

Spring 2019—SYLLABUS
UEP 203, Section 1
Introduction to Public Health

Course description: This course provides a practical and equity-focused approach to the fundamentals of public health. It is organized into two sections: Public Health Fundamentals and Public Health in Practice. The first section covers key concepts in public health: the ecological model of health, history of public health, controversial issues in public health, social determinants of health, biostatistics, epidemiology, and biomedical sciences. The second section of the course, Public Health in Practice focuses on several areas of current public health practice. Students will appreciate how politics and policymaking are inherent to public health in action; they will gain perspective on the range of programs that public health practitioners implement in order to improve health; they will understand that well-designed and conducted research underlie public health work; finally, students will recognize how movements for change have advanced and continue to advance achievement toward public health goals.

Course objectives

- 1) Appreciate that health problems are located within an influential larger context of social, political and economic forces
- 2) Gain exposure to the achievements and failures of public health and the ongoing controversies facing public health
- 3) Introduce **public health fundamentals** such as epidemiology and social determinants of health and **public health in action** through a focused examination of four public health action areas (politics, programs, research, and movements for change)
- 4) Apply public health principles to health problems and develop strategies to address public health problems

Instructor

Jane Schmitz, PhD

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Office hours Tue and Thurs 12 – 1:00 pm UEP Room #104 and by appointment

[323-341-4005](tel:323-341-4005) or x4005

Class meeting and location: Tues & Thurs 1:30- 2:55 pm, Fowler 309

Required textbook: Mary Jane Schneider. Introduction to Public Health. 5th edition.

Evaluation criteria

Your final grade will be divided among class participation (15%), small assignments (25%), midterm exam (30%) and final take home assignment (30%).

Criteria	Description	Percent of final grade	Due
Class participation	<p><i>Debate</i> You will engage in a structured debate on the following topic: “Resolved: food stamps should not be used to buy junk food or sugary drink.”</p> <p><i>Public health news groups</i> Select one news story and discuss the following questions: What is the health issue being discussed? Where is this happening and what populations are most impacted? Why is this story particularly compelling? What more do you want to find out about this story? How do you all feel about the story and/or its coverage: disagree/agree, support/reject, understand/remain confused, believe/disbelieve?</p> <p><i>Scientific presentation</i> You will be part of a mock scientific team that will interpret and present results of public health on air pollution and health.</p> <p><i>In-class discussions</i> You are expected to participate in day-in, day-out class conversations and pose questions most importantly to guest lecturers. We will have an in-class discussion of Unnatural Causes.</p>	15	<p><i>Debate 3/26</i></p> <p><i>Public health news groups ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Scientific presentations 4/16 & 4/18</i></p>
Small assignments		25	
	<p><i>Personal essay</i> From among the Health People 2020 topics listed at www.healthpeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives, choose the health problem of most relevance or interest to you. In two pages, reflect on the roots of your personal interest in public health and in that specific health problem. How has public health touched your life? Via a personal or family health crisis? Via travel around the U.S. or outside the U.S.? Via your parent’s occupations? Via experiences of your friends?</p>	(20)	1/31
	<p><i>Epidemiology Problem Set</i> Design a study to explore loneliness and health on the Occidental College campus. Clearly state a scientific question (1 sentence) and a hypothesis (1 sentence) based on that scientific question. Provide one to two background paragraphs on the health problem. Propose a study design to test your hypothesis.</p>	(40)	2/21
	<p><i>Field Trip Reflection</i> Reflect on the LA Regional Food Bank field trip; what is one surprising aspect of the trip; describe the role that food banks play in fighting food insecurity in the U.S. Do Food Banks also play a role in anti-hunger policy advocacy? Why are Food Banks stake holders in the policy issue area of proposed changes to public charge? What is their position on the proposed changes to Public Charge? (1-2 pages)</p>	(40)	4/30
Midterm	This in-class exam will cover materials presented in the first half of the semester and it will be composed of multiple choice, short answer and an essay.	30	3/7
Take home final exam	There will be two sections to the exam: 1) description of a public health crisis scenario to which you need to evaluate several potential interventions and 2) short answers covering the second half of the semester.	30	

Course schedule

Day	Date	Topic	Notes
PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDAMENTALS			
Tue	1/22	What is public health? Introduction to the course	
Thu	1/24	Public health models for understanding and action	
Tue	1/29	Biostatistics	
Thu	1/31	Introduction to viruses and vaccines, <i>Cheryl Okumura</i>	Essay due
Tue	2/5	Accessing public health data and information: library workshop, <i>Andrew LaFave</i>	
Thu	2/7	Epidemiology I: individual determinants of disease & screening tests	
Tue	2/12	Epidemiology II: risk factors & study design	
Thu	2/14	Epidemiology III: challenges in collecting evidence	
Tue	2/19	Medical care and public health; health care reform	
Thu	2/21	Controversy in public health	Epi problem set due
Tue	2/26	History of public health, part I	
Thu	2/28	History of public health, part II	
Tue	3/5	Social determinants of health: where we live, discussion of Unnatural Causes	
Thu	3/7	Mid-term exam	
Tue	3/12	SPRING BREAK	
Thurs	3/14	SPRING BREAK	
PUBLIC HEALTH IN PRACTICE			
Tue	3/19	Practice example #1: Politics & Policy, Childhood obesity	
Thu	3/21	Practice example #1: Politics & Policy, Childhood obesity	
Tue	3/26	Debate: “Resolved: food stamps should not be used to buy junk food or sugary drink.”	
Thu	3/28	Practice example #2: Programs, HIV/AIDS	
Tue	4/2	Practice example #2: Programs, HIV/AIDS	
Thu	4/4	Practice example #3: Research, Air pollution	
Tue	4/9	Pathways in Public Health, <i>Julie Hudman</i>	
Thu	4/11	Health care delivery in Los Angeles, <i>Julie Hudman</i>	
Tue	4/16	Practice example #3: Research, Air pollution	
Thu	4/18	Practice example #3: Research, Air pollution	
Tue	4/23	Practice example #4: Movements for change, Public health campaigns in the Trump Era	
Thu	4/25	Practice example #4: Movements for change: Public health campaigns in the Trump Era	Field trip, 11:30 am to 3:00 pm
Tue	4/30	Wrap-up & introduction to take home assignment	Field trip reflection due
		Final assignment due	

Session Learning Objectives and Readings

Part I: Public Health Fundamentals

1/22 *What is public health?*

Learning objectives

- 1) Introduce definitions of public health, current examples of public health in action and key actors in the public health system
- 2) Describe our nation's most pressing public health challenges; compare the U.S. to other nations and explore sub-national health statistics; examine trends in key health outcomes and risk factors
- 3) Introduce ourselves and describe the course requirements

1/24 *Public health models for learning and action*

Learning objectives

- 1) Become familiar with two important models for thinking and acting in public health
- 2) Apply these models to several public health problems

1/29 *Biostatistics*

Learning objectives

- 1) Appreciate how widely statistics is used in public health
- 2) Learn how statistics help public health deal with inherent uncertainty of data
- 3) Introduce the concept of 'rates' and why they are so widely used to describe and understand data
- 4) Understand some of the sources of data in public health and why we need data to drive public health discovery and action

1/31 *Introduction to viruses and vaccines, Cheryl Okumura*

Learning objectives

- 1) Approach a new and complex topic in basic science and appreciate its connection to advancing public health.

2/5 *Library workshop, Andrew LaFave*

Learning objectives

- 1)

2/7 *Epidemiology I*

Learning objectives

- 1) Introduce the definition of epidemiology and deepen understanding via examples of epidemiology in practice.
- 2) Explore individual determinants of disease
- 3) Using the breast cancer BRCA gene test as an example, understand the epidemiology of diagnostic and screening tests

2/12 *Epidemiology II*

Learning objectives

- 1) Describe the process at the core of epidemiological investigation: forming a scientific question, generating a hypothesis and designing a study.
- 1) Discuss the concepts of risk and risk factors

2/14 *Epidemiology III*

Learning objectives

- 1) Discern the difference between an association and a causal relationship
- 2) Gain an understanding of the challenges of bias and confounding

2/19 Medical care and public health; health care reform

Learning objectives

- 1) Outline the organization of the health care and public health systems—institutions and structures of health care and public health systems
- 2) Appreciate the distinct roles and complementary responsibilities of health care and public health systems
- 3) Understand the mechanisms, including insurance systems, for paying for health services.

2/21 Controversies in public health; the role of government

Learning objectives

- 1) Introduce the broad powers of public health and the tension between individual liberties and public health
- 2) Explore why vaccination programs are controversial

2/26 Public health history, I

Learning objectives

- 1) Appreciate the major achievements and failures of public health in the recent era
- 2) Consider the main attributes of key eras in the public health history and acknowledge how public health mirrors it's societal context over time
- 3) Confront two unethical public health studies: Tuskegee Study on Syphilis and Guatemala

2/28 History of public health, II

- 1) Explore evolution of stricter ethical guidelines overseeing public health research
- 2) Examine the influence of political and economic forces over adequate protection of the public against lead poisoning.

3/5 Social determinants of health: Where we live

Learning objectives

- 1) Detail the social and social environmental factors that are key determinants of health
- 2) Discuss how the topics, people and places presented in Unnatural Causes relate to the social determinants of health
- 3) Explore the biological pathway between stress and poor health
- 4) Examine the life and death of Freddie Gray as a case study in social determinants of health—and the role of lead poisoning in hindering child development.

3/7 MIDTERM

Part II: Public Health in Practice

3/19 Politics & Policy: Obesity

Learning objectives

- 1) Attempt to match the scientific consensus on the causes of obesity with the political and policymaking reality.
- 2) Describe the actors and stake holders forces shaping obesity-related policymaking.

3/21 Politics & Policy: Obesity

Learning objectives

- 1) Learn the history and basic features of the federal food programs that aim to prevent child undernutrition as well as child obesity
- 2) Explore in depth the federal School Lunch Program and the complex negotiations surrounding this Program

3/26 Debate: “Resolved: food stamps should not be used to buy junk food or sugary drink.”

Learning objectives

- 1) Thoroughly consider both sides of a volatile public health issue

- 2) Gather and package facts on debate topic and develop debate strategy
- 3) Work in teams in a fast-paced situation

3/28 Programs: HIV/AIDS

Learning objectives

- 1) Introduce the HIV/AIDS virus and global, national and local epidemiological trends.
- 2) Analyze options for HIV/AIDS interventions using a framework including *when, who, and how* to intervene.

4/2 Programs: HIV/AIDS

Learning objectives

- 1) Become familiar with the HIV/AIDS epidemic among people who inject drugs.
- 2) Analyze two very different approaches to HIV prevention among people who inject drugs (Indiana vs Vancouver).
- 3) Appreciate powerful sociocultural and political forces influence public health programs.

4/4 Research, Air pollution

Learning objectives

- 1) Introduce the causes of and health consequences of air pollution.
- 2) Approach important steps to reporting scientific evidence

4/16 & 4/18 Research, air pollution

Learning objectives

- 1) Conduct critical reading of scientific journal articles on air pollution; identify the study design, data collection methods, discern the main results and the implications of the research. Identify possible limitations to the research.
- 2) Present a summary of the journal article to your classmates at a mock scientific conference.

4/23 Movements for change: Public health campaigns in the Trump Era

Learning objectives

- 1) Introduction to groups and coalitions who are uniting to oppose Trump Administration efforts to de-rail progress in public health

4/25 Movements for change: Public health campaigns in the Trump Era FIELD TRIP TO LA FOOD BANK

Learning objectives

- 1) Experience the reality of Food Bank functioning by doing hands-on volunteering at the LA Regional Food Bank
- 2) Reflect on the scope of need for food assistance in LA

4/30 Wrap-up & distribution of final assignment

FROM YOUR STUDENT HANDBOOK

Academic misconduct occurs when a student misrepresents others' work as her/his own or otherwise behaves so as to unfairly advantage her/himself or another student academically. Examples of misconduct include cheating and plagiarism and failure to report suspected academic misconduct. If misconduct occurs to any extent in connection with any academic work, it will be subject to disciplinary action.

Cheating Defined

Cheating occurs when a student attempts to complete or take credit for work by any dishonest means or assists another in doing so. Some examples of cheating include, but are not limited to, lying to obtain an academic advantage; copying from another's exam or assignment or collaborating on an exam or assignment, unless specifically allowed by the instructor; submitting the same work in more than one course without instructor permission; falsifying data collected in research or laboratory courses; taking or receiving copies of an exam without the permission of the instructor; and using notes or other information devices inappropriate to the test conditions.

Plagiarism Defined

Plagiarism occurs when the ideas, organization, or language of another are incorporated into one's work without properly crediting the original source with a citation or other disclosure. It includes re-writing or re-formatting material without acknowledging the original source of the ideas. Even if the language and organization are in the student's own words, any ideas or information that are not common knowledge must be acknowledged in a reference.

Students are responsible for knowing and using the correct procedures for acknowledging and identifying sources of borrowed material. Failure to properly credit sources in all or part of work presented in draft or final form to anyone is plagiarism, regardless of whether it occurs as a result of dishonest intent or carelessness and regardless of the course credit attached to it. As a student scholar, if you:

- Quote directly from a source: you must enclose the quoted material, even if it is no more than a phrase or a single distinctive word (such as a neologism), within quotation marks, and provide a reference.
- Paraphrase, i.e., restate the material in your own words: (a) the paraphrasing must represent a substantial change from the original, not just the changing of occasional words and phrases, and (b) you must provide a reference.
- Present material that is common knowledge, but borrow someone else's organizational pattern: you must acknowledge that borrowing in a reference.

<https://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics/academic-ethics>

THERE IS A WRITING CENTER AT OCCIDENTAL

Who We Are

We collaborate with students in one-to-one writing sessions to help them learn strategies to improve their writing. During our session, we will offer suggestions and pose questions that aim to provoke analysis of a student's own ideas, help them produce strong responses to course assignments, and assist a student's overall growth as a writer. We welcome students at any stage of the writing process, from generating ideas to final revision, and at any point in a student's academic career, from first semester through senior comprehensive projects or preparation for graduate school and fellowship applications.

What We Do

- Help unpack or figure out assignment prompts.
- Brainstorm ideas for writing assignments or tasks.
- Help organize or clarify ideas.
- Talk through and help strengthen a topic, a thesis, or an argument.
- Determine if claims or points need further development.
- Teach how to cite sources and correct documentation.
- Provide instruction in usage, grammar, and punctuation.
- Work with students on all types or genres of texts, including:
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