Course Overview or Purpose
The purpose of this course is to provide an in-depth understanding of the topics and research methods used in modern infectious disease epidemiology, with a focus on topics of major public health relevance. The course is intended for graduate students who have taken an introductory course in epidemiology and are interested in more advanced study related to infectious diseases and public health. Although the focus is on epidemiologic methods used to study infectious disease topics, the course is designed to appeal to students in a variety of disciplines, including epidemiology, health behavior, global and environmental health, and medical geography.

Course Objectives and/or Goals
1) Identify epidemiologic research methods used to address a diverse range of research questions related to infectious diseases.

2) Interpret strengths and weaknesses of specific research design strategies as they apply to infectious disease epidemiology research.

3) Identify a specific research question related to infectious disease epidemiology, explain why it is important, and design a research study that could answer the research question.

4) Identify and describe current public health issues related to several important infectious disease conditions worldwide.

5) Communicate public health infectious disease issues orally and in writing.

6) Identify sources of current information regarding infectious disease topics.
Course Materials


1-3 journal articles each week. These will be available online on the course web site. The course is in the Sakai e-learning system, which can be accessed at URL: lss.at.ufl.edu and requires your Gatorlink ID.

Information available via the internet.

Course Requirements/Evaluation/Grading

We will learn about methods used to address research questions in infectious diseases and public health. Topic areas will include key infectious disease conditions that are relevant in the early 21st century. These include malaria, HIV infection, vector-borne infections, influenza, sexually transmitted diseases, emerging infectious diseases, health-care associated infections, and other conditions chosen by the students.

Each week, there is a 1-hour class on Monday and a 2-hour class on Wednesday. In general, one hour per week will be devoted to review of a specific infectious disease concept or condition, using the primary textbook and additional resources as needed. The second hour will be a group discussion involving review of 2-3 journal articles, or answering research questions related to that topic. The third hour will include a multidisciplinary team of guest lecturers who will discuss their research related to infectious diseases and public health.

Homeworks. 15% of grade. Each week, students will be expected to read a book chapter about one of the infectious disease conditions assigned that week. The material will either be reviewed in class via a traditional lecture, or via class participatory activity to address learning objectives.

There will be a homework assignment each week, assigned one week prior to the due date. Most weeks, the homework will be related to specific journal articles that will be reviewed in class. As homework, there will be a few questions related to each article. The responses to all questions should never be more than one page in length, and should be copied and pasted into the appropriate answer box in Sakai prior to class. I will drop your lowest homework grade. Late homeworks may be accepted, with at least 1 point deduction (of 10), if arrangements are discussed prior to class (e.g. in case of illness).

Assignments. Each student will present one journal article during the semester and participate in class discussions (15%).

For article review, each student will be assigned a topic at the beginning of the semester. The student will do a literature search for articles related to the topic and choose an article for review that will be approved by the instructor. The articles should be research articles that present data or an appropriate systematic summary of existing data. It should not be a review paper. Students must submit their article selections to Dr. Cook at least 10 days prior to their scheduled presentation, and on the day of each paper discussion, the student will lead a 15-minute class discussion that will include:

1. What is the specific research question, and why is it significant?
2. What was known and unknown before the study started?
3. What is the study design, and why was that study design used?
4. Who was the population and how was a sample of the population identified?
5. What was the major outcome and how was it measured?

Group discussions (15%). At least 2 times during the semester, students will select a question about a current infectious disease topic (from a list). Each student will choose one question for each topic for a 5-minute presentation in which they:
   1. Identify at least 1 source of original data or declare that there are no data
   2. Create a 1-page (max) handout to bring for class that outlines the topic, present some data (if available), and explain a rationale for their response.
   3. List at least 2 references used to address the question.

   Students will also participate in two in-class homework exercises, where students work in groups to identify answers to the “learning objectives” for a specific infectious disease topic. Grading will be based, in part, on peer evaluations.

Final research paper and presentation (20% each). Each student will identify an infectious disease research topic of their own choosing, and prepare a 20-minute oral presentation and a 10-15 page (double spaced) paper outlining the rationale and the study design for a research project that is designed to answer a specific research question. Students will identify up to 3 specific learning objectives for the oral presentations.

Examinations. There will two examinations during the class that will include a combination of question types. The first exam will cover material from the first half of the semester, and the second exam will cover information from the second half, including content from the student presentations. (15% each exam).

Book club participation (bonus points on exam) We will have a book discussion late in the semester. Participating in the book discussion is optional, but it will provide 3 bonus points to one of the exams.

Grades:
- Homework 15%
- Research paper and class discussions 15%
- Group assignments 10%
- Exam 1 15%
- Exam 2 15%
- Written Paper 15%
- Oral Presentation 15%

Grades for class participation are generally provides as excellent (95), good (90) or could have been better (85). Missing more than 2 classes for any reason will result in an 5 points off the participation grade, unless specifically negotiated with the instructor or due to illness. I will provide feedback on participation rates at the time of Exam 1.

The grading scale for this course consists of the standard scale, including minus grades, below. The conversion factors for grade point values that are assigned to each grade are also included (in parentheses):

- 93% - 100% = A (4.00)
- 90% - 92% = A- (3.67)
- 87% - 89% = B+ (3.33)
83% - 86% = B (3.00)
80% - 82% = B- (2.67)
77% - 79% = C+ (2.33)
73% - 76% = C (2.00)
70% - 72% = C- (1.67)
67% - 69% = D+ (1.33)
63% - 66% = D (1.00)
60% - 62% = D- (0.67)
Below 60% = E (0.00)

Statement of University’s Honesty Policy (cheating and use of copyrighted materials)

Academic Integrity – Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity (see Graduate Student Handbook for details). Cheating or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior. This will be discussed during the first day of class.

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Policy Related to Class Attendance:

15% of grade is related to class participation. 1-2 excused absences are allowed; additional absences will count against this grade.

Policy Related to Make-up Exams or Other Work

Example:

Attendance and Make-up Work – Personal issues with respect to class attendance or fulfillment of course requirements will be handled on an individual basis.

Statement Related to Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with Disabilities - Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student. The student should them provide this documentation to me.

Phone Numbers and Contact Sites for University Counseling Services and Mental Health Services

University Counseling Services
http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/services.asp
P301 Peabody Hall – 392-1575

Student Mental Health Services in the Student Health Care Center
Final Note

Course syllabi will be posted on a student accessible website that will be submitted to the departmental office to document compliance with this policy.