Course Syllabus
Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health
Fall Semester 2014
Section 1: Monday, 12:00 – 1:55pm, Room A216 Crabtree
Section 1: Monday, 4:00-6:00 PM, Room A719 Crabtree

(version 2014/09/07)

Instructor: Candy Kammerer, PhD
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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) assess current and historical 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, (4) perform tabletop role-playing exercises.

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 current and historical examples of public health interventions
• Apply an interdisciplinary approach to assess ethics cases in public health
• Use problem-solving methodologies (e.g., problem analyses, logic model, budget) to address public health issues, at different population levels, with an emphasis on science, policy and practice considerations.
• Apply an interdisciplinary approach to public health problem-solving.

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. 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.”
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 will be 12 assignments in this course – all assignments are listed in the Assignments section on Courseweb. All assignments must be submitted in class or to the assignment box or to your group’s site, on or before the due date. Points will be subtracted for late assignments. 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.
(DUE by 4pm on Sept 1)

Assignment #2: Identify one public health issues + determinants for group intervention project 10 pts)
Using the websites given below (and on Courseweb), or other sources of information, identify 1 issue/problem in public health in Western PA. Fill in the “Identify Problem” and “determinants” templates (on Courseweb) for Issues in Public Health, and bring this list for in-class discussion with your group on Sept 8.
BE SURE TO INCLUDE REFERENCES (use APA style, NOT just web-links).
(DUE by NOON on Sept 8 – submit online AND to your group site)

Websites:
1. Allegheny County Behavioral and Risk Factor Survey  
   www.achd.net
2. HRSA Community Profile at  
   http://www.communityhealth.hhs.gov/homepage.aspx?j=1
3. Burden of disease:  
   Explore "DALY" and other relevant indicators used by WHO, at:  
4. Air pollution:  
   Post-Gazette Articles on Mapping Mortality:  
   http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/03001/1108747-209.stm
5. Marcellus Shale –
Assignment #3: Ethics (two parts)

#4A: Ethics case study report (15 pts)

Each student, individually, will write a 3-4 page (1.5 line spaced) report on the Ethics Case Study assigned to your group. Two of the cases are given in the ASPH: Ethic and Public Health Model Curriculum (http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782). Ethical considerations are provided in specific Modules as background for the other four cases. However, these cases are ongoing, so much of the information will be from current reports. Please use the information in this online curriculum resource to guide your report. However, I expect you to go beyond the discussion in the ASPH Model Curriculum.

In your report, please describe

1. a few of the specific ethical issues involved (who are the stakeholders, what do they have at stake, what are alternate courses of action)
2. a few of ethical dimensions of the case (what are the general moral considerations or principles involved). In other words, arguments for and against different issues.
3. how you would resolve the case (if the case is not resolved) or whether you think the resolution was “correct” and why.

Remember this is a 3-4 page paper (1.5 line spaced), so you obviously can NOT include all stakeholders, ethical principles, etc. But I want you to discuss a few - especially the ones that have influenced **your** decision.

Include references.

Do NOT include the case, per se, in your written report (but, of course, you may refer to parts of it to support your comments.)

(DUE by NOON on Sept 22)

There are multiple cases in each module, please be sure you assess the correct one.

Group 1 Case: Non-profit Health Care Provider: changing demographics (ASPH Module #4)
Group 2 Case: Non-profit Health Care Provider: changing demographics (ASPH Module #4)
Group 3 Case: Power Plant in Homer, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)
Group 4 Case: Power Plant in Homer, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)
Group 5 Case: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)
Group 6 Case: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)
Group 7 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks (ASPH Module #6 and current reports/articles)
Group 8 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks (ASPH Module #6 and current reports/articles)
Group 9 Case: Informing study subjects about incidental findings (ASPH Module #8 and Wolf et al., Genetics in Medicine 2012)
Group 10 Case: Informing study subjects about incidental findings (ASPH Module #8 and Wolf et al., Genetics in Medicine 2012)
#3B: Ethics case study discussion lead by groups  
*(10 pts + 5 pts peer evaluation)*
Each set of 2 groups will lead a discussion/modified debate of their ethics case for the class. Each group will be assigned to present/defend a specific perspective of the case, *regardless* of their personal thoughts (see assignments below). Each group’s initial presentation should be 5 minutes *maximum*. Then each group will have 3 minutes for a rebuttal. After that, questions and comments will be taken from the class. During the discussion, the groups (and class) may come to a decision (or not).
Presentation and leading class discussion.  
*(10 pts)*
Each class member will evaluate each group’s presentation (peer evaluation).  
*(5 pts)*

Oct 6: Non-profit Health Care Provider: changing demographics
Group 1 Position: The administrator’s and board of director’s position, that is, the community is changing, we need to hire bilingual staff
Group 2 Position: The community board’s position, that is, the LEP patients are from outside the community, so refer them elsewhere
*Both groups - please consider your positions with respect to the suggested questions for discussion (in the ASPH module #4), and how your answer might change if you think of short-term (one year) versus long-term (5 years) outcomes*

Oct 6: Coal-fired power plant in Homer, PA
Group 3 Position: The plant modifications are sufficient and the plant should remain operating.
Group 4 Position: The modifications are NOT sufficient and the plant should be modified further or shut down.

Oct 14: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA
Group 5 Case: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)
Group 6 Case: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)

Oct 14: Smoking ban during hospital shifts
Group 7 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks is reasonable
Group 8 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks is NOT reasonable

Oct 14: Informing study subjects about ‘incidental’ findings
Group 9: Position: Study subjects from past, present, and future studies should be informed.
Group 10: Position: Study subjects from past, present, and future studies should NOT be informed.

 Assignment #4: Logic model
#5: Logic model quiz  
*(5 pts)*
*(DO in-class on Sept 22)*

 Assignment #5: Logic Model plus Intervention budget  
*(10 pts)*
Each group should submit one logic model plus budget (and budget justification). See details and the “Budget” template available under Assignments on Courseweb.
*(DUE by 4pm on Sept 30)*

 Assignment #6: Critique and Ranking of public health intervention  
*(5 pts total)*
We will practice critiquing proposals. *(DUE at end of class Sept 29)*
Assignment #7: Documentary report (15 pts)
Watch the documentary, “FLOW: For Love of Water” on Oct 28 (during class or on Youtube) OR watch the documentary “King Corn” (on Youtube) and write 1-2 pages (double-spaced) to answer three assigned questions for the documentary. The questions are provided on Courseweb under Assignments. (DUE by 4pm on Nov 4)

Assignment #8: Book Club (two parts)
#8A: Book report (15 pts)
Select one of the following books to read. On Nov 5, we will discuss the books in a book club setting. Each student must participate in the discussion of their book and submit a 1-2 page response (1.5 line-spaced) to three questions assigned by the instructor for their book. (The questions are on Courseweb under Assignments). (DUE by 4pm on Oct 20)

#8B: In Class discussion group on OCT 27 (5 pts)

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)

- “As an epidemiologist researching AIDS, Elizabeth Pisani has been involved with international efforts to halt the disease for fourteen years. With swashbuckling wit, fierce honesty, and more than a little political incorrectness, she dishes on herself and her colleagues as they try to prod reluctant governments to fund HIV prevention for the people who need it most: drug injectors, gay men, sex workers, and johns. “ (Carlin Romano, Philadelphia Inquirer)

- “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)

Assignment #9: 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 2.5 minutes maximum plus budget (1 minute) and should include: brief description of problem, examples of the intervention, and budget (especially cost/benefit). Each group will provide a detailed version of the determinants and logic model and budget (and justification to the instructor) and a simplified version for presentation to the class. (20 pts)
Each group will also evaluate its fellow group members. (10 pts) (DUE: Nov 3).

Assignment #10: FRED Navigator modeling exercise (5 pts)
Each group will answer questions based on the FRED Navigator modeling exercise done in class. Due at the end of class on **Nov 10 (or alternate time)**. Details will be provided as the course progresses.

**Assignment #11:** Tabletop exercise (10 pts)
To be done on Nov 17 (**or alternate date**)

**Extra credit:** Questionnaire on public health competencies (**5 pts**)
(MUST BE completed by Wednesday, Dec 4)
[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Capstone_Fall2013](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Capstone_Fall2013)
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 + determinants (individual)  
5 pts
Assignment #3: Ethics case study  
(A) Ethics case study individual report  
15 pts
(B) Ethics case study group presentation  
In-class group presentation  
10 pts
(C) Peer evaluation (by classmates)  
5 pts
Assignment #4: Logic Model quiz  
5 pts
Assignment #5: Logic Model + Budget for your group’s public health intervention  
10 pts
Assignment #6: PHI Ranking Exercise  
5 pts
Assignment #7: Documentary report  
10 pts
Assignment #8: Book club  
(A) 1-2 page paper (individual)  
15 pts
(B) On-line discussion  
5 pts
Assignment #9: Public health intervention (group project)  
Overall presentation/intervention  
25 pts
Fellow group member evaluation  
10 pts
Instructor evaluation of each student’s group activity  
10 pts
Assignment #10: FRED Navigator modeling questions  
5 pts
Assignment #11: Tabletop exercise  
10 pts

Total 150 pts

Extra Credit: Competency assessment  
5 pts

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<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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<td>A</td>
<td>141-150</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>135-140</td>
<td>90-93</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>130-134</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>124-129</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>120-123</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>&lt;104</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 25</td>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Course overview</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identify a public health issue</td>
<td>Readings: • A guide for health priorities.</td>
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<td>Run a meeting</td>
<td>• Quick guide to planning meetings</td>
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<td>Determinants of public health problems</td>
<td>Readings: • Joffe&amp;Mindell: Health Impact Assessment</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #1:</strong> “What I want to accomplish in public health” – DUE by Sept 1</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #2:</strong> Identify one public health problems for the intervention project (do individually) – DUE by Sept 2</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #8:</strong> Book club report (individual) + online comment – DUE by Oct 28</td>
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<td>EXTRA CREDIT: MPH competencies - DUE by Dec 2</td>
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<td>Sept 1</td>
<td><strong>Labor Day</strong></td>
<td>There is no class this week, however, you should work on Assignment #2</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
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<td>Sept 8</td>
<td>Leadership + Public speaking</td>
<td>Read leadership articles/characteristics</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>Article on public speaking</td>
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<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>Ethics in Public Health</td>
<td>Readings: Childress article</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Thomas lectures</td>
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<td>Bring public health problem ideas to class</td>
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<td>Assignment #3A: Ethics case study report (do individually) – DUE by 4pm on Sept 22</td>
<td>Assignment #3B: Group presentation of ethics case study – DUE Oct 7 or 14</td>
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<td>Sept 22</td>
<td>Logic Model + Budget</td>
<td>Readings: McCawley_Logic Model</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<td>KelloggFndHandbook (Intro and Chap 1)</td>
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<td>Assignment #5: Logic Model + Budget for your public health problem – DUE by NOON on SEPT 30</td>
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<td>Assignment #9: Group project: public health intervention - Present on Nov 4 or Nov 11</td>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Preparation for Class/Assignments</th>
<th>In-class Activities</th>
<th>Assignments to submit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 29</td>
<td>Ranking and Critiquing Example Intervention Proposals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Example interventions will be presented – we will critique them in class</td>
<td>Assignment #5: Logic Model + Budget + Justification (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Work on your group’s ethics case study and/or your group’s public health intervention</td>
<td>Assignment #6: Ranking exercise (done in class – 5 pts)</td>
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<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics Cases: Groups 1-4</td>
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<td>Presentation of case studies: groups 1-4</td>
<td>Assignment #3B: Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 1-4 (10 pts) Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Assessment of case study presentation by other class members (peer evaluation)</td>
<td>Assignment #3B: Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 5-10 (10 pts) Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics Cases: Groups 5-10</td>
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<td>Presentation of case studies: groups 5-8</td>
<td>Assignment #3B: Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 1-4 (10 pts) Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Assessment of case study presentation by other class members (peer evaluation)</td>
<td>Assignment #3B: Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 5-10 (10 pts) Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Documentary (FLOW)</td>
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<td>Assignment #8A: Book club report (15 pts paper)</td>
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<td>Oct 27</td>
<td>Discussion of books and documentary</td>
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<td>Assignment #7: documentary report</td>
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<td>Assignment #8B: Book club online comment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Nov 3</td>
<td>FRED Navigator</td>
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<td>Assignment #9: FRED navigator questions, tbd in class</td>
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<td>Nov 10</td>
<td>PHI intervention</td>
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<td>All groups will present for 3.5 minutes <strong>maximum</strong></td>
<td>Assignment #10: (45 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
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<td>Nov 17</td>
<td>Tabletop</td>
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<td>Ms. Jamie Sokol, MPH ACHD, will lead the activity</td>
<td>Assignment #11: Tabletop – in class activity (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
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<td>Nov 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Week</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>Practitioner</td>
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<td>Ms. Margaret Palumbo, MPH, will discuss her career</td>
<td>Extra Credit: Competency assessment completed by WED, DEC 4 (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
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<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Final exam week</td>
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