Course Syllabus
Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health
Spring Semester 2014
Monday, 4:00-6:00 PM, Room A719 Crabtree

(version 2014/01/08)

Instructor: Candy Kammerer, PhD
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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 historical examples of public health interventions and (3) identify a current issue in public health in Western Pennsylvania, understand the determinants, creatively develop an intervention, propose methods to assess the intervention, and develop a budget.

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?pageld=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_
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](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 on or before the due date. *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:** Identify one public health issue for group intervention project (5 pts)

Using the websites given below (and on Courseweb), or other sources of information, identify one issues/problems in public health in Western PA region. Fill in the “Identify Problem” template (on Courseweb) for Issues in Public Health, and bring this list for in-class discussion with your group on Jan 13. Include references. See examples on Courseweb. (DUE by 4pm on JAN 13 – submit online AND to your group site)

**Websites:**

1. Allegheny County Behavioral and Risk Factor Survey
   [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net)
2. HRSA Community Profile at
3. Burden of disease:
   Explore “DALY” and other relevant indicators used by WHO, at:
4. Air pollution:
   Post-Gazette Articles on Mapping Mortality:
5. Marcellus Shale –
   Post Gazette website: Pipeline

**Assignment #2:** “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 JAN 13 – submit online)
Assignment #3: Determinants of Public Health Problem  
(5 pts)
Each student, individually, will complete the "Determinants" template (available on Courseweb) for her/his group's Public Health Issue/Intervention. Include references.
(DUE by 4pm on JAN 27; submit online and to group members)

Assignment #4: Ethics  (four 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: Ethics 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.

In your report, please describe (1) at least two or three of the specific ethical issues or principles involved (see your readings/notes from class on ethics), (2) how you would use these principles to resolve the case (if the case is not resolved) or (3) whether you think the resolution was “correct” and why. Include references. Do NOT include the case, per se, in your written report (but, of course, you may refer to it to support your comments.)
(DUE by 4pm on JAN 27, submit online)

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: Informing study subjects about incidental findings (ASPH Module #8 and Wolf et al., Genetics in Medicine 2012)
Group 6 Case: Informing study subjects about incidental findings (ASPH Module #8 and Wolf et al., Genetics in Medicine 2012)
Group 7 Case: Testing and Segregation of HIV prisoners (ASPH Module #2 and current reports/articles)
Group 8 Case: Testing and Segregation of HIV prisoners (ASPH Module #2 and current reports/articles)
Group 9 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks (ASPH Module #6 and current reports/articles)
Group 10 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks (ASPH Module #6 and current reports/articles)

#4B: Ethics case study discussion lead by groups  (10 pts)
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 discussion.  (10 pts)

#4C: Each class member will evaluate each group’s presentation (peer evaluation).  (5 pts)

#4D: Each group will also evaluate its fellow group members (see online form).  (5 pts)
Feb 10: 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

Feb 10: Coal-fired power plant in Homer, PA
Group 3 Position: The proposed plant modifications are sufficient and the plant should remain operating.
Group 4 Position: The modifications are NOT sufficient and the plant should be shut down.

Feb 17: Informing study subjects about ‘incidental’ findings
Group 5: Position: Study subjects from past studies should be informed.
Group 6: Position: Study subjects from past studies should NOT be informed.

Feb 17: Testing and segregation of prisoners with HIV
Group 7 Position: Testing and segregation of prisoners with HIV is reasonable
Group 8 Position: Testing and segregation of prisoners with HIV is NOT reasonable

Feb 24: Smoking ban during hospital shifts
Group 9 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks is reasonable
Group 10 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks is NOT reasonable

Assignment #5: Logic model
#5: Logic model quiz (5 pts)
One student from each group will present the development of a logic model to the rest of their group members. Upon completion of the presentation, the group members will take a short quiz in-class. The quiz will be handed out in class. When teaching, please use the “Logic Model” terms as provided in the template available on Courseweb.
(Do in-class on JAN 27)

Assignment #6: 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. Email documents to instructor.
(DUE by 4pm on MAR 3)

Assignment #7: Critique of public health intervention (two parts)
Each student will critique and rank proposals. (5 pts)
(DUE at the end of class on FEB 3).

Assignment #8: Documentary report (10 pts)
Watch the documentary, “King Corn” on Mar 3 at 2:30 or on YouTube OR “Flow: For Love of Water” on YouTube. 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 MAR 17)
Assignment #9: Book Club (two parts)

#9A: Book report (15 pts)
Select one of the following books to read. Each student must participate in the on-line 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 before 4pm on MAR 17)

#9B: Online discussion group (5 pts)
Each student is required to contribute to an online Discussion of their book (under Discussion group on Courseweb).
(DUE before 4pm on MAR 24)

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)

**Mountains Beyond Mountains: Healing the World: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer; Tracy Kidder, Profile Books, 2011.**
-“As a specialist in infectious diseases, Farmer's goal is nothing less than redressing the 'steep gradient of inequality' in medical service to the desperately poor. His work establishing a complex of public health facilities on the central plateau of Haiti forms the keystone to efforts that now encompass initiatives on three continents.” (School Library Journal)

**The Wisdom of Whores: Bureaucrats, Brothels, and the Business of AIDS; Elizabeth Pisani, W.W. Norton, 2009.**
-“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 #10: Tabletop exercise (10 pts)
Students will be assigned to groups and will model response to a public health incident. Details are available on courseweb. Students will write an assessment of the exercise.
(DUE by 4pm on MAR 24)

Assignment #11: Modeling exercise (5 pts)
Each group will answer questions based on the FRED Navigator modeling exercise done in class.
Details will be provided on courseweb
(Due at the end of class on MAR 31.)
Assignment #12: Group presentation of public health intervention (35 pts total)
Each group will present its public health intervention using the tools and methodologies learned in public health. The presentation will be 7 minutes maximum and should include: brief description of problem, determinants, logic model (including assessment and timeline), examples of the intervention, and budget. 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. (15 pts)
Each class member will evaluate each group’s presentation (peer evaluation). (5 pts)
Each group will also evaluate its fellow group members. (5 pts)
Instructor evaluation of each individual’s group activity. (10 pts)
(DUE: Groups 2,4,6,8,10 on APR 7 and Groups 1,3,5,7,9 on APR 14).

Extra credit: Questionnaire on public health competencies (5 pts)
(MUST BE completed by Mon, APR 21)

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Capstone_Spring2014
Summary of assignments and total points:
(150 pts total = 85 pts from individual assignments + 65 pts from group assignments)

Assignment #1: Identify 1 public health problems (individual) 5 pts
Assignment #2: What I Want to Accomplish in Public Health (1-2 paragraphs) 5 pts
Assignment #3: Determinants of public health problem (individual) 5 pts
Assignment #4: Ethics case study
   (A) Ethics case study (individual report) 15 pts
   (B) Ethics case study group presentation in-class 10 pts
   (C) Peer evaluation (by classmates) 5 pts
   (D) Fellow group member evaluation 5 pts
Assignment #5: Logic Model Quiz 5 pts
Assignment #6: Logic model + Budget for your group’s public health intervention 10 pts
Assignment #7: PHI Ranking Critique 5 pts
Assignment #8: Documentary report 10 pts
Assignment #9: Book club
   (A) 1-2 page paper (individual) 15 pts
   (B) On-line discussion 5 pts
Assignment #10: Tabletop exercise 10 pts
Assignment #11: FRED navigator exercise 5 pts
Assignment #12: Public health intervention (group project)
   Overall presentation/intervention 15 pts
   Peer evaluation (by classmates) 5 pts
   Fellow group member evaluation 5 pts
   Instructor evaluation of each student’s group activity 10 pts
   Total 150 pts

Extra Credit: Competency assessment 5 pts

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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<td>A+</td>
<td>151-155</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>141-150</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>135-140</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;104</td>
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| Jan 6      | Course overview                           | Readings: 
• A guide for health priorities. 
• Quick guide to planning meetings
Readings: Joffe & Mindell: Health Impact Assessment | Review goals of course, learning objectives, and syllabus                                | Assign working groups and ethics case study 
(Each student’s group assignment is on Courseweb Documents) |                      |
| Week 1     | Identify a public health issue             | Assignment #1: 
Identify one public health problems for the intervention project (do individually) – DUE by JAN 13 | Lecture on tools to use to identify a public health problem/issue |                      |
|            | Run a meeting                              | Assignment #2: 
“What I want to accomplish in public health” – DUE by JAN 13                               | Lecture on how to run a meeting                                                      |                      |
|            | Determinants of public health problems     | Assignment #3: 
Determinants of Public Health problem (individual): DUE by JAN 27                         | Lecture on determinants                                                             |                      |
|            |                                            | Assignment #7: 
Book club report (individual) – DUE by MAR 17                                              | Exercise on determinants of a public health problem                                   |                      |
|            |                                            | EXTRA CREDIT: 
MPH competencies - DUE by APR 21                                                          |                                                                                     |                      |
| Jan 13     | Ethics in Public Health                   | Readings: Childress article                                                                    | Lecture on ethics                                                                    | Assignment #1: 
Public health problems (individual) (5 pts) |
<p>| Week 2     |                                            | Thomas lectures                                                                                | In-class ethics case study exercise                                                  | Assignment #2: Public health accomplishment (5pts) |</p>
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<th>Preparation for Class/Assignments</th>
<th>In-class Activities</th>
<th>Assignments to submit</th>
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<tr>
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<td>report (do individually) – DUE by 4pm on JAN 27</td>
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<td>Turn in your Group’s Public Health Problem at end of class</td>
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<td>Assignment #4B: Group presentation of ethics case study – DUE FEB 10, 17, or 24</td>
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<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>MLK Day</td>
<td>No class meeting</td>
<td>There is no class this week, however, you should work on Assignment #3 and #4A</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>Readings: McCawley Logic Model&lt;br&gt;KelloggFndHandbook (Intro and Chap 1)</td>
<td>Lecture on budget&lt;br&gt;In-class budget exercise&lt;br&gt;Assignment #5: In-class Logic model quiz (5pts)</td>
<td>Assignment #3: Public health determinants (individual) (5pts)</td>
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<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Logic Model Budget</td>
<td>One member of each group will teach the logic model to the other group members</td>
<td>Work on your group’s public health intervention and/or your group’s ethics case study&lt;br&gt;Groups 1-5 will provide instructor with oral update (in class)</td>
<td>Assignment #4A: Ethics case study report (individual) (15 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Assignment #6: Logic model + Budget for your group intervention – DUE by 4pm on MAR 3</td>
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<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>Critiquing and Ranking Proposals</td>
<td>Assignment #10: Group project: public health intervention - Present on APR 7 or 14</td>
<td>Example interventions will be presented – we will critique them in class&lt;br&gt;Assignment #7: Ranking exercise will be done in class&lt;br&gt;Work on your group’s public health intervention or ethics case&lt;br&gt;Groups 6-10 will provide instructor with oral update (in class)</td>
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<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics Cases: Groups 1-4</td>
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<td><strong>Presentation of case studies: groups 1-4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4B:</strong> Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 1-4 (10 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment of case study presentation by other class members (peer evaluation)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4C:</strong> Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #4D:</strong> Group member assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics Cases: Groups 5-8</td>
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<td><strong>Presentation of case studies: groups 5-8</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4B:</strong> Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 5-8 (10 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment of case study presentation by other class members (peer evaluation)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4C:</strong> Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #4D:</strong> Group member assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics Cases: Groups 9-10</td>
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<td><strong>Presentation of case studies: groups 9-12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4B:</strong> Group presentation of ethics case study: Groups 9-10 (10 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment of case study presentation by other class members (peer evaluation)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4C:</strong> Peer assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #4D:</strong> Group member assessment (5 pts)</td>
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<td>Mar 3</td>
<td><em>King Corn</em> Or <em>FLOW</em></td>
<td>Assignment #8: Documentary report</td>
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<td>Assignment #6: Logic model + Budget</td>
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<td><em>Spring Break</em></td>
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<td><strong>Mar 17</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tabletop exercise</strong></td>
<td>Readings on Courseweb</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #10:</strong> Topical exercises will be done in class (5 pts)</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #8:</strong> Documentary report (10 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 10</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Work on your group’s public health intervention</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #9A:</strong> Book club report (15 pts) paper</td>
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<td><strong>Mar 24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critique group draft proposals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We will critique determinants and logic models and budgets in class and turn in results at the end of class</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #9B:</strong> Book club online comment due (5 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #10:</strong> Tabletop exercise due (10 pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Apr 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>FRED Navigator</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #10:</strong> FRED navigator questions will be done in class</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Book and documentary discussion</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Apr 8</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Group presentations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #10:</strong> Group Intervention Projects 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 (35 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Apr 15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intervention Groups 1, 3, 5, 7, 9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Group presentations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #10:</strong> Group Intervention Projects 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 (35 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Apr 21</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Extra Credit:</strong> Competency assessment completed (5 pts)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
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