Course Syllabus  
Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health  
Summer Semester 2014  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3:55pm, Room A215 Crabtree

(version 2012/05/08)

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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, also present and defend differing perspectives of the case, (2) assess current and 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 and methods to assess the intervention and a budget, and critique other intervention proposals.

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 will mostly 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. Handouts (including syllabus) and other resource materials will be available on CourseWeb or distributed in class.

Evaluation/Grading:
There will be 11 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. 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 possible public health problems for your group intervention (5 pts) Using the websites given below (and on Courseweb), or other sources of information, identify one issue/problem in public health in Western PA. 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 May 15. (!!DUE by 2pm on May 15!!; submit online AND to your group)

Websites:
1. Allegheny County Behavioral and Risk Factor Survey
   www.achd.net
2. HRSA Community Profile at
   http://www.communityhealth.hhs.gov/homepage.aspx?q=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 –
   Post Gazette website: Pipeline
   http://shale.sites.post-gazette.com/
Assignment #2: 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.
(DUE by 2pm on May 20; submit online AND to your group)

Assignment #3: “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 2pm on May 20; submit online)

Assignment #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. Specific modules in the ASPH: Ethics and Public Health Model Curriculum (http://www.asph.org/document.cfm?page=782) provide background for the 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 2pm on May 22; submit online AND to your group)

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

Group 1 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks (ASPH Module #6 and current reports/articles)
Group 2 Case: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks (ASPH Module #6 and current reports/articles)
Group 3 Case: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)
Group 4 Case: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA (read ASPH Module #7 and current articles and reports)

Assignment #4B: Ethics case study discussion (10 pts)
Each set of 2 groups will lead a discussion/modifed 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 perspective (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 may continue. During the discussion, the groups may come to a decision (or not).

May 29: Smoking ban during hospital shifts
Group 1 Position: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks is reasonable
Group 2 Position: Smoking ban during hospital shifts and breaks is NOT reasonable

May 29: Fracking in Deer Lakes Park, PA
Group 3 Position: The decision to allow fracking is reasonable.
Group 4 Position: The decision to allow fracking is NOT reasonable.
Assignment #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 mean score of the group will be the score for all individuals in the group.
(In-class on May 20)

Assignment #6: Logic model and budget (group)  (5 pts)
Each group will create a logic model and budget for the public health intervention for their group. Use the “Logic Model” and “Budget” templates available under Assignments on Courseweb.
DUE by 2pm on May 27; email to instructor at cmk3@pitt.edu

Assignment #7: Critique and ranking of public health intervention (5 pts)
Practice critiquing proposals.
DUE at the end of class on May 22.

Assignment #8: Documentary report  (15 pts)
Watch the “Flow” (in class) and write 1-2 pages (double-spaced) to answer three assigned questions for the documentary. The questions are provided on Courseweb under Assignments.
Report DUE by 2pm on June 3; submit online; In-class discussion on June 10

Assignment #9: 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 June 3.

Assignment #10: Book Club report (20 pts report + 5pts in-class discussion)
Select one of the following books to read. On June 4, 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 the three questions assigned by the instructor for their book. (The questions are on Courseweb under Assignments).
Report DUE by 2pm on June 5; submit online; In class discussion on June 10

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 #11: Group presentation of public health intervention (40 pts total)
Each group will present its public health intervention using the tools and methodologies learned in public health. The presentation will be 10 minutes 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)
Classmates will assessPHI (10 pts)
Each group will also evaluate its fellow group members. (5 pts)
Instructor evaluation of each individual’s group activity. (10 pts)
Due in-class on June 12.

Assignment #12: Tabletop exercise (10 pts)
Each individual will complete the modeling exercise in class.
Due in-class on June 17.

Extra credit: Questionnaire on public health competencies (5 pts)
(MUST BE completed before Tues, June 17)
Summary of assignments and total points:
(150 pts total = 90 pts from individual assignments + 60 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 10 pts
Assignment #5: Logic Model quiz 5 pts
Assignment #6: Logic model and Budget for your group’s public health intervention 5 pts
Assignment #7: PHI Ranking exercise 5 pts
Assignment #8: “FLOW” Documentary report 15 pts
Assignment #9: FRED navigator exercise 5 pts
Assignment #10: Book club
   (A) 1-2 page paper (individual) 20 pts
   (B) In-class discussion 5 pts
Assignment #11: Public health intervention (group project)
   Overall presentation/intervention 15 pts
   PHI improvement (assessed by classmates) 5 pts
   Fellow group member evaluation 10 pts
   Instructor evaluation of each student’s group activity 10 pts
Assignment #12: Tabletop exercise 10 pts

Total 150 pts

Extra Credit: Competency assessment 5 pts

Grade Total Points Percent
A+ 151-155 >100
A 141-150 94-100
A- 135-140 90-93
B+ 130-134 87-89
B 124-129 83-86
B- 120-123 80-82
C+ 115-119 77-79
C 109-114 73-76
C- 105-108 70-73
F <104 59 and below
# Capstone: Problem Solving in Public Health
## Weekly Class schedule – Summer 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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><strong>May 13</strong>&lt;br&gt;Week 1</td>
<td>Course overview&lt;br&gt;Identify a public health issue&lt;br&gt;Run a meeting&lt;br&gt;Determinants of public health problems</td>
<td>Readings: • A guide for health priorities. • Quick guide to planning meetings&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Readings: Joffe &amp; Mindell: Health Impact Assessment&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assignment #1:</strong> Identify one public health problems for the intervention project (do individually) – DUE by <strong>May 15</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assignment #2:</strong> Determinants of Public Health problem (individual): Due by <strong>May 20</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assignment #3:</strong> “What I want to accomplish in public health” – DUE by <strong>May 20</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assignment #10:</strong> Book club report (individual) – DUE by <strong>June 5</strong></td>
<td>Review goals of course, learning objectives, and syllabus&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Assign working groups and ethics case study (Each student’s group assignment is on Courseweb Documents)&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Lecture on tools to use to identify a public health problem/issue&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Lecture on how to run a meeting&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Lecture on determinants&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Exercise on determinants of a public health problem</td>
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<td><strong>May 15</strong>&lt;br&gt;Week 1</td>
<td>Ethics in Public Health</td>
<td>Readings: Childress article&lt;br&gt;Thomas lectures&lt;br&gt;Bring public health problem ideas to class&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>Assignment #4A:</strong> Ethics case study report (do individually) – DUE by 2pm on May 22</td>
<td>Lecture on ethics&lt;br&gt;In-class ethics case study exercise&lt;br&gt;Group discussion of potential intervention topics&lt;br&gt;Work on ethics case study (for group)</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #1:</strong> Public health problems (individual) - due by 2pm today</td>
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<td>May 20</td>
<td>Logic Model</td>
<td>Assignment #4B: Group presentation of ethics case study – DUE June 5</td>
<td>Lecture on budget</td>
<td>Assignment #2: Determinants of public health problem (individual) - due by 2pm today</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Readings: McCawley_LogicModel&lt;br&gt;KelloggFndHandbook (Intro and Chap 1)&lt;br&gt;Bring public health problem determinants to class&lt;br&gt;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</td>
<td>Assignment #3: “What I want to accomplish in public health” – due by 2pm today</td>
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<td>Assignment #6: Logic model and budget for your group’s public health problem – DUE by 2pm on May 27</td>
<td>Assignment #5: In-class Logic model quiz (5pts)</td>
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<td>May 22</td>
<td>Critiquing and Ranking Proposals</td>
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<td>Example interventions will be presented – we will critique them in class</td>
<td>Assignment #4A: Ethics case study report (individual) (15 pts)</td>
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<td>Assignment #7: Ranking exercise will be done in class</td>
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<td>Work on your group’s public health intervention or ethics case</td>
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<td>May 27</td>
<td>Movie: Flow</td>
<td>Assignment #8: Flow movie report (paper – 15 pts) – DUE by June 3</td>
<td>Work on your group’s ethics case</td>
<td>Assignment #6: Logic model and budget (group report)</td>
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<td>May 29</td>
<td>Public Health Ethics Case Studies</td>
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<td>Assignment #4B: Group Presentations of Ethics Case Study (15 pts)</td>
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<td>Work on your group’s public health intervention</td>
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<td>June 3</td>
<td>FRED Navigator exercise</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #9</strong>: FRED navigator questions will be done in class</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #8</strong>: Flow movie report (paper – 15 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Work on your group’s public health intervention</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
<td>Critique group draft proposals</td>
<td>Bring first part of PHI presentation to class for critique</td>
<td>We will critique determinants and logic models and budgets in class</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #10A</strong>: Book club report (20 pts paper)</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>June 10</td>
<td>Discuss movie &amp; book</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #10B</strong>: Book and Flow in-class discussion (5 pts)</td>
<td>Work on your group’s public health intervention</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<td>June 12</td>
<td>PHI group presentation</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #11</strong>: PHI presentations by all groups</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>Tabletop exercise</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #12</strong>: Tabletop exercises will be done in class (10 pts)</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<td>Jun 19</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>Enjoy your summer!</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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