

**PBHL 4099: Capstone Experience in Public Health\***  
Spring 2019, CU Building 440, Wed 12:30pm – 3:20pm

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### Course Description

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“Protecting Health, Saving Lives—Millions at a Time.”

(motto, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health)

This course, being the last in the sequence for Public Health majors, is intended to pull together the ideas you have developed across the program and apply them as a composite strategy for understanding, explaining and proposing improvements for key dimensions of population health. Doing so will require that you collectively draw on the ideas developed separately in your courses on epidemiological, global, social, environmental and policy dimensions of public health. Moreover, rather than treating these as independent dimensions of health to be comprehensively covered in parallel, our purpose will be to synthesize, compare/contrast, and even “compete” across the ideas from each of these perspectives, where they intersect in particular health conditions.

This will **not** be a lecture-based course. Instead you will form teams who will collectively identify, research and organize the discussion of a series of identified topics. In other words, you will get the opportunity to select a substantial proportion of the content of this course. In turn, the class sessions covering this material will involve student presentations and active seminar-style discussions. As such, the success of our course will require that we each individually prepare for class every week, and come prepared to engage material through questions, discussions and applications of evidence.

### Objectives

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By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- **Explain** the connections between epidemiological, global, social, environmental and policy dimensions for current concerns in population health.
- **Identify** similarities and differences across those five perspectives when applied to topics of your own interest.
- Work effectively in **groups** to understand, explain and seek potential improvements in public health challenges.
- **Write** more clearly than when you started this course.
- **Clearly present** (orally, visually, etc.) the complex interactions of public health issues to a generally knowledgeable scientific audience.

\* The structure of this course draws heavily on materials from the same course previously taught by Karen Lutfey & David Tracer.

## Course Organization

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There will be five main topics in our course. For the first of these, I will identify a public health issue, select articles, present, and lead discussion. You should see this section of the course as a model of what your aims will be when your group is responsible for the course material. In addition to the public health topic in these early weeks, we will also devote some time to how to review the literature, give effective presentations, and allow time for groups to meet with me, to collectively identify your own topics.

During the remaining weeks of the semester, each of the four student groups will, in turn be responsible for covering a topic of their own choosing. In selecting a topic, you will be responsible for identifying the readings to be addressed. The in-class presentations of each topic will last two class sessions. As a rough guide, each class meeting should be constructed to allow for approximately 90 minutes of presentation and 60 minutes of discussion on the topic and readings for the day. Across both the readings **and** class presentation/discussion sessions, your group is responsible for being sure the topic is adequately covered from an epidemiological, global, social, environmental, **and** policy perspective. How you decide to divide that coverage, identify readings, formulate your presentation style(s), and facilitate discussion is up to the group, and should be determined in consultation with the instructor.

Your group must discuss your proposed topic with me before it is considered “final.” Topics will be assigned on a first come first-served basis, but must be settled no later than the date listed on the course outline.

## Course Structure & Requirements

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First and foremost, this course will be organized as a seminar. ***This means that you will need to come to each class session having completed assigned readings and prepared to discuss the day’s topic*** from the various perspectives pertinent to understanding, explaining and seeking to improve these public health issues. Much of our reading for this course will be primary peer-reviewed research articles. At times the content of these will be over your head. This is to be expected. Your aim will not be to fully interpret the minutiae of every aspect of these readings, but to extract the key dimension(s) of public health they bring to bear on the topic at hand, and use those ideas to help the class formulate an informed discussion.

## Requirements

### I – Weekly Elements

#### A. Participation (60 points, 13% of total grade):

As mentioned above, this course is designed as a seminar, which requires your participation to be successful. As such, the first element of your grade will reflect your contributions to the course. Participation entails 2 primary elements.

1. Baseline expectations – **everyone** should: do the reading, be in class (on time and don’t leave early), actively contribute to discussions (i.e., not on your phone/computer), and engaged participation in group activities.
2. To spur these discussions, for the 10 weeks of topical presentations, all students should submit **at least one** “Discussion Question” **weekly** to Canvas. These should

be posted no later than midnight the day before material is to be covered in class. Two discussion questions can be missed without penalty.

**B. Brief Response Papers (4 papers, 40 points each; 160 total, 35% of total grade)**

For 4 of the class meetings, you will write a brief (~3 pages, double spaced) synopsis and critical analysis of the assigned readings. Detailed requirements for what critical analysis should entail is provided in a separate handout. **Responses are due to Canvas before class on the first day a topic will be covered** (these due dates are noted on the syllabus, and attached to the assignments on Canvas). You will be responsible for writing response papers for *each* of the topics when your group is *not* presenting. Late Response Papers will be deducted 25% if they are up to 24 hours late, 50% if 24-48 hours late, and will not be accepted if more than 48 hours late.

**II – Group Presentation Elements**

**A. Reading Selections (40 points, 9% of total grade):**

For the weeks when your group will be presenting, your group is collectively responsible for identifying the weeks' topic, selecting the assigned readings for that topic, and presenting the topic to the class to initiate the week's discussion. Total, the group should identify 5-7 readings, which collectively address the 6 key elements that your presentation will consist of: (1) an overview understanding of the topic, along with (2) epidemiological, (3) global, (4) social, (5) environmental and (6) policy dimensions of the topic. If chosen appropriately, most readings should address more than one of these. At least half of the readings selected must be academic research articles. Readings should not be overly redundant. These requirements combine to mean that identifying and selecting readings will require some coordination among the group. To reflect this, all group members will receive the same grade for this assignment. Reading selection due dates are 2 weeks before your first presentation, and are listed on the full course calendar.

**B. Oral Presentations (80 points, 17% of total grade):**

For the weeks that your group selects the topic, you will also be responsible for providing the presentations that will initiate the week's discussion. This will entail approximately 30 minutes on each of the six (minimum) elements to be covered: (1) an overview understanding of the topic, along with (2) epidemiological, (3) global, (4) social, (5) environmental and (6) policy dimensions of the selected topic. Beyond that requirement, how you break things up is up to the group, except that each member of the group must participate in each week's presentation. All presentations should include some graphical elements – e.g., Powerpoint, Keynote, etc. Your presentation grade will be based 75% on the elements you individually contribute, and 25% on how well the group's presentation as a whole is coordinated and comprehensively addresses the required elements.

**III – Final Paper (120 points, 26% of total grade):**

Your final project for the class will be to synthesize any one of the (student selected) topics from this semester according to the key elements we've addressed. I.e., your aim will be to assess how each of the 5 dimensions (epidemiological, global, social,

environmental and policy) informs public health's understanding, explanation and potential to improve population outcomes related to the chosen topic. To completely address these issues will require approximately 15 pages. These papers are to be written **individually**. You are **strongly encouraged, but not required**, to use the topic that your group presented on for this assignment. Final Papers are due by the end of our allotted final exam period (**to Canvas by 5pm on May 15<sup>th</sup>**).

#### IV – Honors Requirements (if applicable):

If you are enrolled in the Honors section of this course, you will be responsible for the same requirements as outlined above, but will also be expected to extend your final paper in a few ways:

- A longer final synthesis paper (approximately 20 pages), which includes:
  - the collection of some additional data beyond what is included in your group presentation for your topic (some examples include: interviews with key informants on the topic, proposing new research agenda items pertaining to the topic including a literature review identifying the pertinence of that question, extensions of service learning opportunities applicable to your topic, etc.).
- Making a final presentation to PBHL faculty/students at the end of the semester.

You need to meet with me to discuss how you will incorporate this extension into your final paper. This meeting must take place **no later than February 15<sup>th</sup>**. The honors extension will be graded pass/fail.

#### Grading

##### Maximum Potential Points (460):

<u>Weekly Elements</u>	<u>220 (48%)</u>	<u>Group Elements</u>	<u>120 (26%)</u>	<u>Final Paper</u>	<u>120 (26%)</u>
Participation	(60 pts)	Readings	(40 pts)		
Responses	(160 pts)	Presentations	(80 pts)		

##### Final Grade Computation:

Your final grade will be determined by summing the number of points earned from each of the above categories. Letter grades will be determined from your point total as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Range</u>
A	426+	B	380-402	C	334-356
A-	414-425	B-	368-379	C-	322-333
B+	403-413	C+	357-367	D	276-321

Any student accumulating 275 or fewer points will receive an F for the course.

##### Grading Expectations:

Participation, presentation, and paper grades you earn will reflect how thoroughly your work demonstrates the particular assignment requirements *and* overall course aims, which will correspond to the following sets of expectations:

- F Work that **fails to address** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the F range.
- D Work that **incompletely addresses** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the D range.
- C Work that **addresses only** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the C range.
- B Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also **occasionally** reflects **engagement** with other material from the course where appropriate, in ways that **meet course objectives** will earn grades in the B range.
- A Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also **consistently** reflects **engagement** with other material from the course where appropriate & in ways that **exceed course objectives** will earn grades in the A range.

Please note now that there are NO extra credit opportunities in this course. For this course to be successful, and therefore for you to be successful in this course, we need everyone keeping up with requirements throughout the semester.

### **Course and College Policies**

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#### **Electronic Devices:**

You are welcome to use laptops/tablets in this course **for class purposes only** (e.g., to access readings or take notes). Any other uses will lead you to lose this privilege. All other devices (phones, etc.) should be silenced for the duration of class.

#### **Due Dates & Late Assignments:**

- Discussion questions are due by **midnight, the day before** material is to be covered in class. Late discussion questions will not be accepted for any reason.
- Response papers are due **before class** the day material is to be covered in class. If late, they will be deducted 25% up to 24 hours late, 50% if 24-48 hours late, and will not be accepted if more than 48 hours late.
- Topic identification must be complete by **midnight Sept 5<sup>th</sup>**. Late group selection/topic identification will result in being assigned your group/topic/presentation date.
- Reading identification lists are due via email to Canvas two weeks before your group's presentation. If late, they will be deducted 25% up to 24 hours late, 50% if 24-48 hours late, and will not be accepted if more than 48 hours late.
- Final papers are due by **5 pm on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**. If late, final papers are deducted **10% per day**, and will **NOT** be accepted after 5 days.

#### **A Note on Participation:**

The topics of study in this course will at times touch on personal and/or controversial issues. Your thoughts and opinions in discussing these topics will be valued and respected. To foster this, the following ground rules will apply for all in-class *and* online interactions:

- 1- Be respectful of others and their opinions. While healthy debate will be constructive in the learning process, disrespectful or insulting contributions *will not be tolerated*.
- 2- The content of your expressed *opinions* will in no way affect your grade. You are encouraged to share your *thoughtful* opinions, beliefs and values openly. The class

will particularly benefit from statements that support and/or challenge both those of other students and the instructor (*as long as it is done in a manner consistent with rule #1*).

### Course Communication:

- The Syllabus has answers to the most common questions pertaining to the course. Be sure check the syllabus first, before asking me about due-dates, assignment requirements, etc.
- Canvas will be used for the majority of communication in this course. You can find a copy of the syllabus, additional assigned readings, and all assignments there. I will also post any lecture notes after each class. To make your experience in this course successful, you should expect to make this resource a *regular* part of your preparation for this course.
- E-mail should be used for quick communications (things that can be responded to in no more than a few sentences); use office hours for anything requiring more depth. You should only use your UCD email account for communication related to this course; I will not read/reply to emails from your personal accounts (e.g., Yahoo!, Hotmail, etc). Please consider e-mail as subject to the same standards of communication as you would all other forms written material in this course (i.e., you should use complete sentences, proper punctuation, etc.). I will typically respond to email within **48 hours**. I will **NOT, under any circumstances** discuss grades over email.
- Office Hours are available to add to your experience in this course. Please make use of them. These are meant to supplement required course work and in-class elements. As such, while I am happy to discuss course materials or other aspects of public health/academia in general with you during this time, they should not be viewed as an opportunity to ask, "What did I miss in class?" (You should find peers in the class with whom you can share notes for that purpose.)

### Academic Dishonesty

This is a Capstone course. As such, standards of academic honesty should be abundantly clear to you by now. Any documented Academic Dishonesty will result in **failure for the course**. Don't risk it. Cite your sources, etc. Be sure you have read and understand the CLAS policy linked below. When in doubt, ask.

CLAS Academic Dishonesty Policy: Students are required to know, understand, and comply with the CU Denver Academic Dishonesty Policy as detailed in the Catalog and on the CLAS website. A university's reputation is built on a standing tradition of excellence and scholastic integrity. As members of the University of Colorado Denver academic community, faculty and students accept the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty and ethical conduct. Academic dishonesty consists of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission of the same work, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. If you are not familiar with the definitions of these offenses, go to <http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/CLAS/faculty-staff/policies/HandlingAcademicDishonesty/Pages/Definition-of-Academic-Dishonesty.aspx> .

**Disability Services Information:**

The University of Colorado Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS) in Academic Building 1, #2116, Phone: 303-315-3510, Fax: 303-315-3515. Website:

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/disability-resources-services/Pages/disability-resources-services.aspx>. I will be happy to provide approved accommodations, once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter.

*Course Schedule*

NOTE – All assigned readings are posted to Canvas, and this schedule will be updated regularly.

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**23 January – Introduction & Course Overview (adams)**

## Required Readings

- none

**30 January – Conducting & Writing Literature Reviews – Synthesizing Research (adams)**

## Required Readings

- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *Political Science & Politics* 1:127-132.
- Calarco, Jessica. 2018. "Beyond the Abstract: Reading for Meaning in Academia." Blogpost. Retrieved on Jan 2, 2019 from <http://www.jessicacalarco.com/tips-tricks/2018/9/2/beyond-the-abstract-reading-for-meaning-in-academia>.

**6 February – HIV, part I (adams)**

## Required Readings

- Cassels S, Menza TW, Goodreau SM, Golden MR. "HIV Serosorting as Harm Reduction Strategy: Evidence from Seattle, Washington." *AIDS* 2009; 23:2497-2506.
- Heylen E, Panicker ST, Chandy S, Steward WT, Exstrand ML. "Food Insecurity and Its Relation to Psychological Well-Being Among South Indian People Living with HIV." *AIDS and Behavior* 2015; 19(8): 1548-1558.
- Idele P, Gillespie A, Porth T, Suzuki C, Mahy M, Kasedde S, Luo C. "Epidemiology of HIV and AIDS Among Adolescents: Current Status, Inequities, and Data Gaps." *AIDS* 2014; 66(S2):S144-S153.
- Mojola SA. "Fishing in Dangerous Waters: Ecology, Gender and Economy in HIV Risk." *Social Science & Medicine* 2011; 72: 149-156.
- Vlahov D, Junge B. "The Role of Needle Exchange Programs in HIV Prevention." *Public Health Reports* 1998; 113(S1): 75-80.

## Assignment

- **ALL STUDENTS** – Response Paper #1 (to Canvas before class)

**13 February – Group Meetings**

## Assignment

- **ALL GROUPS** – Topic Due (to Canvas by Feb 15<sup>th</sup>)

**20 February – Effective Presentations**

## Required Readings

- Edwards, Paul N. 2014. “How to Give an Academic Talk.” version 5.2. School of Informatics, University of Michigan. Available from: <http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtotalk.pdf>. Accessed on 11 January, 2016.

## Assignment

- **Group I** – Reading List Due (to Canvas, End of Day)

**27 February – HIV/AIDS, part II (adams)**

## Required Readings

- continued from 6 February

**6 March – Group I, part 1 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- TBD

## Assignments

- **ALL STUDENTS** – Response Paper #2 (to Canvas before class)
- **Group II** – Reading List Due (to Canvas, End of Day)

**13 March – Group I, part 2 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- continued from 6 March

**20 March – Group II, part 1 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- TBD

## Assignments

- **ALL STUDENTS** – Response Paper #3 (to Canvas before class)
- **Group III** – Reading List Due (to Canvas, End of Day)

**27 March – No Class, Spring Break****3 April – Group II, part 2 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- continued from 20 March

**10 April – Group III, part 1 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- TBD

## Assignments

- **ALL STUDENTS** – Response Paper #4 (to Canvas before class)
- **Group IV** – Reading List Due (to Canvas, End of Day)

**17 April – Group III, part 2 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- continued from 10 April

**24 April – Group IV, part 1 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- TBD

## Assignments

- **ALL STUDENTS** – Response Paper #5 (to Canvas before class)

**1 May – Group IV, part 2 – Topic TBD**

## Required Readings

- continued from 24 April

**8 May – Honors Presentations & Final Paper Workday**

## Required Readings

- continued from 14 November

## Assignment

- none

**15 May – Final Papers Due to Canvas by 5pm**