

# Essentials of Public Health PUBHLT2011

Spring semester, 2014  
Weds & Thurs 5:30-6:50  
Graduate School of Public Health, lecture hall G-23

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## Course Description

*Official Pitt catalog description. The course provides GSPH students enrolled in MS and PhD degree programs with an introduction and overview of the scope and history of Public Health, as well as core concepts in Public Health not covered in the core Epidemiology and Biostatistics courses.*

Welcome to PUBHLT2011, *Essentials of Public Health*. We are looking forward to working with you to achieve the goals of our course. This single three-credit course is aimed at meeting the Public Health educational needs of non-MPH GSPH degree students that were formerly provided by other courses totaling twelve credits. It is now in its seventh year and has continued to be revised. Your involvement in evaluating the course contents and goals, and in helping us improve the course, is always welcome.

## Course Rationale

GSPH is accredited by the Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) as an institution authorized to offer the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree. Part of that accreditation requires us to provide instruction in Public Health to all our students, not just those enrolled in the MPH. We recognize that any student receiving a degree from GSPH should be familiar with the essential core concepts and knowledge base of the overall field of Public Health. The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction and overview of the scope and history of Public Health, as well as core concepts in Public Health not covered in the core epidemiology and biostatistics courses, to those GSPH graduate students not receiving an MPH degree. **This course is required for all GSPH students who are not enrolled in the MPH program, or do not already have an MPH from a CEPH-**

**accredited institution in the USA.** Other students are welcome to enroll in this course, although permission from the Course Director is required.

All students graduating from GSPH are now entitled to sit the *Certified in Public Health* (CPH) exam, offered by the National Board of Public Health Examiners. While not a test preparation course, PUBHLT2011 is intended, along with the core epidemiology and biostatistics courses, to provide non-MPH GSPH students with enough material to enable them to achieve a passing grade in the CPH exam.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define the scope of Public Health
- Describe historical foundations of Public Health and relate them to contemporary issues in Public Health
- Describe the major determinants of ill health, and the role of population and community-based approaches in health issues
- Be conversant with the core curriculum and central concepts of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, Environmental and Occupational Health, and Health Policy and Management; as well as have knowledge pertinent to human genetics and infectious disease
- Be familiar with the interface between Public Health science and policy, and the role of Public Health science in protecting the health of the public
- Recognize the integration of disciplines and the multi-disciplinary collaboration necessary to address the multiple determinants of health
- Understand the design and evaluation of a Public Health intervention.

### **Required Materials:**

There is no required textbook for the course. A good overview of Public Health can be found in any of:

- *Introduction to Public Health*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed, by Schneider (Jones & Bartlett, 2013)
- *Essentials of Public Health*, by Turnock (Jones & Bartlett, 2007)
- *Introduction to Public Health*, by Goldsteen, Goldsteen, and Graham (Springer, 2011)
- *Principles of Public Health Practice*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed, by Scutchfield and Keck (Delmar Cengage, 2009)

Please note, however, that it is **not a requirement** that you purchase any of these books. Reading materials, including primary literature, case reports, or other publications, will be placed on Courseweb as required by the instructors.

### **Course Expectations & Requirements:**

This course can be considered in three main sections. In the first part, we will consider the history of the concept of Public Health, the way in which it is organized and delivered in the USA, and some of its notable successes and ongoing challenges. We will also have a workshop devoted to the end-of-semester project and logic model.

The middle part of the course will consist of guest presentations from faculty in the departments of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences (BCHS), Environmental and Occupational Health (EOH), and Health Policy and Management (HPM), who will give overviews of the work of their departments and disciplines. Core information and concepts about BCHS, HPM, and EOH are a necessary part of the class, and integration of this core information with epidemiology and biostatistics will be essential, however core epidemiology and biostatistics will not be formally taught.

The final part of the course will integrate many of the concepts covered in the previous two parts, and show how they come together in the field of Public Health practice. This section will feature guest presenters from institutions involved in Public Health practice, such as the Allegheny County Health Department.

- **Assignments and Projects:** The final project is a major component of this course. Each student will work on a project that will be written up as a presentation at the end of the semester, but due to time constraints it will not be possible for you to present these in class. These presentation topics must focus on integration of concepts and information. The subjects must have a breadth of content that takes the student beyond one particular public health discipline. For each project, you will design a Public Health action or intervention that will include recommendations for assessment, assurance, and policy development. (Note: the project and its evaluation are to be designed but not performed). Student projects are an important part of the course as they allow you to demonstrate your understanding of Public Health. Optimally, the project will provide you with the opportunity to explore the broader Public Health aspects of your MS or PhD research topic, but you are welcome to choose a different topic for your intervention if you prefer. Your project will vary depending upon your interests and will require discussion with your faculty mentor. You must include a “logic model” that will provide an overview of the expected inputs, outputs and outcomes of your proposed project. More information about logic models and Public Health Interventions will be provided during the course.

Your faculty mentor will usually be from your own department. By the end of January, you must email the title and/or a brief (one paragraph at the most) description of the proposed project to Dr Martinson and your Faculty Mentor. By the end of February you must email an annotated outline of the proposed project by to these individuals. These two documents will not be graded, although points from the final grade may be deducted for late submission – their purpose is to allow your mentor to provide feedback to you.

Your final project documents must be submitted electronically by March 31st. These documents will consist of an annotated Power Point presentation, using the speaker's notes section to provide supporting information for each slide figure, and a one-page logic model that summarizes the intervention. Due to the increased enrollment in this course we will not have time for in-class presentations. Further guidance as to the logistics of the presentations will be given during the course.

- **Attendance:** Attendance is expected. If you have professional obligations that prevent you from attending certain classes, please let the Course Director know in advance.
- **Examinations:** The examination format will be aimed at providing reinforcement to the overall goals and content of the course. There will be two midterms and one final exam. The first midterm will be an in-class, closed book multiple choice question (MCQ) format, and the second midterm will be a take-home, open-book longer essay format. The final exam will be an online MCQ format administered through Courseweb. The purpose of the two MCQ exams is partly to familiarize the students with the style and content of the recently introduced Certified in Public Health exam, which GSPH students are eligible to take towards the conclusion of their degree program.
- **Deadlines:** The key deadlines for the Public Health Intervention are at the end of each month throughout the course. The title and/or a brief description of the PHI is due by January 31<sup>st</sup>; a detailed abstract is due by February 28<sup>th</sup>; and all additional materials are due by March 31<sup>st</sup>. The in-class midterm will be on February 6<sup>th</sup>, and the take-home midterm will be assigned on March 6<sup>th</sup>, with answers due back by March 19<sup>th</sup>. The online exam will be made available during Finals Week.
- **Class participation:** Many of the course material can best be presented in a discussion format, rather than a didactic lecture. Please be prepared to discuss each week's topic, particularly by reading any material that is posted on Courseweb before class.

## Grading

This course is letter-graded A (90-100%), B (80-89.9%), C (70-79.9%), and F (below 70%). Grades are based upon examinations, project/presentation, and participation, including attendance at lectures and answering of questions related to the reading. Failure to submit an acceptable project will result in a failing grade.

The grading components are weighted as follows:

<i>Component</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Midterm exam 1 (MCQ)	10%
Midterm exam 2 (essay)	35%
Final exam (MCQ)	10%
Final project	35%
Attendance/participation	10%

## Course Modules:

The precise order of these modules will be determined by the availability of the instructors. A full schedule will be posted soon.

- **Introduction.** In the first week of the course, classes are intended to give you an introduction to the course itself and to the field of Public Health. In the first class we will introduce the course, go over the administration of the course and final projects, then have an overview of the ASPH definitions of Public Health and its components. The second class will review of the history of public health, from early concepts of contagion and miasma to the current status of the field in the USA.
- **The context of Public Health.** This module will review the legislative framework in which the Public Health system operates, and will also include a discussion on the past and present controversies within the field of Public Health.
- **Public Health successes and challenges.** This module will consider recent achievements in Public Health, including the CDC's ten great Public Health successes of the 20th century, and will conclude with a consideration of the challenges that face us in the 21st century.
- **Behavioral and Community Health Sciences.** Dr Martha Terry will give two presentations on the work of her department and on methods in community-based participatory research.
- **Ethical Practice in Public Health.** Dr Maggie Potter, Director of the Center for Public Health Practice, will discuss public health practice and ethics.
- **Community-Based Public Health research.** Dr Tony Silvestre of the Department of Infectious Diseases & Microbiology will discuss the importance of community

participation in the research process, with particular reference to the work of the Pitt Men's Study, a leading example of public health research work within the community.

- **Health Policy and Management.** Prof Beaufort Longest will discuss the policymaking process, and Dr Wes Rohrer will give two presentations, one on Organization Theory and Management and the other on leadership.
- **Health Communication.** Dr Elizabeth Felter, of the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, will discuss effective methods of communication in the context of health-related information.
- **Environmental and Occupational Health.** Prof Bernie Goldstein will cover core environmental health concepts, including the toxicological basis for the health effects of external chemical and physical agents, and the fundamentals of risk assessment and risk management, including the role of risk communication and of community involvement. Dr Goldstein will also give a lecture on Environmental Justice and hydraulic "fracking".
- **Global Health.** Dr Joanne Russell, of the Center for Global Health, will discuss many of the greatest Global Health challenges of the 21st century.
- **Environmental Health in southwest Pennsylvania.** This module will include a documentary made by former GSPH faculty on the 1948 Donora smog incident and the emergence of environmental health legislation. This will be followed by a discussion of the impact of the southwest Pennsylvania region on Environmental Health through out the 20th and 21st centuries.
- **Public Health in Action: Genetic Counseling.** Dr Betsy Gettig, from the Dept. of Human Genetics, will present a module on *Modern Genetics and Public Health*.
- **Public Health in Action: Community interventions.** Dr Martha Terry will return to discuss a community-based intervention she led, aimed at condom use and HIV prevention.
- **Public Health in Action: State and local Health Departments.** Dr Ron Voorhees, former Director of the Allegheny County Health Department, will give a class on the realities of Public Health work.
- **Public Health in Action: Community-Based Participatory Research.** Dr Jeannette Trauth, of the Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, will talk about her use of behavioral health models in Public Health research.

### Important Dates:

<b>January 31<sup>st</sup></b>	Public Health Intervention title/brief description submission date
<b>February 6<sup>th</sup></b>	In-class midterm exam
<b>February 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Public Health Intervention detailed abstract submission date
<b>March 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Take-home midterm exam handed out
<b>March 19<sup>th</sup></b>	Take-home midterm exam answers due
<b>March 31<sup>st</sup></b>	Public Health Intervention final submission date
<b>April 23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup></b>	Finals week – online exam

## **University Policies:**

**Academic Integrity.** Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

**Disability Services.** If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

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## **Statement on Classroom Recording**

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.