

PHC 6931
Seminar in Contemporary Public Health Issues
Time: Monday, 11:45AM-1:40 PM
Place: See Schedule
Credit: 1 credit

Description

This course is designed to provide a framework for students to integrate a variety of public health topics, issues, and skills into a culminating experience for the MPH program. The course is offered fall and spring with at least three, two-hour sessions in each semester. MPH students are required to attend eight of the sessions during their course of study, and to complete a major paper and a presentation during the final semester of the program. Since many students are not on campus during the final semester while they conduct their internships, it is wise to attend all sessions of this course early in the program. Each session consists of a one-hour presentation followed by one hour of discussion.

Objectives

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

1. Discuss selected interdisciplinary, cross-cutting issues in Public Health,
2. Explain the interrelationships among the five core areas of public health in a written paper and an oral presentation, and
3. Complete an MPH Portfolio documenting achievement of MPH and concentration competencies.

Specific learning objectives for each class session will be developed in collaboration with the speaker for that session and posted on the course website.

Content

During each two (2) year period, sessions will be offered on interdisciplinary topics considered essential to the contemporary practice of Public Health, such as:

- **Communication:** The ability to give, solicit and receive oral, written, graphic, and numerical information, taking into consideration target audience and using a variety of mechanisms in both formal and informal settings.
- **Diversity and Cultural Proficiency:** The ability to interact sensitively and professionally with individuals and communities with diverse characteristics.
- **Leadership:** The ability to create and communicate a shared vision for a better future, champion solutions to organizational and community challenges and energize commitment to goals.
- **Professionalism and Ethics:** The ability to demonstrate ethical choices, values and professional practices implicit in public health decisions, giving consideration to the

effect of choices on community stewardship, equity, social justice and accountability, as well as to commit to personal and institutional development.

- Program Planning and Assessment: The ability to design, develop, implement and evaluate strategies and interventions to improve individual and community health.
- Systems Thinking: The ability to recognize dynamic interactions among human and social systems and how they affect the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, and communities.

In addition to the above topics, sessions will be offered each semester on the role of workplace competencies in public health education, group process, and on developing a major paper which addresses, in part, the synergistic relationships among the public health concentrations. Students are required to attend the session on competencies and group process during their first semester and the session on the major paper during the semester before they undertake their special projects.

Attendance/Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Attend at least eight sessions during the course of the two year, 48-credit MPH program
- Attend the session on competencies during the first semester of the program
- Attend the session on major paper during the semester before beginning a special project
- Complete the required reading PRIOR to class
- Participate actively in the discussion of the topic after the presentation
- Register upon arrival at each session
- Be on time and stay until class is dismissed
- Turn off cell phones and pagers during class

Readings

Appropriate readings for each session will be announced two weeks prior to the session.

Readings will include published literature and online resources recommended by the scheduled speaker.

Registration

Students will register for 1 credit of PHC 6931 during the last semester in the MPH program.

Each student's Supervisory Committee Chair will serve as the instructor of record.

Major Paper and Presentations

Each student develops a scholarly paper based on a project undertaken as part of his/her internship. A substantial portion of this paper includes an in-depth discussion of the manner in which all five of the core disciplines and cross-cutting skills are involved in the project. Students are expected to use this opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the broad field of public health. The major paper must be approved by the supervisory committee chair before the student will be scheduled for a presentation.

An oral presentation based on the paper is made during a “Public Health Day” near the end of the student’s final semester in the program. The oral and written reports constitute the culminating experience in the MPH program.

Specific guidelines for developing the paper and presentation, meeting with supervisory chairs, and evaluating the presentation are distributed prior to commencement of the internship (during a PHC 6931 session).

Written reports should be 15-20 pages, exclusive of graphics and references. Oral reports should be 20 minutes in length, followed by a 10-minute question and answer period. Students should use appropriate audio/visual aids in the delivery of their reports. Oral presentations will be made during one or two “Public Health Days” at the end of each semester. The dates are announced at the beginning of each semester. Specific times for each presentation are posted no less than two weeks before Public Health Days. All students and preceptors are invited to attend. Three faculty members attend each presentation and provide feedback to the student and Supervisory Committee Chair.

Each report, both oral and written, is expected to include the following content:

Background

- Summary of critical literature
- Rationale and/or need for the project
- Objectives or specific aims

Description of methods

- Specific identification of methods used in needs assessments, policy analysis, epidemiological analysis, financial management, program planning, evaluation, etc., noting especially how methods of concentrations other than your own were used.

Results

Discussion

- Strengths and limitations
- Generalizability
- Relationship of this project and its results to practice or research within your concentration area (e.g., environmental health, epidemiology)

Implications

- Relationship of this project and its results to practice and research in the larger field of public health, focusing, as appropriate, on each of the other concentrations.
- Implications for social justice, equity, and other ethical concerns
- Identification of stakeholders and their involvement in the project; advantages and disadvantages of involvement
- Lessons learned from this project/recommendations for future projects

The quality of the content is assessed by a three faculty members representing different concentrations. In general, the project itself should demonstrate your ability to apply one or more of your concentration competencies. Your ability to integrate the MPH core competencies should be evident throughout the paper and presentation. For example, a project may involve

biostatistical analysis and an epidemiological research design to produce results that will inform policy decisions.

A few weeks before Public Health Days, students are given opportunities to practice their presentations. They may receive feedback on the content as well as the following characteristics that will be evaluated during the presentations:

Presentation style:

- Energy/enthusiasm
- Appropriate body movements
- Voice projection
- Inflection
- Appropriate eye contact
- Avoidance of “um,” “ah,” etc.
- Ability to hold the attention of the audience
- Appropriate drama

Delivery methods:

- Organization of the material
- Clarity of delivery
- Appropriate use of time
- Appropriate audio-visual materials

Students are expected to consult regularly with their Supervisory Chairs and Preceptors as they develop their reports. At a minimum, students should have a meeting with the supervisory chair at mid term to evaluate progress and decide on subsequent meetings.

Faculty

Guest experts, faculty of the MPH program, the College of Public Health and Health Professions, and other Health Science colleges at UF will contribute to the class sessions. Timely and relevant Internet broadcasts from outside UF will also be presented. Students will work closely with their supervisory committee chairs and internship preceptors to develop their major papers and presentations.

Grading

The course uses the standard letter grade format of the University of Florida. In order to receive a grade for the course, students MUST 1) attend eight seminar sessions, including the required sessions on public health competencies, group process, and the major paper and presentation, 2) submit a major paper, and 3) present the key elements of the paper during an oral presentation. A letter grade for the course is derived from the paper, based on the content identified above, (60%), oral presentation (30%), and attention to guidance from supervisory chair and preceptor (10%).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

To obtain academic accommodations, first register with the Dean of Students' Office. The Dean of Students' Office will provide documentation to be given to the course instructor at the time

you request the accommodation. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students' coursework.

Academic Integrity/Honesty Statement

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida Honor Code, which recognizes that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Cheating or plagiarism in any form is not acceptable.

Schedule

Three or four seminars will be scheduled at regular intervals during each of the fall and spring semesters. Schedules are posted on the MPH Website.