



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

HPM 945 DISSERTATION PLANNING AND PREPARATION SUMMER, 2017 SYLLABUS

Department of Health Policy and Management
School of Public Health

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Course Overview

This course will guide students through the steps necessary to produce the outline of a dissertation proposal. In collaboration with faculty, students will assess the current state of their literature reviews on their chosen topic and how proposed research questions evolve from the literature reviews. Students will consider the use of conceptual models to guide their work and develop preliminary ideas about their proposed methodology and plan for change. The work will culminate in brief oral presentations of dissertation proposal outlines in person in August. Emphasis is on making independent progress on components of a proposal draft, with support and guidance from faculty and peers over eight class sessions during the summer.

Learning Objectives and CEPH Competencies

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| 1 | Apply knowledge gained in previous and concurrent courses to write and refine introductions to their topics and significance, research questions or problem statements, and conceptual models or frameworks, if applicable. | Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue. |
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2	Describe preliminary ideas about approaches to methodology.	Design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a public health issue.
3	Review key steps in the process of writing a doctoral dissertation, including strategies for overcoming challenges or obstacles and resources for additional writing assistance.	Create and implement strategic plans, in this case a doctoral dissertation.
4	Identify potential plans for change	<p>Design a system-level intervention to address a public health issue</p> <p>Propose strategies for health improvement and elimination of health inequities by organizing stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, community leaders and other partners</p> <p>Integrate knowledge, approaches, methods, values and potential contributions from multiple professions and systems in addressing public health programs</p>
5	Orally and in writing communicate clearly and succinctly a brief overview of their project plans.	Deliver training or educational experiences that promote learning in academic, organizational and community settings

Requirements and Expectations

Work Plan (10% of grade): Due June 6. Students must submit a Gantt chart work plan that includes your timetable for when you will have completed each of the following steps that will lead to a (partial) draft dissertation proposal and meet the requirements for the class. **Note: Short summaries/presentations of many of these deliverables are also included for class, however—more fleshed out information is needed for your final class paper. Thus, your Gantt chart should include both the short summaries required for class, and the longer sections required for the paper.**

These steps include:

- ◇ Identify the topic and explain why this topic is significant to the health of a population
- ◇ Complete the literature review
- ◇ Develop a specific, main research question or problem statement

- ◇ Identify/develop the conceptual framework, if applicable
- ◇ Write the introduction
- ◇ Describe preliminary ideas about approach to methodology
- ◇ Identify and describe possible data sources
- ◇ Define terms
- ◇ Provide initial ideas about a plan for change based upon outcome of project

(This process is iterative, rather than linear).

Students will draft the proposal with input from faculty and fellow students. As this is an iterative process, over the course of the summer, there will likely be refinements of the problem statement, revised literature reviews and research questions, introduction of a conceptual model (if you are using this), initial ideas about an approach to research design and methodology, and potential approaches to the plan for change.

Fall coursework (HPM 956 Fundamentals of Research Methods and Analysis) will prepare students for further planning regarding methodologies of data gathering, including primary data collection, the use of secondary data, and policy analysis. However, students should list in the final document all components of a complete dissertation proposal, regardless of level of completion at the close of the semester. The work plan (Gantt chart) that you develop will include internal deadlines for completion. Students will be permitted one adjustment of the deadline as necessary, after which point inadequate progress may affect the final grade in the course.

Overview of dissertation topic and significance (10% of your grade): Due June 6. Each student will prepare a 3-4 minute presentation for class to present your topic, significance and any appropriate background. You will be limited to 3 slides. Include why your topic is significant to the health of a population. (Note: your topic doesn't have to impact on everyone—but it must have the potential of positively impacting the health of the public).

Summary of literature review and draft research question (10% of grade): Due June 13. Each student will prepare a short summary of the main findings of their literature review followed by a draft research question. Be prepared to explain how the research question evolves from what was learned in the literature review.

Reaction Papers (15% of grade): Due June 20. Read the first six chapters in the Creswell text and write a brief (half of one single-spaced page is sufficient) reaction to the information contained in each chapter. Consider whether the information has relevance to your dissertation project and, if so, how you might use the information to shape your approach to your project. This exercise is meant to help you retain the information contained in these chapters as well as to help guide the development of your proposal. Maintain your reaction log or paper as one Word document, separated by chapter. Label it with your name and deliver to the instructor via email when it is completed.

One page dissertation summary/abstract (15% of grade): Due June 27. Prepare a one page dissertation summary that includes the topic, significance, background, proposed methods and

ideas on plan for change. This will be useful for early discussions with your chair, and later for introducing your proposal to potential committee members. Email to instructor.

Oral and Written Proposal (40% of grade): Due the week of August 15. When students are in Chapel Hill, they will make individual 20 minute oral presentations of dissertation proposal outlines to cohort, faculty and dissertation chairs. Logistics of scheduling presentations will be addressed during summer semester. A written copy of the dissertation proposal outline and any other material prepared for presentation in August (such as PowerPoint slides) will also be submitted to course faculty and dissertation chairs. The draft of the dissertation proposal is usually between 25-40 pages, double spaced, and must be shared with your chair at least one week before the presentation.

Class Participation

Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate in discussions and to provide constructive feedback to your fellow classmates. Failure to participate in class discussions can affect your final grade (ie, from H to a P). Also, freezing one's camera for extended periods of time can negatively impact your class participation grade, as the instructor does not know whether or not you are present.

Evaluation Method

Grade Components

Component	% of Grade
Work Plan (Gantt Chart)	10%
Dissertation topic and significance – presentation	10%
Literature review/draft research question - presentation	10%
Creswell reflections	15%
One page dissertation summary/abstract	15%
Written preliminary dissertation proposal & presentation	40%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

90-100	H
79-89	P
68-78	L

Recognizing, Valuing, and Encouraging Diversity

The importance of diversity is recognized in the mission statement of HPM. In the classroom, diversity *strengthens* the products, *enriches* the learning, and *broadens* the perspectives of all in the class. Diversity requires an atmosphere of inclusion and tolerance, which oftentimes challenges our own closely-held ideas, as well as our personal comfort zones. The results, however, create a sense of community and promote excellence in the learning environment. This class will follow principles of inclusion, respect, tolerance, and acceptance that support the values of diversity.

Diversity includes consideration of: (1) life experiences, including type, variety, uniqueness, duration, personal values, political viewpoints, and intensity; and (2) factors related to “diversity of presence,” including, among others, age, economic circumstances, ethnic identification, family educational attainment, disability, gender, geographic origin, maturity, race, religion, sexual orientation, social position, and veteran status.

UNC Honor Code, Plagiarism and Citation

The principles of academic honesty, integrity, and responsible citizenship govern the performance of all academic work and student conduct at the University as they have during the long life of this institution. Your acceptance of enrollment in the University presupposes a commitment to the principles embodied in the Code of Student Conduct and a respect for this most significant Carolina tradition. Your reward is in the practice of these principles.

Your participation in this course comes with the expectation that your work will be completed in full observance of the Honor Code. Academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable, because any breach in academic integrity, however small, strikes destructively at the University's life and work.

If you have any questions about your responsibility or the responsibility of faculty members under the Honor Code, please consult with someone in either the Office of the Student Attorney General (966-4084) or the Office of the Dean of Students (966-4042).

Read “The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance” (<http://instrument.unc.edu>).

Note: In the past, we have had students who have not properly cited when they used other people's work (eg, using direct passages from other studies without using quotations, or paraphrasing other people's work without giving proper attribution). We strongly encourage students to review the UNC Health Sciences Library information on plagiarism and citing sources.

It only takes about 15 minutes to review, and is available at:
<http://www.hsl.unc.edu/Services/Tutorials/PlagiarismTutorial/intro.html>.

Accommodations for People with Disabilities or Certain Medical Conditions

UNC-CH supports all reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability, or a pregnancy complication resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities.

All accommodations are coordinated through the UNC Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (ARS), <http://accessibility.unc.edu>; phone 919-962-8300, email accessibility@unc.edu. Students must document/register their need for accommodations with ARS before accommodations can be implemented.”

Course Evaluation

HPM participates in the UNC-CH’s online course evaluation system, enabled at the end of each semester by DigitalMeasures. Your responses will be anonymous, with feedback provided in the aggregate. Open-ended comments will be shared with instructors, but not identified with individual students. Your participation in course evaluation is an expectation, since providing constructive feedback is a professional obligation. Feedback is critical, moreover, to improving the quality of our courses, as well as for instructor assessment.

Resources

HPM 945 has its own website using Sakai software. (See <http://sakai.unc.edu>.)

Readings

Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, Fourth Edition by John Creswell (Sage, 2014).

Optional Texts:

The following book is recommended by a former DrPH student:

Kjell Erik Rudestam, Ph.D. and Rae Newton, Ph.D., authors of [Surviving Your Dissertation: A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process](http://www.amazon.com/Surviving-Your-Dissertation-Comprehensive-). (Sage, 2007). See <http://www.amazon.com/Surviving-Your-Dissertation-Comprehensive->

Content/dp/1412916798/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/102-5511588-8558512?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1173983992&sr=8-1

Other Resources:

UNC Writing Center

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/>

Review handouts on Writing the Paper, Grammar & Mechanics, Specific Writing Assignments (Literature Reviews, Dissertations), and Writing for Specific Fields (Political Science, Sciences)

Other resources (selected from UNC Writing Center site):

Advice on Research and Writing:

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mleone/web/how-to.html>

Writing, public speaking, dissertation management, burnout, and more.

[Advice for the Ph.D.-Lorn:](#)

<http://www.cc.gatech.edu/student.services/phd/phd-advice/>

Focused on math and computer science, this web page from Georgia Tech includes helpful links for all graduate students, including general links on success in graduate school, links pertaining to women's success in computer science (and for women graduate students, generally), "The Unwritten Milestones for the Ph.D." and other useful links.

[How to be a Good Graduate Student](#) DesJardins, Marie:

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html>

This essay talks about several phases of the graduate experience, including the dissertation. She discusses some helpful hints for staying motivated and doing consistent work.

[Survival in the Academy:](#)

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/docproject/handbook/part1.9.html>

A project of the University of Indiana Computer Science Department, this page offers some general advice for graduate students. The ABD section of the website includes research findings about ABD students, and helpful advice for avoiding the "ABD blues." It also includes a very helpful section on women's graduate experiences.

[Back to Dissertation Basics:](#)

<http://www.asgs.org/DissBscs.html>

A reprint from ASGS (the Association for the Support of Graduate Students), this article talks about the skills required for the completion of a doctoral dissertation. The homepage for [ASGS](http://www.asgs.org) <http://www.asgs.org/index.htm> offers other links and an archive of articles and advice.

[Dissertation Tips:](#)

<http://web.archive.org/web/20030203011257/www.citationonline.net/survdis.htm>

[The ABD Survival Guide Newsletter:](#)

<http://www.abdsurvivalguide.com/>

Information about the ABD Survival Guide newsletter (which is free) and other services from E-Coach (many of which are not free).

UNC Dissertation Forms

<http://gradschool.unc.edu/forms.html>

Guide to Theses and Dissertations: Electronic Submissions

<http://gradschool.unc.edu/etdguide/submission.html>

Class Schedule

<p>MAY 19 9:00-10:30 AM</p>	<p>SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF CLASS POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST FOR DRPH STUDENTS IN DISSERTATION RESEARCH AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM</p> <p>Professor: Sandra Greene Guest: Christin Daniels, MA, Director of Research and Co-Chair SPH COI committee</p>
<p>Session Learning Objectives:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the course is structured, what it will cover, and student assignments • Understand potential conflicts of interest with employers in conducting dissertation research and how to report and manage the conflicts.
<p>Readings/ Assignments</p>	<p>Begin reading the Creswell textbook for this course. Chapters 1-6 are due by June 20th. At the end of each chapter, write a one-half page reflection.</p>
<p>JUNE 6 4:00-5:25 PM</p>	<p>SESSION 2: KEY ELEMENTS OF A DRPH DISSERTATION Professor: Sandra Greene</p> <p>This session will begin with a brief overview of the structure of DrPH dissertations. Then each student will present their current thinking about a dissertation topic, significance and background.</p>

Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the components of a dissertation proposal Obtain instructor and student feedback on proposed topics and significance
Readings/ Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read description of DrPH dissertation (attached at the end of the syllabus) Continue reading chapters 1-6 in Creswell Prepare power point slides (maximum 3) to present topic, significance and background. Email to instructor Construct summer workplan/Gantt chart with deliverables throughout the summer. Email to instructor
JUNE 13 4:00 – 5:25 PM	SESSION 3: LITERATURE REVIEWS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS Professor: Sandra Greene
Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn how to convey key findings of a literature review Understand how research questions evolve from literature review findings
Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare power point slides (maximum 3) to present literature review findings and proposed research question. Email to instructor.
June 20 Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection paper on Creswell text – chapters 1-6. Email to instructor
JUNE 27 4:00-5:25 PM	SESSION 4: CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND PLANS FOR CHANGE Professor: Pam Silberman
Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conceptual models and how they are used in research The role of plans for change in DrPH dissertations
Assignment	Prepare one page dissertation proposal summary/abstract – to include topic, significance, background, proposed methods and potential plan for change.
JULY 11 4:00-5:25 PM	SESSION 5: PANEL DISCUSSION Professor: Sandra Greene
Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel discussion with alums. Learn from the experiences of others who have developed dissertation proposals and implemented them. <p>Mark Woodring, DrPH (Cohort 7) Heather Altman, DrPH (Cohort 9) Julie Osgood, DrPH (Cohort 10)</p>
Assignment	Dissertation chair check in: Share your one page proposal summary with your chair, and arrange for a phone conversation to discuss.
JULY 25 4:00-5:25 PM	SESSION 6: CONCEPTUAL MODELS, METHODS AND PLANS FOR CHANGE Professors: Sandra Greene
Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share beginnings of preliminary proposal with conceptual model, methods and plan for change

Class Discussion:	Half of the class will make a 5-7 minute presentation including one slide on each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model • Methods • Plan for change
Assignments	Power point slides for your presentation. Email to instructor
AUGUST 1 4:00-5:25 PM	CLASS 7: CONCEPTUAL MODELS, METHODS AND PLANS FOR CHANGE
Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share beginnings of preliminary proposal with conceptual model, methods and plan for change
Discussion:	The other half of the class will make a 5-7 minute presentation including one slide on each of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual model • Methods • Plan for change
Assignments	Power point slides for your presentation. Email to instructor
Week of August 15 TBD	FINAL PRESENTATIONS
Session Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Research skills
Assignments	Make a 20 minute oral presentation on their dissertation topic, literature review, research questions, conceptual model (if any), proposed methodologies, and preliminary thinking about your plan for change. There will be 10 minutes for questions and answers following the presentation. Students should ask their chairs to be present at the presentation.

APPENDIX A
OUTLINE OF DRPH DISSERTATIONS
(Source: DrPH Handbook)

Outline of Traditional DrPH Dissertations

Chapter 1: The Topic. The topic must be innovative and significant. “Innovative” means the dissertation must either identify new approaches to existing or past problems or apply existing approaches to new problems. “Significant” means that the dissertation’s implementation plan must have the potential to create one or more important improvements in the health of the public, or that the identification and understanding of past failures and successes illuminates principles of organizational change or policy implementation that have application in improving future health policy.

Focus: Most dissertations will focus on either:

- A change at the top level of an organization or a set of organizations that improves the organizations’ ability to improve the public’s health; or
- Policy development and implementation at the local, regional, state, or national level aimed at improving the public’s health

Researchable: The topic must be able to be stated as a research question.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. The dissertation must produce a scholarly analytical synthesis that demonstrates the student’s ability to critically evaluate the relevant literatures on leadership and organizational or policy change as they relate to understanding the issue or problem and identifying alternative courses of action.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter identifies and describes the appropriate tools to study the issue being examined. The methods used in the dissertation fall under the general rubric of “mechanisms for social change” and may include one or more of the following, as is appropriate for the topic: quantitative data analysis, including large data sets; qualitative analysis; or policy analysis. Policy analysis should include an analysis of the problem (needs statement), establishment of goals and evaluation criteria, identification of alternative policies to address the problem, evaluation of the alternative policies using the evaluation criteria, and a description of the implementation and evaluation plans.

Chapter 4: Results. This chapter describes what was found as a result of studying the issue using the methods described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5: The Implementation Plan (Plan for Change). This section is the centerpiece of the DrPH dissertation and should be comprehensively detailed. This chapter presents an explicit strategy for addressing the issue with a focus on the resources, players, and contextual parameters affecting the change and should include a proposed evaluation methodology.

This section includes an application of the core elements of the DrPH leadership curriculum depicted on the triangle’s borders in Figure 1, including:

- 1) The resources necessary to implement and maintain the organizational change or policy including people, funds and other infrastructure elements.
- 2) The players affecting the change including key stakeholders (i.e. populations, communities) and key decision-makers.
- 3) The contextual parameters affecting the change including law and policy, organizational or situational authority, ethics, political and public feasibility, and the prevailing social environment and norms.

Other topics covered in the curriculum (communications, informatics, policy analysis, social forecasting, scheduling, negotiation, assessment, planning, assurance, public relations, marketing, and evaluation) should be

incorporated as applicable. (See inner circle, Figure 1). The implementation plan combines the various elements of the curriculum in a coherent and comprehensive strategy for making organizational or policy change.

Chapter 6: Discussion. This chapter explains how the plan will improve the public's health if implemented, incorporating the principles identified in the analysis in Chapter 5. It identifies any drawbacks/limitations and explains why the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It also describes the plan's potential for further dissemination.

Outline of 3-Paper Option DrPH Dissertations

Chapter 1: The Topic and Literature Review. The topic must be innovative and significant as with the traditional dissertation. *Note: The chair and/or committee may want this to be split into more than one Chapter, with a more extensive methodology section than what is included in your manuscripts for publication (eg, Chapters 2-4).*

The literature review must be an analytical synthesis that demonstrates the student's ability to critically evaluate the relevant literatures on leadership and organizational or policy change as they relate to understanding the issue or problem and identifying alternative courses of action. The literature review should provide the detailed literature critique that is not usually included in empirical journal articles.

Focus: Most dissertations will focus on either:

- A change at the top level of an organization or a set of organizations that improves the organizations' ability to improve the public's health; or
- Policy development and implementation at the local, regional, state, or national level aimed at improving the public's health

Researchable: The topic must be able to be stated as a research question.

Chapters 2-4: One manuscript per chapter. Each manuscript should be a journal length paper that is written and formatted according to target journal requirements.

Chapter 5: The Implementation Plan ("Plan for Change"). This section is the centerpiece of the DrPH dissertation and should be comprehensively detailed. This chapter presents an explicit strategy for addressing the issue with a focus on the resources, players, and contextual parameters affecting the change and should include a proposed evaluation methodology.

This section includes an application of the core elements of the DrPH leadership curriculum depicted on the triangle's borders in Figure 1, including:

- 4) The resources necessary to implement and maintain the organizational change or policy including people, funds and other infrastructure elements.
- 5) The players affecting the change including key stakeholders (i.e. populations, communities) and key decision-makers.
- 6) The contextual parameters affecting the change including law and policy, organizational or situational authority, ethics, political and public feasibility, and the prevailing social environment and norms.

Other topics covered in the curriculum (communications, informatics, policy analysis, social forecasting, scheduling, negotiation, assessment, planning, assurance, public relations, marketing, and evaluation) should be incorporated as applicable. (See inner circle, Figure 1). The implementation plan combines the various elements of the curriculum in a coherent and comprehensive strategy for making organizational or policy change.

Chapter 6: Discussion. This chapter explains would synthesize findings across dissertation papers and discuss their implications for future research, practice, and/or policy. Additional discussion would include how the plan will improve the public's health if implemented, incorporating the principles identified in the analysis in Chapters

2-4. It identifies any drawbacks/limitations and explains why the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. It also describes the plan's potential for further dissemination.

Appendices: For details not included in the Chapters 2-4 journal articles, but necessary for the detail traditionally included in a dissertation, students should use additional appendices