Graduate School of Public Health
Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences
BCHS 2509: Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health
Fall 2017, Wednesday 1 – 3:55pm, A115 Crabtree Hall

Instructor: Thistle Elias, DrPH, MPA
4132 Parran Hall
elias@pitt.edu
412.624.5531

Administrative Assistant:
Summer Haston
srhaston@pitt.edu
412.624.3106

Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistant: Jessica Thompson
jrthompson@pitt.edu
423.645.7530
Office Hours: Tues. 10-12 and by appt

Introduction

This course provides an overview of the social and behavioral sciences and 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 CEPH. It includes selected social and behavioral theories and models used by public health professionals to plan, implement, and evaluate program strategies and policies for the improvement of community health.

Course Rationale

To more fully inform research and intervention efforts, and policy making, public health professionals must look beyond biological risk factors to the complex influence of social, behavioral and environmental factors on the public’s health and welfare. They must come to understand multiple social determinants of health, and the “theoretical underpinnings of the ecological model” (Institute of Medicine, “Who will keep the public healthy?” 2002). As such, in recent years there has been a growing recognition that the social and behavioral sciences play a critical role in public health practice, training and academics. Disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and health education have emerged as contributing important theories, methods and skill sets to public 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 – based on CEPH cross-cutting competencies for an MPH**

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

1) Explain the social ecological framework and how factors at the various levels are connected to health;
2) Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population’s health;
3) Discuss how structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to health equity at community, organizational and societal levels;
4) Explain social, political and economic determinants of health and their role in population health and health inequities;
5) Select appropriate qualitative data collection methods;
6) Analyze qualitative data;
7) Interpret results of qualitative data analysis for public health research, policy and practice;
8) Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect community health;
9) Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design and implementation of public health programs and policies;
10) Select methods to evaluate public health programs; and
11) Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships to impact public health outcomes.

**Teaching Philosophy**

I believe that learning and teaching should be engaging and include exposure to challenging ideas. The diversity of experiences and backgrounds that we all have enriches the learning potential of every discussion. I see the class as a partnership between teacher and students in which we each bring experience and perspectives that can enrich our learning. I encourage each of you to create and sustain an environment in which all students can speak freely.

In addition, I believe that students are ultimately responsible for the depth of their own learning. Thus, actively preparing for and engaging in class discussions (including being brave enough to ask questions!) are critical to mastering the learning objectives.

While there is a formal course evaluation conducted at the end of the semester, constructive comments on the class are welcome throughout the semester.
Principles of Ethical Practice

GSPH affirms its commitment to the Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health. We adhere to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of all components of our mission. We acknowledge that improving health for all requires that public health professionals secure and maintain the trust of our communities.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity:

All students are expected to adhere to the school’s standards of academic honesty. Any work submitted by students for evaluation must represent their 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.

Writing Center

Communicating clearly in written and spoken word is a critical professional skill. For those of you in need of additional practice and feedback on your writing, the University offers invaluable help through its Writing Center (412.624.6556).

Disabilities: If you have any disability for which you may require accommodation, you are encouraged to notify both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890) 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.

Technology in and for class

**Cell Phones:**
Please be courteous to the instructor and your fellow classmates and refrain from cell phone use during class, including texting.

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

**Emails:**
The subject line of the email should indicate what the email is about (e.g. 2509 Question about the Quiz). 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. Informal language (e.g. hey can you tell me my grade, thx, btw,) is unprofessional - people make judgments about you based on how you communicate and as such it is important to write emails in a professional manner. We will make a good-faith effort to respond to your email within 48 hours.

**Recording:**
Students may audio-record class with the permission of the instructor.

Readings: There is no assigned text book for this course. Students are expected to have completed article readings in time for class, as articles relate to each lecture.

All students are encouraged to purchase the One Book One Community GSPH selection *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* by Siddhartha Mukherjee. We will use small excerpts of this book in this class (and have these excerpts available to you on CourseWeb) BUT you can anticipate this book being referenced in multiple GSPH classes and special seminars this year and will likely be glad to have your own copy!

Grading:

**Grades will be assigned on the basis of 200 possible points:**
- participation – attendance, exercises (40 pts),
- 2 papers (20 pts each, 40 pts total)
  - Methods
  - SMART objectives/Eval Plan
- 4 papers (10 pts each, 40 pts total)
  - Social Ecological Framework
  - Social determinants of health
  - Behavioral and Psychological factors
  - Needs assessment
• 2 in-class quizzes (15 pts each = 30 pts total),
• final exam (20 pts)
• team poster presentation (20 pts) + peer rating (10 pts) = 30 pts total.

Below 60% is a failing grade.

**Participation** will be determined by your attendance, participation in exercises (in class and take-home), contributions to class discussion and your use of office hours as needed. Take home exercises will include responding to several readings with a brief (1/2-1p) ‘reflection/reaction’ comment, weeks 4, 8, 10 (noted in course overview matrix).

**All papers** are due by **noon** on the date indicated in the course overview matrix; late assignments will be assessed a **5% deduction for every late day**.

**Submit your assignment through CourseWeb AND bring a hard copy** of your assignment to submit in class. – NAMES must be on CW submissions as well as hard copies. (If you have issues submitting work through this CourseWeb, please let Ms. Thompson or Ms. Haston know)

• Each student will choose a public health issue that is impacted by behavior, a culture/country and related behavior to use for assignments throughout the semester.
  o For example, you might choose HIV/AIDS education (issue) in Ghana (country) and using condoms (behavior); or oral health (issue) in rural PA (country) and tooth-brushing (behavior). Generally weekly assignments are to apply what is learned in the previous week’s class to your topic.

• You will be allowed **one week** to rewrite weekly assignments IF you get 69% or lower and if you choose (this is not required, only recommended for your learning). **Rewrites should be submitted directly to Dr. Elias’ email along with a copy of the original graded assignment - NOT submitted on CourseWeb.**

**Assignment Expectations:** Written assignments are limited to the number of pages noted in the course outline (excluding references), 1.5-spaced 1-inch margins, 12 point font; may be bulleted lists when appropriate. Please check for proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation and number agreement between nouns/verbs. All references should be cited correctly, and be consistent:

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

**Final Poster Presentation:** You will be assigned to a group for the *poster presentation*, which will cover a topic of the group’s choosing but *not* addressed by anyone in the group in the weekly assignments. Guidelines are provided on CourseWeb. Boards and easels will be provided. Bring your own push pins. **10 points of the 30 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 instructor or TA prior to the absence (if possible). You are responsible for getting notes from another student for any class you miss.

**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 and log in!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Competencies</th>
<th>Readings Due/Class Activities</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Rurality – J. Thompson  
Revisiting Social Ecological Framework  
In class: Remote Area Medical. | Social Ecological Framework (1 page)  
Outline at least three specific factors on at least four levels of the social ecological framework relevant for your weekly topic and make sure this includes at least one at the policy level [Comp K12] |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Oct 4</td>
<td>Methods 1 – Select quantitative and qualitative data methods appropriate for a given public health context</td>
<td><em>Overview of systems level thinking – J. Thompson</em> Guest speakers TBA Social networking analysis Multi-level modeling Spatial analysis Agent based modeling</td>
<td>Team Topics Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7    | Oct. 11 | Methods 2 – Analyze qualitative data using appropriate strategies. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy and practice. | Ulin et al, 2005 pp 22-30 | Corburn, J. (2002). Combining community-based research and local knowledge to confront asthma and subsistence-fishing hazards...
Yonas, Burke et al. (2009) |
<p>|      |      | [Comp 2, 3, 4] | Behavioral and psychological factors (1 page) | Identify behavioral and psychological factors related to your weekly topic (ref theories) [COMP K9] |
|      |      | [Comp 3, 4] | *Reflective comments due |
|      |      | [Comp 7] | Methods (2pp) | • Outline the method or methods you would use for your project – include recruitment, sampling, data collection strategy |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Nov 10</th>
<th>Nov 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships to influence public health outcomes</td>
<td><strong>Needs Assessment</strong> (1 page)</td>
<td><strong>Reflective comments due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design and implementation of public health policies and programs</td>
<td><strong>SMART objectives – use for planning and evaluation of process and outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>In-class quiz on stakeholders and cultural values</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Comp 2, 3, 4]</td>
<td>[Comp 7]</td>
<td>[Comp 8, 13]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lantz, PM, Viruell-Fuentes, E, Israel, BA, Softley, D &amp; Guzman, R. (2001). Can communities and academia work together on public health research? Evaluation results from a community-based participatory research partnership in Detroit. <em>Journal of Urban Health</em>, 78(3): 495-507.</td>
<td><strong>Shifting from research to program planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>In class exercise writing SMART objectives (Lead)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CDC .(2010). Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (Change); Building a Foundation of Knowledge to Prioritize Community Needs</strong> <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/stitpublichealth/cha/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/stitpublichealth/cha/index.html</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PLUS qualitative analysis sample (1p)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referring to additional assignment guidelines. (1p)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BCHS 2509 Fall 2017**

**Social and Behavioral Sciences and Public Health**

**Syllabus**

**Page 10**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Have an outstanding Thanksgiving weekend!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 29</td>
<td>Evaluation (revisited) and Advocacy</td>
<td>Additional readings TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SMART objectives/Evaluation Plan (2 pages)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify at least two SMART process and two outcome (impact) objectives for each main component of a planned intervention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe the components of your evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>In-class exam</td>
<td>Study, folks, study!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAPP**
*Precede-Proceed*

*Build evaluation into plans!*
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td>Poster presentation</td>
<td>Details in CourseWeb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poster, Peer Ratings