

Occidental College  
Urban and Environmental Policy (UEP)  
1882 Campus Road, Los Angeles, CA 90041

**UEP 307 - Public Health Practicum  
Spring 2020**

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Office Hours: By appointment  
Office: UEP 103  
Classroom: UEP/I Conference Room  
Class Hours: Mondays from 7:15 pm to 10 pm **or** 6:30 pm to 9:15 pm  
Practicum Hours: 8 hours per week (excluding travel time). Times vary by location.

**Course Description:**

UEP 307 Public Health Practicum is designed to provide students with real-world experiences to develop new skills and enhance insights into multiple health issues, concerns and community based solutions. We will also discuss local, state and federal health policy issues.

Public health is a vast field which includes many focus areas such as health education, policy, environmental health, epidemiology, maternal child health, and nutrition. Under supervision of the course instructor and in collaboration with a community proctor, students will partner with a health focused non-profit organization, community clinic, or government agency to develop mutually beneficial community-based learning project(s). During the course of the internship, students can expect to be active collaborators in improving the health of the community in the service area of our partner agencies by identifying and linking community members to health, legal and social service resources; developing health education materials and classes; facilitating trainings and workshops on healthy lifestyles; and helping to address any community identified health issues.

The combination of the community health engagement experience, class discussions, reflection sessions, reading materials and journal entries will help students reflect on the complexities of keeping communities healthy, and what is required to implement and support preventive approaches especially in under-resourced, under-served communities. Students should expect to spend 8 hours a week at their internship sites. *Prerequisite: UEP 203 Introduction to Public Health or UEP 295 Global Public Health*

**Course Aims:**

UEP 307 Public Health Practicum has six (6) specific aims:

1. To introduce you to myriad areas of public health and allow you to put theory to practice.

2. To challenge you to think critically about the social, cultural and systemic barriers to health.
3. To provide a unique opportunity for you to work alongside other health and social service practitioners such as community health promoters, and collaborate together to develop culturally relevant interventions.
4. To nurture your leadership, problem solving, inclusive decision making and teamwork skills.
5. To encourage you to develop a healthy curiosity about the diverse Los Angeles communities and develop respectful relationships and networks.
6. To help you to identify any specific areas of interests, this can lead to a clearer pathway into graduate school or public health profession.

### **Course Agreements & Expectations:**

To ensure that all of us have the best possible learning experiences, let us mutually agree to bring our whole selves to class, to the internship and to any place where we gather to learn and reflect. Life happens and sometimes you or I will be late to class, or be late with an assignment. I will not know that you are facing any challenges unless you tell me. If you are unavoidably delayed, sick or have any reason to miss class or an assignment, it is your responsibility to tell me as soon as possible.

As the course instructor, I propose that it is useful to have clear and specific expectations from the first day of class. These expectations are not meant to impose any undue hardship on you but are meant to support a respectful and professional learning environment for all of us, and for the community partners and members we will be collaborating with. I encourage you to consider that your display of professionalism during this course, from being timely to communicating clearly and effectively, can have bearing on your future professional life. If you cannot meet any of the course expectations or need further clarification, please ask!

This course provides an important opportunity for students to experience a slice of the public health world through its community and class based aspects. As a student enrolled in UEP 307 please know that you will be expected to:

1. Attend and participate fully in all classes, internship, field trips and projects. Missed days without proper justification will be marked down 0.5 points for each day.
2. Your internship and class attendance count towards your grade so please let me know within 24-hours if you have missed an internship day.
3. Submit all assignments in a timely manner; late submissions without proper justification will be marked down 0.5 points for each day they are late.
4. Dress appropriately - business casual attire and closed toed shoes are a requirement at all times, at all the internship sites.
5. Contact the community proctor by phone ASAP if you will be late to your internship.
6. Avoid using your cell phones to take/make any personal calls/text or browse the internet while you are in class or at your internship. If you absolutely have to take/make an urgent call, please step outside of the classroom.

**Grading (Total 100 points):**

40% Internship attendance & participation and community proctor evaluation

25% Class attendance and participation, communication and presentation

20% Final class paper

15% Satisfactory completion of reflection journals (minimum 3 pages per entry)

**Guidelines for your 12-paged, double spaced final class paper:**

✍ Project paper Sections 1&2 Organizational Background, Community Profile and Health Needs Assessment (**DUE** 2/11/20 at 7 pm PST by email): Describe the organizational history of your internship host site. Include why it was established and by whom; how it currently operates; the members of their board; what services it offers; its current service area; and how it is financially supported to provide these services. Then describe any social, cultural and systemic barriers to health that are faced by community members living in the service area. Start by sharing the community profile of the organization's service area; include a demographic profile and data (with citations) on the health status of the community. What barriers do community members face in trying to stay healthy? What services does the organization currently provide to remove some of these barriers? And what gaps remain? (4 to 5 pages)

✍ Project paper Section 3 Designed Health Project (**DUE** 3/24/20 at 7 pm PST by email): What have you done so far at the internship site? Describe at least one relevant activity and/or product that you have developed/designed, and as importantly describe the process of development and share what skill sets you applied (teamwork, problem solving, negotiation skills etc.) What health need did the activity/product meet? In addition, how are you interacting with 1) organizational staff and 2) community members/clients, and how have these interactions influenced your view of public health? (3 to 4 pages)

✍ Final comprehensive project paper (**DUE** 4/28/20 at 7 pm PST by e-mail or bring it to our last class). Combine sections 1, 2, 3 and 4, into one paper which provides a comprehensive overview of your public health practicum. Incorporate any edits and recommendations which I have shared and focus Section 4 on Evaluation and Recommendations. Describe your overall internship experience, and include at least one highlight and one challenge. 1. What can the organization do better to improve the learning experiences of future public health practicum students? 2. How can future students better prepare to support the organization and its community? 3. And what can the organization do to provide better or different services to the community members living in its service area (which you profiled in the first section of your paper)? When answering # 3, please research and cite other documented community based practices/research implemented by similar programs in the nation. (4 to 5 pages)

**Note: Please cite your references using footnotes at the bottom of each page.**

**Journal entry assignments:** Please hand write (legibly) in your journals (minimum 3 pages per entry) and bring them to class or drop it off in my mailbox at UEP.

Journal question #1 (**DUE** 1/28/20): Please share your hopes and expectations for this course. Include what experiences & skills you'd like to bring to the sites and what you would like to learn.

Journal question #2 (**DUE** 2/25/20) Please write a journal entry on the first month of your internship – share any highlights and challenges, how you are working with the community proctor, staff and with the community clients. What are you learning about yourself?

Journal question #3 (**DUE** 3/31/20): Reflect on an event/situation that occurred during your internship. This can be something you observed or it can be something that you were directly involved in. In your journal entry 1) describe the event/situation; 2) what do you think was the root cause? 3) how did you or others around the event feel about it; 4) what did you, or what was the first thing that you considered doing; and 5) did the class material/discussion/meetings so far, relate to this issue and help suggest a course of action or a related public policy that can affect the issue?

Journal question #4 (**DUE** 4/21/20): Think about where you grew up or where you currently live, Occidental College in Eagle Rock & Highland Park. Is access to basic health information, health care and preventive health needs (such as flu shots, healthy food, places to exercise etc.) something that you did not need to think twice about? Was it simply there when you needed it? You probably knew where to go, were able to communicate, and had the resources to access what you needed within a span of days or weeks. During your internship you have encountered racial and ethnic health disparities\* in working with community members; Latinos who bear disproportionate rates of diabetes; limited English proficient and low-literacy persons who need help to understand and properly manage their chronic disease; individuals and families at risk of losing their homes due to unemployment, sometimes as a consequence of illness; individuals and families who are in need of help to secure the most basic resources such as food; persons of color who live in neighborhoods that are under-resourced and do not have the appropriate infrastructure or investments in affordable housing, healthy grocery stores, safe parks, transportation etc.; institutions that are not fully staffed or equipped to serve changing populations in their community; institutional data collection which is not sufficiently disaggregated to accurately portray the needs of all of its diverse residents; and on and on.

Sociologist Allan G. Johnson proposes that privilege is not about whom we are as individual people; privilege is not a thing that can be given or taken from you or me. Privilege is unearned and tied to social categories, often conferred to those in dominant groups whether they want it or not. Being a public health student from a prestigious institution

such as Occidental College conveys both power and privilege. Please read Chapter 1 of Johnson's book, the article by Michael Spencer, and the interview with Dr. Camara Jones, then reflect on your internship experiences this summer, also share how these experiences will/can influence your role in reducing health disparities as future public health practitioners.

Article links:

<https://unnaturalcauses.org/assets/uploads/file/camarajones.pdf>

<http://bit.ly/1tH5ON3>

<http://bit.ly/1OZFJa8>

*\*Defined by US DHHS as "as affecting groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion."*

**Readings include one of the following books and articles which will be assigned weekly.**

Otto, M. Teeth: *The story of beauty, inequality and the struggle for oral health in America.* New York: The New Press, 2017.

Fadiman, A. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.

Skloot, R. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.* New York: Random House, 2011.