

Criteria for Including Courses in the Health Disparities Curriculum for the Interdisciplinary Certificate Program in Health Disparities

Courses to be included in the Health Disparities Curriculum should contribute substantial knowledge, skill and practice toward answering the following questions on various vulnerable populations:

- (1) How are social, cultural, demographic, institutional, environmental, and economic, health care factors related to adverse health? How does this translate into health disparities?
- (2) What research, policy, and practices in the health fields need to be addressed and changed in order to eliminate health disparities?
- (3) What are the relative weights of contribution toward elimination of health disparities of each of these factors?
- (4) What immediate and long-term changes are needed to eliminate health disparities given the current social, economic and health care systems? Who should be involved in identifying and implementing these changes?
- (5) To what extent are current medical, public health and social initiatives and programs making progress toward the elimination of health disparities?
- (6) How can we improve data and methods relevant to measuring, analyzing and tracking progress in elimination of health disparities? (How do you measure attributable fractions of excess risk? Of declines in excess risk? How do we collect and/or access valid and reliable data on other vulnerable populations? How do we use longitudinal data to track changes in health disparities over time?)

Knowledge Base Needed for Competency in Health Disparities Research or Practice

Methodological Skills

Health Disparities is not a methodological base, but a special interest area to which existing methods used in science are applied. Students will be expected to develop the ability to demonstrably apply methodologies and skills from epidemiology, sociology, demography, biostatistics, environmental health, clinical or health services research, clinical or public health practice, policy development and analysis, health behavior and education toward improving understanding of causal mechanisms, improving measurement, and/or toward developing or critically evaluating policies and strategies to eliminate health disparities. Primary data and secondary data analysis can be used from the context of the aforementioned disciplines.

Courses that become a part of the curriculum should provide one or more of the following content or skill areas, and at minimum, the second level of cognitive development as outlined below.

Content

- (1) The distribution of health disparities across population groups and disease outcomes (Cognitive Levels: identify, describe, calculate, analyze contributing factors, track trends over

time)

(2) The state of the science on theories/models of causality (Cognitive Levels: describe, defend)

(3) The state of the science on empirical research (Cognitive Levels: summarize, appraise, synthesize, produce)

(4) Current social, environmental, public health, medical, and other strategies to address health disparities (Cognitive Levels: describe, develop, practice, evaluate)

Practice/Skills to be Developed (above and beyond core SPH)

Synthesis of knowledge across a variety of disciplines, expanded depth of comprehension of nature and causality of health disparities in at least one specific population and disease outcome, translation of knowledge into effective action.