during class. If you are expecting an emergency call, please ensure that your phone is set to vibrate and leave the classroom if you receive a call that you must answer.

Laptops:

Because this class relies heavily on class discussion and active participation, no laptops will be allowed in class.
Recording:

Students may audiorecord class only with the permission of the instructor.

Email:

I have a strict email policy. When initiating an email conversation with the instructor or TA, you should always begin with “Dear/Hello/Hi/Good Afternoon” and conclude by signing your full name. The subject line of the email should indicate what the email is about (e.g. Question about the Exam). Informal language (e.g. hey can you tell me my grade, thx, btw,) is unacceptable and emails containing it will not be answered. People make judgments about you based on how you communicate and as such it is important to write emails in a professional manner. You can expect that the instructor and TA will make a good-faith effort to respond to your email within 48 hours.

Grading:

Grades will be assigned on the basis of participation (10%), weekly papers (25%), quizzes (20%), a multiple choice exam (20%) and a group poster presentation/peer rating (25%).

Attendance will be taken in exciting, creative ways each class period. Participation will be gauged in part by your contributions to class discussion and your use of office hours.

Weekly papers are due by 2 pm on the day noted in the course outline; late assignments will be assessed a 5% deduction for every late day. Assignments should be submitted through CourseWeb (if you have issues submitting work through this mechanism, please let Ms. Pallatino or Ms. Haston know). Each student will choose a public health issue and culture/country as well as a related behavior to use for weekly assignments. For example, you might choose HIV/AIDS (health issue) education to increase condom use (behavior) in Ghana or an oral health (health issue) intervention in rural PA to change children’s tooth brushing activity (behavior). Weekly assignments ask you to apply the social ecological framework to this issue, identify a theory to use in developing an educational program, discuss ethical issues related to your particular project, and so forth. Exemplary papers are available on CourseWeb.

Assignment Expectations: Written assignments must include your name and are limited to one page, minimum of 1.5-spaced 1-inch margins; may be bulleted lists if appropriate. Minimum 11-point font must be used. Points will be taken off if these requirements are not met. Please check for proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and number agreement between nouns/verbs. All references should be cited correctly.

Citations for all references used should follow one of the following formats:
1) AJPH (references in the text are numbered, and the bibliography is listed numerically, NOT alphabetically); author(s). title. journal or book. year;volume#:pp.

2) APA – check out the rules at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05

Quizzes will be administered in class on the days noted in the course outline.

The multiple choice exam will take place in class and will take advantage of OMET’s ability to grade large numbers of bubble sheets almost instantaneously. Please bring your People Soft number and #2 pencil to class that day.

You will be assigned to a group for the poster presentation, which will cover a topic of the group’s choice but not addressed by anyone in the group in the weekly assignments. Guidelines are provided on CourseWeb. Foam boards and easels will be provided. Bring your own push pins. Ten points of the 25 points will come from peer ratings, completed by all group members and indicating the extent to which each member met her/his responsibilities and made contributions to the final product.

Attendance:

Attendance in class is an absolute necessity for this course. Though power point presentations will be used, they are for talking points only. A great deal of the learning in this course will be through class discussion, which occurs spontaneously and cannot possibly be scripted. If you have to miss a class, please inform the TA prior to the absence (if possible); up to two excused absences will not be counted against you. You are responsible for getting notes from another student for any class you miss.

Grading Scale: The instructor reserves the right to assign + and – grades.

90% + = A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
Below 70% = F

CourseWeb:
The course format will involve the use of CourseWeb/Blackboard and on-line sources for class assignments and enrichment materials. NO TEXT BOOK IS REQUIRED. CourseWeb/Blackboard is a web-based application. Use the web browser, Internet Explorer, to access your course information online.

- Go to the web address: http://courseweb.pitt.edu
- “Log in” with your user name, type your password, then click “Log in.”
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>Reading/Assignments</td>
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<td>3 May 26</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>MEMORIAL DAY</td>
<td>health issue you have chosen in the location you identified</td>
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<td>4 Jun. 2</td>
<td>Structural/systemic causes of disease; Social and community factors in disease causation</td>
<td>Blitstein, R.  Racism’s Hidden Toll.  <em>Miller-McCune</em>, July-August 2009.</td>
<td>Homework #2: Theory (10 pts) One-page paper identifying and applying a theory appropriate for addressing the behavior related to the health issue you have identified</td>
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<td>5 June 9</td>
<td>Social and behavioral research methods – there are only two kinds</td>
<td>Braveman, P, Egerter, S &amp; Williams, DR.  (2011).  The Social Determinants of Health: Coming of Age.  <em>Annual Review of Public Health</em> 32:381-98.</td>
<td>In-class quiz Group Topics Due – submit through CourseWeb – only ONE person submits</td>
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<td>6 June 16</td>
<td>More methods</td>
<td>Focus group demonstration</td>
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| Role of social and community factors in solving public health problems  
Seabrook, J. Don’t Shoot. *The New Yorker*. June 22, 2009, pp. 32+. | the method(s) you will use for your project. Include recruitment, sampling, data collection and analysis. |
|---|---|---|
| Planning and evaluating public health programs  
**SMART OBJECTIVES**  
*The best laid plans of mice and men.....* | Baker, AD, Gilley, J, James, J & Kimani, M. “High Five to Healthy Living”: A Health Intervention program for Youth at an Inner City Community Center. *J Community Health*, accessed on-line 12/21/11  
Two-page paper outlining your intervention and identifying one SMART objective in each of the |
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Sources</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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Reverby, S M. (2011). Listening to narratives from the Tuskegee syphilis study. *The Lancet*, 377(9778), 1646-1647. | categories (process, impact, outcome) for each intervention component |
| 11  | July 21 | Poster Presentations AND FOOD DAY! A Dr. Terry tradition continues! | Location TBA  
Please have a hard copy of your poster to hand in to one of the instructors (you can use your display copy); please complete the peer rating and email to one of the instructors. *Remember to rate yourself.* | Homework #5: Ethical Issues (10 pts)  
One-page paper describing the ethical issues your project faces, based on your visit to the IRB web page, lecture and class discussion |
| 12  | July 28 | In-class exam | Study, folks, study! HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BARB! |