

PHC 6601
Seminar in Contemporary Public Health Issues Syllabus
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 variable one hour sessions in each semester. MPH students are required to attend 16 contact hours of the sessions during their course of study, complete a major paper and a presentation during the final semester of the program, develop a portfolio of professional accomplishments, and 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 required MPH program professional development sessions and a mix of seminars offered by the College of Public Health and Health Professions and its various departments. . Most of the professional development sessions and all of the internship preparation sessions are required.

Objectives

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

1. Explain the interrelationships among the five core areas of public health;
2. Document and discuss public health accomplishments, including achievement of MPH and concentration competencies;
3. Interact professionally with faculty, staff, and peers in a variety of formal and informal settings; and
4. Present a complete project undertaken during the internship in written and oral/poster presentation form, thus strengthening competence in communication.

Content

Seminar sessions are offered on professional development topics as well as contemporary public health issues, with special emphasis on three interdisciplinary topics considered essential to the contemporary practice of public health:

- **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.

- **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.

Sessions are offered 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. Specific sessions are required of new students and other sessions of students in the semester preceding their internships. Required sessions are identified on the seminar schedule for each semester.

In addition, MPH students in the first year, including students in the combined bachelor's/MPH program, are required to participate in three special sessions that involve interprofessional learning in health (IPLH). Each of the three sessions counts for two contact hours in PHC 6601. Please see the attached document, *Interprofessional Learning in Health*, for additional information.

Requirements

To receive a grade for PHC 6601, students must meet the following **requirements**:

- Attend at least 16 contact hours from seminar sessions, including IPLH, during the course of the MPH program
- Attend all required seminar sessions
- Attend 6 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 a Special Project in written and oral or poster form on Public Health Day
- Complete the MPH portfolio documenting accomplishments, including achievement of MPH and concentration competencies
- Complete the online MPH Exit Survey

Behavioral Expectations

Students are expected to behave professionally throughout this course. Examples of professional behavior include:

- Participating actively in the discussion of the topic after the presentation
- Registering upon arrival at each session
- Being on time and staying until class is dismissed
- Turning off cell phones, pagers, I-pads, and laptops during class

Registration

Students register for one credit of PHC 6601 during the last semester in the MPH program. Each student's faculty advisor serves as the instructor of record.

Common Reader Discussion

Early in the fall semester, one 2 hour seminar is devoted to discussion of a book of public health significance. Students who enter the program in summer or fall, including those in the bachelor's/MPH combined program, are expected to read the book and come prepared for the discussion. The book is identified in early summer and all new students are notified. This session is a highlight of the fall semester, since students in all concentrations get to know each other and many of the faculty through this venue. Lunch is also available!

Major Paper and Presentations

Each student develops a scholarly paper based on a project undertaken as part of his/her internship. The paper includes an in-depth discussion of the manner in which all five of the core disciplines and MPH competencies 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 single spaced pages, exclusive of graphics and references. The faculty advisor must approve the major paper draft three weeks before the student will be scheduled for a presentation. 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. 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).

An oral or poster 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 dates of Public Health Days are announced at the beginning of the semester, and specific times for each presentation are posted two weeks in advance of the presentations. **Students will select their preferred presentation method – oral or poster -- one calendar month before Public Health Day**, and will inform both their faculty advisor and the MPH internship coordinator. These oral/poster and written reports constitute the culminating experience and the final comprehensive examination for the MPH program. Awards are made for high scoring presentations based on criteria outlined in the Special Project Assessment Form, which will be used to assess both oral and poster presentations. **Students are expected to upload their presentation (power point or poster) and an abstract one day prior to Public Health day.** On Public Health Day **students are expected to bring several copies of the abstract with them for distribution to the audience.**

For oral presentations, each student is allocated 30 minutes: 20 minutes for the formal presentation, followed by a 10 minute question and answer period. Students who conduct poster presentations will be assigned one hour time period during which they will be available to discuss the poster and the larger project in detail with faculty and fellow students. Each poster presenter should be prepared to provide a brief 1-2 minute presentation for fellow students and a 6 minute

presentation for faculty reviewers. The two presentation methods require a number of different skills, thus seminar sessions on various presentation skills are required during the semester before the internship begins.

All students and preceptors are invited to attend Public Health Day. Two faculty members will attend each oral or poster presentation and provide feedback to the student and faculty advisor.

Content of Paper and Presentation

The written and oral/poster reports should include the following content as appropriate to the topic:

Background

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

- Implications for research and/or practice
- Relationship of this project to the internship experience
- MPH and concentration competencies strengthened by this project
- Lessons learned from this project/recommendations for future projects

Two faculty members representing different concentrations assess the quality of the content. 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 presentation style and delivery methods.

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 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. Students may also earn credit for seminars presented through departmental seminar sessions, the Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series, and the keynote address on PHHP Research Day in the Spring.

Portfolio

The MPH Portfolio serves as: 1) a guide to self-assessment of achievement of the MPH and concentration-specific competencies, and 2) a compendium of documents that demonstrate accomplishments during the MPH program. Key elements include:

- Tables tracking accomplishment of MPH core and concentration-specific competencies
- A CV and/or a resume
- Writing samples from courses
- Special Project report and power point or poster presentation

Students may also identify other materials they would like to have available for potential employers. See <http://mph.ufl.edu/internship/mph-portfolio/> for additional information and guidance regarding MPH Portfolios.

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 give suggestions for improvement. This information is very important to continuous improvement of the quality and effectiveness 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, completion of the MPH Portfolio, submission of a special project paper (60%), completion of an oral/poster presentation (30%), and attention to guidance from faculty advisor and preceptor (10%).

Schedules are posted on the MPH Web site prior to the beginning of each semester.

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.

Counseling and Student Health

Students may occasionally have personal issues that arise in the course of pursuing higher education or that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at the UF Counseling & Wellness Center, 352-392-1575. Visit their web site for more information:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>.

The Student Health Care Center at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services, including primary care, women's health care, immunizations, mental health care, and pharmacy services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at:

www.health.ufl.edu/shcc

Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from:
Alachua County Crisis Center: (352) 264-6789.

BUT – Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.