Syllabus for Community Health Improvement and Assessment  
PUBH 745, Spring 2015

Faculty: Cheryll Lesneski, DrPH, MA (lesneski@email.unc.edu, 919.966.6617 Office)

Course Description
The Community Health Improvement and Assessment Course introduces students to the concepts and methods of community health improvement and the role of assessment. This course will cover important community health topics including systems thinking that leads to coordination of health care and public health activities to achieve community health goals; the nature of health and its determinants; the use of quantitative and qualitative methods; data analysis; community mobilization and capacity building; and the impact of current national policy, including the Affordable Care Act, on community health improvement.

Course Goals and Objectives
The overall goals for this course are to help students lead and participate in community health improvement activities and develop skills to assess community health status and resources. The following are specific objectives for this course:

- Apply a community health improvement process
- Define health and its determinants
- Articulate two models of community health improvement
- Describe surveillance systems for monitoring health status to identify community problems
- Research evidence based public health practices
- Develop community health action plans
- Develop skills to mobilize communities and build capacity to improve community health status
- Discuss current national policies that have an effect on community health

CLASS RESPONSIBILITIES
Some of the lesson readings are available as linked pdf files at the web site listed in the lesson information or through the UNC Health Sciences Library, PUBMED. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to read many of the articles. To obtain a free copy of the Adobe Acrobat Reader you may download it from their website: http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

1. Discussion Forums (DF)
   - Discussion forums are required for a number of the lessons.
   - Your group should assign discussion leaders who will facilitate the discussion, assuring that the discussion remains focused on the lesson and the questions, as well as stimulating members to actively participate.
   - You are required to post a minimum of five (5) times for each discussion forum. Your first post should answer one or more of the assignment questions directly.
Your additional posts should respond to the initial post(s) of at least one of your group members, elaborating on a point that they have made, raising new questions, and carrying forward the discussion. You may also choose to answer other discussion forum questions as long as you are discussing others’ posts as well.

- In order to assure a timely exchange of ideas, I recommend that you post your initial response within three days of the start of the lesson and no later than the first Saturday following the opening of the lesson. This will give others time to read and respond during the 2nd week. Remaining posts should be completed by no later than Friday of the 2nd week to allow time finalizing the team project. Your posts should occur throughout the lesson and not appear on only one or two days of the two week lesson.
- Your instructor will evaluate your group discussion posts by assessing the timely submission of the required posts and the quality of your posts. A quality post is one that incorporates the criteria for critical thinking: clarifying issues, assessing some aspect of the debate or discussion, demonstrating connection among ideas and proposing a hypothesis, and proposing possible actions. (See Table below.)

### Criteria for Assessing Critical Thinking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clarification</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All aspects of stating, clarifying, describing (but not explaining) or defining the issue being discussed</td>
<td>Evaluating some aspect of the debate; making judgments on a situation, proposing evidence for an argument or for links with other issues. Ex. Asks about validity of evidence that is offered; specifies assessment criteria such as source credibility.</td>
<td>Showing connections among ideas; drawing appropriate conclusions by deduction or inductions; generalizing, explaining (but not describing), and hypothesizing. Ex. Makes appropriate deductions and inferences; arrives at conclusion; makes generalizations.</td>
<td>Proposing, discussing, or evaluating possible actions. Ex. Takes action; describes possible actions; evaluates action; predicts outcomes of proposed actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Your posts should not be more than one or two paragraphs long and should not quote to any great extent course readings or other references. Your interpretation of material and critical thinking skills are what is needed in a quality discussion forum. The course instructor and teaching assistant will routinely review your lesson postings and assign a grade for your participation in the discussion forums.

2. **Individual Assignments (Essays, Tests and Quizzes)**
- Individual assignments will be posted through the Assignments link in Sakai. Tests and quizzes can be found through the Tests and Quizzes link.
3. **Team Projects**

- All team members are expected to actively participate in the editing and improvement of team assignment drafts by improving the content, wording, grammar, and organization of the assignment. Below are some ideas for working together as a team.

**As a Team and at the beginning of the course or each lesson:**

1. Assign a Facilitator for the Module
2. Develop an Action Plan to respond to the team assignment.
   - Clarify Team Member Roles for the team assignment – common ones are:
     - Lead Author or Co-Lead Authors (usually the facilitators)
     - Editor, proofreader
     - Multimedia developer (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel)
     - You may have other roles for your team members in place of these suggestions
   - Develop a work schedule for your team and divide the work among team members to take advantage of individual strengths and to assure each team member has a chance to be a lead or co-lead author. Rotate duties at times to step outside your comfort zone. Be certain to post on the Discussion Forum the work schedule for team assignments so that the instructor is able to monitor participation and punctuality.
   - We prefer that you conduct your team work on the Sakai discussion forum site. If your team chooses to use Google Docs, each team member must obtain a Google account to allow the instructor and TA to review each team member’s participation in editing the assignment. Access to the Google Docs site must also be given to the instructor and TA.
   - Submit your team assignments through the assignment link in Sakai.
   - Use 1 inch margins, 12 point font, 1.5 line spacing, and headers and subheaders when developing your papers. Your papers should be 3 to 5 pages in length. Any exceptions to these formatting requirements must be pre-approved by the course instructors or will be indicated in the lesson instructions.
   - Typical format of a team assignment:
     - Introduction – defining the issue to be discussed and why it is important or urgent
     - Summary and analysis or assessment of lesson readings, drawing inferences across ideas
     - Recommendations – propose or discuss strategies or evaluate possible actions
     - Conclusion – Main take away points, future steps
• PowerPoint presentations should be about 20 slides and include a narrative in the note section of the slide. The narrative should be well written with citations. References are to be placed at the end of the presentation, as the last few slides.

4. **APA Formatting for Citations and References**
   APA formatting is required for all citations and references. APA formatting is **not** taught as part of this class. Students will find resources about APA formatting of citations and references at the following sites:
   - [http://ssw.unc.edu/currentStudent/APA_Quick_Reference_Guide.pdf](http://ssw.unc.edu/currentStudent/APA_Quick_Reference_Guide.pdf)
   - [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/)
   APA formatting of papers is required in most of your graduate classes and you may wish to purchase a book on this topic.

5. **Plagiarism**
   The university honor code applies to all assignments completed for this class. The following UNC website on plagiarism should be reviewed by each student: [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html)

   The following websites offer guidance on writing papers, posting content on the class site, and avoiding plagiarism:
   - [http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/copyright/plagiarism/](http://www.lib.unc.edu/instruct/copyright/plagiarism/)
   - [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/contents.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/contents.html)

   Plagiarism violates the university honor code and will result in a failing grade. Teams are encouraged to use plagiarism detection software to monitor their writing. In the search box on the UNC home page, type in plagiarism software for suggestions. I have used VIPER software and find it to be highly accurate.

6. **Grading Notes:**
   • All members of a team will receive the same **base grade** for a team assignment and, if required, adjusted down based on participation and punctuality on team assignments.
   • Each team member will also receive an individual grade for his/her participation in discussion forums four times during the term.
   • Please review the calendar below for points that can be earned for each assignment.

7. **Online Class Evaluation**
   During the last 2 weeks of this course, you will receive an email to participate in an online evaluation of this course. Please participate and provide us feedback about your course experience.

8. **Valuing Diversity**
Promoting and valuing diversity in the classroom enriches learning and broadens everyone’s perspectives. Inclusion and tolerance can lead to respect for others and their opinions and is critical to maximizing the learning that occurs in this course. This may challenge our own closely held ideas and personal comfort zones. The results, however, create a sense of community and promote excellence in the learning environment.

Diversity includes consideration of (1) the variety of life experiences other have had, and (2) factors related to “diversity of presence”, including, among others, age, economic circumstances, ethnic identification, disability, gender, geographic origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social position.

This class follows principles of inclusion, respect, tolerance, and acceptance that support the values of diversity.

9.  **Technical Support**

If you need technical support during the course, there are a number of technical support options:

**General Computer Help: Contact UNC ITS Help Desk**

The UNC Information Technology Services (ITS) department provides technical support 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

General computer help refers to problems with computer hardware and printers, problems connecting to UNC, and problems with software (RealPlayer, Adobe Acrobat Reader, etc.).

**If you need general computer help, please contact the ITS Help Desk by phone at 919-962-HELP (919-962-4357), by email at help@unc.edu, by visiting their web site at http://help.unc.edu, or by UNC Live Chat at http://its.unc.edu/itrc/chat.**
## Calendar, Lesson Titles, and Assignment Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson #</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Assignment &amp; Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Wed, 1/7/15</td>
<td>Tue, 1/20/15 (2 wks.)</td>
<td>Lesson 1: Community Health Improvement Framework and Health and Its Determinants</td>
<td>Individual Assignment (10 pts.) Team Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wed, 1/21/15</td>
<td>Tue, 2/03/15 (2 wks.)</td>
<td>Lesson 2: Community Health Improvement Processes - Mobilizing Communities &amp; Building Capacity</td>
<td>Individual Assignment (10 pts.) Team Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wed, 2/04/15</td>
<td>Tue, 2/17/15 (2 wks.)</td>
<td>Lesson 3: Assessing Community Health Status through the Use of Primary Data in Community Health Assessments</td>
<td>Team Assignment (10 pts.) Team Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wed, 2/18/15</td>
<td>Tue, 3/03/15 (2 wks.)</td>
<td>Lesson 4: Assessing Community Health Status using Surveillance Systems and Secondary Data</td>
<td>Team Assignment (10 pts.) Team Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wed, 3/04/15</td>
<td>Tue, 3/24/15 (3 wks.)</td>
<td>Lesson 5: Analyzing and Interpreting Community Health Data &amp; Prioritizing Health Issues</td>
<td>Team Assignment (10 pts.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Spring Break 5 pm Friday, 3/6/15 to 8 am Monday, 3/16/15** *(Lesson 5 has been extended 1 week to allow students to enjoy the Spring Break.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson #</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Assignment &amp; Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wed, 3/25/15</td>
<td>Tue, 3/31/15 (1 wk.)</td>
<td>Lesson 6: Current Issues in Community Health Assessment and Improvement</td>
<td>Individual Assignment (10 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wed, 4/1/15</td>
<td>Tue, 4/14/15 (2 wks.)</td>
<td>Lesson 7: Evidence-based Public Health Practice and Community Action Plans</td>
<td>Individual Assignment (10 pts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Wed, 4/15/15</td>
<td>Fri, 5/01/15 (Final Project Due) (2 + Weeks)</td>
<td>Lesson 8: Developing a Community Health Improvement and Action Plan to Address the Health Effects of the Built Environment</td>
<td>Final Exam (20 pts.) Team Discussion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion Forums = 20 points for the term**
Lesson 1: Community Health Improvement Framework and Health and Its Determinants

Objectives:
- Define health and the ecological model of health behavior
- Identify the cycles & major components of a community health improvement process
- Articulate the role of social and economic factors on health inequities
- Identify two different models used for community health improvement

Competencies: Social and behavioral sciences, communication, systems thinking, leadership

Required Readings:
1. Improving Health in the Community, Chapter 1 & 2
   (Major concepts: Model of the Determinants of Health & the Community Health Improvement Process-CHIP)
3. Healthy People in Healthy Communities 2020, Sections on
   a. Focus on the Determinants of Health
   b. Leading Health Indicators
5. MAPP Field Guide at NACCHO, pages 3-11 (National Association of City and County Health Officers)
   (Major Concept: 2nd Framework, MAPP, for Community Health Improvement)

Videos/Webinars/Presentations (Required):
2. Community Health Assessments – Data for Public Health Action, Lesneski

Lesson 2: Community Health Improvement Processes - Mobilizing Communities and Building Capacity

Objectives:
1. Describe a planning process for community health improvement
2. Identify the basic capacities that are necessary for local public health systems

Competencies: Program planning, communication, systems thinking, leadership

Required Readings:
1. IOM, Improving Health in the Community, Chapters 3 & 4


4. Healthy People 2020, Read both the Mobilize and Assess sections, available at this site: [https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/tools-and-resources/program-planning/Mobilize](https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/tools-and-resources/program-planning/Mobilize)
   Read Chapter 1: sections 3, & 7 and Chapter 7: sections 1,2,3,7 & 8 in the Community Toolbox section under the Mobilize site.

**Videos/Webinars/Presentations (Required):**


**Lesson 3: Assessing Community Health Status through the Use of Primary Data**

**Objectives:**
- Define primary data
- Describe the purposes and uses of primary data in community health assessment
- Discuss the different methods for obtaining community data

**Competencies:** Epidemiology, communication and informatics, leadership

**Required Readings:**


3. Hidden Heroines: Lone Mothers Assessing Community Health Using Photovoice

4. Photovoice

   Chapter 3, sections 3, 6, 7, 8, 12 & 13
6. North Carolina Community Health Assessment Process, Phase 2

7. Community Health Assessment Guide Book Appendices, Appendix E

8. MAPP Field Guide – Community Themes & Strengths Assessments
   http://www.uic.edu/sph/prepare/courses/ph420/resources/mappguide.pdf

Videos/Webinars/Presentations (Required):
1. Public Health Surveillance
2. Types of Surveys & Survey Sampling Methods

Lesson 4: Assessing Community Health Status using Surveillance Systems and Secondary Data

Objectives:
- Identify national, state, and local sources of community data
- Articulate the usefulness of a set of indicators for understanding a community’s health profile
- Discuss the use of indicators to monitor performance of strategies selected to improve the community’s health
- Articulate the value of GIS in conducting a CHA

Competencies: Epidemiology, informatics, communication, leadership

Required Readings & Reviews:
1. IOM, Improving Health in the Community, Chapters 5 and Appendix 5 A

2. North Carolina Community Health Assessment Process, Phase 3 & 4


4. GIS for Health Promotion and Public Health: A Review

5. Data Sources – For review and reference

   b. Federal/National Data Sites:
      - The US Census Bureau offers a wealth of data. The American Fact Finder provides national, state & county data regarding population, housing, economics and geography. This website is found at: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml
You can access useful data many ways at this home page. Take a moment to tour the home page, particularly the topic searches, Quick Facts by State (includes county and city data, too) and Getting Detailed Data.


- State maps with county lines from this site: [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/2010_census_profile_maps/census_profile_2010_main.html]

- The US Census also conducts the American Community Survey (ACS) that is an annual survey that provides estimates regarding social, economic, housing and demographic information. Check out the sections at the top of the main page (located at: [http://www.census.gov/acs]), particularly Guidance for Using Data. You may also access the ACS through the American Fact Finder site.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collects and maintains oodles of data. Here is one site that has a number of links to important collections from the National Center for Health Statistics: [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/ftp_data.htm]. Review this site to look at some of the sources and types of data available from the CDC.

- One CDC data site that you will want to aware of is the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) [http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/]
  (You will be able to access state information from this site as well – see State data below for access to county level data. Here’s an overview of BRFSS: [http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/AAG/brfss.htm])

- The National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS) may be best known for preparing the Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). The home page is found at: [http://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss]

- You may also access the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System from this site. It is useful to note that the American Reinvestment & Recovery Act supports the data requirements for “Meaningful Use” (see: [http://www.cdc.gov/ehrmeaningfuluse/]) that includes the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) for electronic health records (EHR).

- The US Department of Health & Human Services also houses community data; however, the most recent data is from 2009. The main page for the Community Health Status Indicators is found at: [http://www.communityhealth.hhs.gov/homepage.aspx?j=1] and provides an overview as well as access to state & county level data. (See the left side for entry to state & county data.) The summary data will also show the data source that will give you additional ideas.
While there are numerous federal sources of data, the final one highlighted here is from the US Department of Health & Human Services is the Healthy People 2020 Leading Health Indicators found at: [http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/LHI/default.aspx](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/LHI/default.aspx)

This source shows the national objectives for health improvement and useful to measure comparisons between your county and the national target. [http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/default.aspx](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/default.aspx)

Another data source that is supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation is Kids Count. Check out this source for state & community level data relating to children. [http://datacenter.kidscount.org/](http://datacenter.kidscount.org/)

America’s Health, United States [http://www.americashealthrankings.org/Default.aspx](http://www.americashealthrankings.org/)


c. State Data Sites (Note that many State Health Offices, usually located in state capitols, have similar Health Statistics sites.)

The North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics is a great site. (See [http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/](http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/)) Become familiar with this site. In addition, county level data from BRFSS is easily accessed through this portal.


Check out the North Carolina Institute of Medicine website: [http://www.nciom.org/](http://www.nciom.org/), particularly the section, *Running the Numbers*, found under NC Health Data.

The North Carolina Division of Public Health is found at [http://publichealth.nc.gov/](http://publichealth.nc.gov/)

If you haven’t had an opportunity to visit this site, it’s worth taking a tour. In addition, you will want to look at the Healthy North Carolina 2020 for the state’s health objectives. [http://publichealth.nc.gov/hnc2020/foesummary.htm](http://publichealth.nc.gov/hnc2020/foesummary.htm)

The UNC Health Sciences Library also has a site set up to assist researchers in finding NC Community Health data: [http://guides.lib.unc.edu/c.php?g=8369&p=784117](http://guides.lib.unc.edu/c.php?g=8369&p=784117)

d. County Data Sites:

While county level data is found at numerous places already mentioned, we recommend that you tour your county’s public health department website for information. For example, the county may have prepared a CHA in the past that will provide historical trend data. Further, the county governmental website may also link to departments that will have data regarding bike trails, parks and recreation opportunities, air quality monitoring, etc. The school districts, major employers, local hospitals, colleges, or service providers may have websites that will link to useful data as well.

e. 2011 Orange County NC Community Health Assessment Report (Scan for data sources used for this CHA report.)

Videos/Webinars/Presentations (Required):

Strategies for finding public health data, Lesneski

Additional References (optional):
- Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce
  
  http://phpartners.org/health_stats.html#National%20Public%20Health%20Data%20Sets

Lesson 5: Analyzing and Interpreting Community Health Data & Prioritizing Health Issues

Objectives:
- Articulate a process for assembling community health data and determining community priorities
- Gain a basic understanding of the demographics of the county, the health status, and the major health risks and problems in a community
- Develop hypotheses to explain the health risks in a community
- Discuss processes for identifying community health priorities
- List major steps in creating the Community Health Assessment Report

Competencies: Epidemiology, informatics, communication & leadership

Required Readings:
1. NC Community Health Assessment Guide
   - Chapter 4, Analyze and Interpret County Data
   - Chapter 5, Determine Health Priorities
2. A Community-Based Participatory Planning Process and Multilevel Intervention Design: Toward Eliminating Cardiovascular Health Inequities

Videos/Webinars/Presentations (Required):
Public health priorities and strategic plans, Lesneski

Lesson 6: Current Issues in Community Health Assessment

Objectives:
- Describe the impact of the Affordable Care Act on community health improvement and assessments
- Identify successful policy and legal tools that have been used to improve health in a community
- List the priorities of the National Prevention Strategy
- Describe the role of GIS in community health assessments
- Understand the role of data systems in the future of community health improvement and assessment
**Competencies:** Health policy and management, communication, informatics, program planning, systems thinking

**Required Readings:**


**Videos/Webinars/Presentations:**
None

**Additional Readings (Optional):**

**Lesson 7: Community Health Action Plans and Evidence Based Public Health Practice**

**Objectives:**
- List the main components of a community health action plan
- Define evidence-based public health practice
- List several resources for evidence-based public health practice

**Competencies:** Leadership, professionalism, communication

**Required Readings:**
2. What Works for Health:  http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/what-works-for-health  
(View the tutorial and click on each link in the model.)

3. The Guide to Community Preventive Services:  
http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html (Select multiple areas to review and to use in your action plans.)

(Review all topics in this tutorial.)

5. Primary Care and Public Health: Exploring Integration to Improve Population Health:  
Summary and Chapter 2:  
http://www.nap.edu/chapterlist.php?record_id=13381&type=pdf_chapter&free=1

6. Redefining Public Health in New York City:  
http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2812%2960879-4/fulltext

Videos/Webinars/Presentations (Required):  
Public Health Interventions, Lesneski

Lesson 8 Materials, Community Health Improvement and the Built Environment (or a Public Health Issue Chosen by Your Team)

Objectives

1. Articulate the importance of translating evidence-based intervention into community practice  
2. Discuss the application of public health statistics to a community problem  
3. Understand the relationship of the built environment to public health.

Required Readings

http://ehis.ebscohost.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=5c8df4bc-db43-471b-9ea3-dd3b7dcda633%40sessionmgr113&vid=5&hid=115
2. North Carolina Community Health Assessment Process, Phase 8

Lecture

Required Lecture: Next Steps - Population Based Public Health Practice
Cheryl Lesneski, DrPh, PHLP

Additional Readings

Here are some additional (optional) references about public health and the built environment that you may find helpful or interesting:

Safe and Healthy Communities Consulting, "Tools, Publications and Presentations" at http://www.safehealthycommunities.com/tools_publications.html. Particularly recommended are the three California local health department case studies; the links are listed under "Publications and Reports".

ASTHO’s Smart Growth Toolkit http://www.astho.org/Programs/Environmental-Health/Built-and-Synthetic-Environment/Smart-Growth-Tool-Kit/

CDC’s Designing and Building Healthy Places website http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/

For those who are interested, CDC offers a listserv "Healthy Community Design News" that you can join here: http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/listserv.htm
### Evaluation of Learner Progress - Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-89%</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-75%</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 70%</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Points | 110 pts. |