PHC 6601
Seminar in Contemporary Public Health Issues
Fall Semester Thursday, 11:45AM-1:40 PM, according to schedule
Spring Semester, Monday, 11:45AM-1:40PM, according to schedule
Location: TBA per schedules
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 3-6 one-hour sessions in each semester. MPH students are required to attend 16 contact hours of the sessions during their course of study, to complete a major paper and a presentation during the final semester of the program, and to complete the MPH Exit Survey. 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. Seminar sessions consist of a mix of themed topics and required MPH program professional development programs each semester.

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
3. Discuss the MPH and concentration competencies that have been strengthened through the special project
4. Complete an MPH portfolio documenting achievement of MPH and concentration competencies
5. Present a complete project undertaken during the internship in written and oral form, thus strengthening competence in communication.

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

Content
Seminar sessions are offered on public health issues that include 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.

Sessions are offered each semester on the role of MPH and concentration competencies in public health education, developing a major paper and presentation, academic integrity, selecting an internship and special project, Institutional Review Board requirements on research involving human subjects, interviewing skills, and resume construction. Some of these sessions are required of new students and students in the semester preceding their internships. Required sessions are identified on the seminar schedule for each semester.

Requirements
To receive a grade for PHC 6601, students must meet the following requirements:
- Attend at least 16 one hour seminar sessions during the course of the MPH Program
- Attend all required seminar sessions
- Attend 6, thirty minute Public Health Day presentations by other students during the semesters before their own internships; at least 2 sessions in the student’s own concentration
- Present the Special Project in written and oral form on Public Health Day
- Complete the online MPH Exit Survey

Behavioral Expectations
Students are expected to behave professionally throughout his course. Examples of professional behavior include:
- Completing required reading PRIOR to class
- Participating 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 seminar sessions will be announced prior to the session. Readings will include published literature and online resources recommended by the scheduled speaker.

Registration
Students will register for one credit of PHC 6601 during the last semester in the MPH program. Each student’s faculty advisor 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. Written reports should be 15-20 pages, exclusive of graphics and references. The major paper must be approved by the faculty advisor two weeks before the student will be scheduled for a presentation. Specific guidelines for developing the paper and presentation, meeting with Faculty Advisors, and evaluating the presentation are distributed prior to commencement of the internship (during a PHC 6601 session).

Students must submit their drafts and final paper to the Assignment link on the eLearning course site at http://lss.at.ufl.edu. This submission will validate the originality of the paper. Students should make all resubmissions of their paper via this same link. Students must also turn in a hard copy of their final paper to their faculty advisor and a disk to the Program Assistant containing both the paper and a one-page abstract. On Public Health Day students are expected to bring several copies of their abstract to their presentation for distribution to the audience.

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 and the final comprehensive examination for the MPH program.

Oral presentations are 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 two weeks before Public Health Days. 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. All students and preceptors are invited to attend. Three faculty members attend each presentation and provide feedback to the student and Faculty Advisor.

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
- Relationship to public health values
- Objectives or specific aims

**Description of methods**
- Hypotheses
- Specific identification of methods used in needs assessments, policy analysis, epidemiological analysis, financial management, program planning, evaluation, etc., noting how methods of concentrations other than your own were used
- Justification of methods
- Stakeholder involvement, as appropriate

**Results**
- Description of findings/outcomes
- Relationship of findings to objectives, aims, or hypotheses
- Appropriate use of tables, charts, and other graphics
• Interpretation of findings

Discussion
• Relationship of findings to literature cited in the summary of critical literature
• Strengths and limitations
• Generalizability

Implications
• Relationship of this project to the internship experience
• Relationship to practice and research in the larger field of public health, focusing, as appropriate, on each of the other concentrations
• MPH and concentration competencies strengthened by this project
• Lessons learned from this project/recommendations for future projects

The quality of the content is assessed by 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.

Before Public Health Days, students are given opportunities to practice their presentations. They 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

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 faculty advisors and preceptors as they develop their reports. At a minimum, students should have a meeting with the faculty advisor at mid-term to evaluate progress and decide on subsequent meetings.

Faculty
Guest experts and faculty of the MPH program, the College of Public Health and Health Professions, and other Health Science Center colleges at UF contribute to the seminar sessions. Timely and relevant Internet broadcasts from outside UF are also presented. Students work closely with their Faculty Advisors and internship preceptors to develop their major papers and presentations.

**Exit Survey**
As a final course requirement, graduating students complete the online MPH Exit Survey. Students are expected to complete the survey immediately after their presentations on PH Day. The Exit Survey provides students the opportunity to document the strengths of the MPH Program, and outline suggestions for improvement. This information is very important to continuous improvement of the program.

**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* meet all requirements identified above. A letter grade is derived from participation in 16 contact hours of seminars (including all required seminars), attendance at 6 Public Health Day presentations prior to the semester in which they present, the special project paper, based on the content identified above, (60%), oral presentation (30%), and attention to guidance from faculty advisor 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 Web site.