

PUBH 771: Communicating public health through writing
Summer 2017

Course overview

PUBH 771 is a 2 credit course offered online. This course is designed to provide students an opportunity to gain writing skills they need in a public health practice career. Five types of writing projects will be covered in this course: systematic reviews and literature syntheses, policy analyses and summaries, program planning papers, research and evaluation papers and funding proposals. Students will practice different components of each type of writing with the topic of their choice. The Public Health Leadership Program accepts masters papers reflecting the types of writing used in practice; thus, this course will also prepare students for writing a master's paper in the Public Health Leadership Program.

Faculty: Anna Schenck, PhD, MSPH (anna.schenck@unc.edu), Professor of the Practice of Public Health

Office hours: I am happy to talk with you by phone or skype if you need an individual appointment. Please contact Chantal Donaghy to schedule appointment (Donaghy@email.unc.edu).

Course objectives: By the end of the course, students will

- 1) Frame a question about a public health concerns that is appropriate for scholarly inquiry;
- 2) Conduct literature searches and summarize and synthesize findings;
- 3) Identify and use appropriate writing approaches for different practice situations;
- 4) Understand and use citations appropriately;
- 5) Be able to convey a public health problem clearly and propose a plan of inquiry in writing.

Required Text: This class has no required texts. I have selected readings from a number of sources and will provide links to these assigned readings.

Competencies: This course is designed to assure MPH students meet the following communication competencies identified by the Council for Education on Public Health:

- Choose appropriate strategies for communicating a public health issue to various audiences, including stakeholders at all levels and sectors
- Write technical or professional papers on public health issues

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, which is valuable in itself and is critical to maximizing the learning that occurs in this course. This class follows principles of inclusion, tolerance, and respect for multiple and diverse points of view.

The University of North Carolina Honor Code: Carolina students enjoy a great deal of freedom and have been entrusted to hold each other accountable for maintaining a just and safe community. As such, students hear and decide all alleged cases of conduct and academic integrity violations.

The Honor Code is the heart of integrity at Carolina. In brief, the Honor Code says that all students shall "Refrain from lying, cheating, or stealing," but the Honor Code means much more. It is the guiding force behind the students' responsible exercise of freedom, the foundation of student self-governance here at UNC-Chapel Hill. The University maintains an Honor Code because we believe that all members of our community should be responsible for upholding the values that have been agreed upon by the community. A written Honor Code is an affirmation of our commitment to high standards of conduct inside and outside of the classroom.

The Honor Code is found in a document known as the [*Instrument of Student Judicial Governance*](#). The Instrument is the University's official document containing the rules and regulations that guide the Honor System. The list of prohibited conduct and the possible sanctions given by the Honor Court can all be found in the *Instrument*. This document also includes information on the rights and responsibilities of all members of our community to the Honor System and under the Honor System.

Work submitted in this course must be your own and must have the honor code pledge on the cover page or last page. Assignments submitted without the honor code pledge will not be graded.

Honor Code Pledge: "By including this sentence, I acknowledge that I understand that the Honor Code applies to this assignment and that further, I attest that I have neither given nor received help in completing this project."

Assignments and grading: This course is taught in 10 modules. You will be expect to complete one or more assignments for each module. In addition, there will be a final project. Descriptions of the assignments will be included under each Module in the sakai site. Student grades for this course will be based on three components: participation, assignments and the final project:

1. Participation will count 20%. You will learn as much from each other as you will from the readings or my feedback, but only if you are willing to engage in reviewing and making suggestions for your colleagues' writing samples.
2. Assignments will count 50%. Each of the 10 modules will have at least one written assignment. The assignments for each module are weighted equally and count towards 50% of the grade in the course.
3. Final project will count 30%. You will be given instructions to follow in preparing your final project. Your grade on this component will be based on the extent to which you demonstrate understanding of the material presented in this course.

Grades for the course will be assigned using the graduate school grading scale, with the following cutpoints: H = 93 – 100, P = 80 – 92, L = 70 – 79, F = below 70

Participating in an online class: Participating in an online class is very much like participating in an "in-person" class. The class components - lectures, activities, readings and assignments - will seem familiar to you. In this class, however, your participation is "virtual." The discussion forums serve as our classroom and are where we will conduct our activities associated with each module. We will also use a general

discussion forum. The general discussion forum a space for you to “raise your hand” to ask a question – much like you would in an “in-person” class. Please post general questions that occur while you are reading the lecture, the assigned materials or activity instructions under the general discussion forum. When you post, all other students are able to see your question and the response. This also means that you will need to review the general discussion forum each week to be sure you have seen any recently added material.

**PUBH 771 Schedule at a Glance
Summer 2017**

Modules	Timeframe	Content
Module 1	May 17-23	Course overview and assessment
Module 2	May 24-30	Scholarly inquiry in public health, types of written communication and components of scientific writing
Module 3	May 31-June 6	Reviewing what is already known – searching the literature
Module 4	June 7-13	Giving credit where credit is due – using citations appropriate
Module 5	June 14-20	Writing type 1: systematic review
Module 6	June 21-27	Writing type 2: program plan
Mid-summer break No assignments June 28 - July 4		
Module 7	July 5-11	Writing type 3: policy analysis
Module 8	July 12-18	Writing type 4: research or evaluation plan or report
Module 9	July 19-25	Writing type 5: proposal preparation
Module 10	July 26-27	Common pitfalls and problems in writing about science
Final Exam	July 31	Complete final exam and course evaluation Constructing a writing plan