Introduction to Implementation Research and Practice in Public Health

(Credit Hours: 3)
Department of Health Policy and Management
UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

Spring, 2018 Syllabus

Class Location and Time: Online, Asynchronous + Live Discussion Sessions (Time TBD)

Faculty: W. Oscar Fleming, DrPH (c), MSPH
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Phone: 919-962-7193

Office Hours: Online office hours will typically be Tuesday's at 9:30 a.m. Office hours can also be accessed by appointment. You are invited and encouraged to contact me any time if you have questions or need assistance, and I will respond as soon as I am able.

Course Description: Internationally, there is a substantial gap between the development of innovations in public health and their delivery in routine practice. Implementation research and practice have emerged as a means of addressing that gap. Implementation research is defined as “the scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and other evidence-based practices” to improve the quality of service delivery in routine care settings (Eccles & Mittman, 2006). It includes the study of influences on professional and organizational behavior that impact implementation effectiveness. This is one of the four courses in the Global Online MPH program’s Implementation Science concentration. It will provide an overview of the core theories and methods in implementation research and practice and will cover implementation determinants and strategies at the intervention, individual, organizational, and policy levels. Through individual and group assignments, students will have numerous opportunities to apply principles to their own areas of interest and to implementation problems in global public health. In addition to course readings and individual and group assignments, regular online synchronous discussion sections will be scheduled to facilitate learning. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to: 1) identify implementation gaps in a wide-range of domestic and global health service settings; 2) describe and apply core concepts of implementation research and practice; 3) use theories and frameworks to inform implementation research and practice; 4) assess multi-level barriers and facilitators (i.e., determinants) of implementation effectiveness; 5) apply strategies to implement, sustain, and scale-up effective practices; and 6) align their academic and applied work to priorities within the field of implementation science.
## Summary Outline and Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module/Week:</th>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Assignment:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W1: 1/10/18 – 1/14/18</td>
<td>Introduction to Implementation Research and Practice</td>
<td>Introductory Post and Responses (Due 1/15/18)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W2: 1/15/18 – 1/21/18</td>
<td>Guiding Conceptual Frameworks and Theories</td>
<td>Ind. Paper 1 (Due 1/21/18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W3: 1/22/18 – 1/28/18</td>
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<td>Post (Due 1/28/18) and Responses (Due 1/31/18)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W4: 1/29/18 – 2/4/18</td>
<td>Overview of Implementation Strategies; Intervention-Focused Determinants and Strategies</td>
<td>Ind. Paper 2 (Due 2/4/18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W5: 2/5/18 – 2/11/18</td>
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<td>Post (Due 2/11/18) and Responses (Due 2/14/18)</td>
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<td><strong>Module 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W6: 2/12/18 – 2/18/18</td>
<td>Assessing Individual-Level Determinants; Individual-level Implementation Strategies</td>
<td>Group Paper 1 (Due 2/18/18)</td>
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<td>W7: 2/19/18 – 2/25/18</td>
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<td>Post (Due 2/25/18) and Responses (Due 2/28/18)</td>
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<td><strong>Module 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W9: 3/5/18 – 3/11/18</td>
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<td>Post (Due 3/7/18) and Responses (Due 3/10/18)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Module 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W10: 3/19/18 – 3/25/18</td>
<td>Organizational-Level Implementation Strategies (Part 2)</td>
<td>Post (Due 3/25/18) and Responses (Due 3/28/18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W11: 3/26/18 – 4/1/18</td>
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<td>Group Paper 3 (Due 4/1/18)</td>
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<td><strong>Module 7</strong></td>
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<td>W12: 4/2/18 – 4/8/18</td>
<td>Assessing and Changing the Enabling Environment; Multi-Level Determinants and Implementation Strategies</td>
<td>Post (Due 4/8/18) and Responses (4/11/18)</td>
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<td>W13: 4/9/18 – 4/15/18</td>
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<td>None (Work on Final Assignments)</td>
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<td><strong>Module 8</strong></td>
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<td>W14: 4/16/18 – 4/22/18</td>
<td>Sustainability and Scale-Up; Future Directions in Implementation Research and Practice</td>
<td>None (Work on Final Assignments)</td>
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**NOTE:** Assignments are due at 11:55 p.m. EST on the dates listed.

**Course Materials:** All the materials for this course will be posted on Sakai. The materials for each week’s lesson (including introductory PowerPoint presentation(s), readings, online lectures/webinars, and assignment details) will typically be posted no later than the preceding Saturday.
**Course Structure and Activities:** This course will involve:

1) completing assigned reading and review of other course materials,
2) participating in synchronous online discussion sessions,
3) contributing and responding to content on the course discussion board,
4) the completion of individual and group papers that will allow you to apply key concepts to a case study pertinent to global public health, and
5) a final reflection paper in which you apply the lessons from this course to your own area of interest.

These assignments are detailed in brief below; however, further details will be provided on Sakai.

**Readings and Other Materials:** Required readings are all listed below, along with additional, optional readings, online lectures/webinars, and useful tools. I will provide context for the readings, and help you to focus in on the key points that I hope that you take away from the assigned readings and any optional materials. You are also encouraged to seek out articles in your area of interest to supplement course material. All readings and additional course materials will be posted on Sakai in the “Resources” section.

**Synchronous Online Discussion Sessions:** Approximately every 2 weeks we will have an online synchronous discussion session that will last between 30-60 minutes. These sessions will be mandatory, and we will work as a class to schedule a time that works for the class. These sessions serve three primary purposes: First, they will provide me the opportunity to introduce new material and to draw connections between the readings, course materials, and resources. Second, they will allow us to learn from each other’s unique experiences and expertise as we strive to apply implementation-related concepts to different public health problems and contexts. Finally, it will give you a chance to ask any lingering questions or concerns that arise throughout the semester.

**Discussion Board Posts and Responses:** One of the ways that we will engage with the material and with each other throughout the semester will be through the discussion board. While it is always an option to facilitate dialogue through the discussion board, you will be formally required to post and to interact with your classmates on 7 occasions as noted in the summary outline above.

**Individual and Group Papers:** Individual and group papers will give you an opportunity to apply the content of this course. Except for the final group paper, these papers will all be relatively brief (1000 word limit). Individual papers 1 & 2 will focus on articulating the relevance of implementation research and practice and applying conceptual frameworks, respectively. The group papers will focus on the application of course content to a case study. Group papers 1-3 will provide a solid foundation for the final group paper, which will involve developing a comprehensive implementation plan for your group’s specific public health problem.

**Final Course Reflection Paper:** You will be given detailed instructions for a final course reflection paper (1500 word limit) that will allow you to demonstrate your comprehension of key course concepts and your ability to articulate their relevance to your area of interest.

**Grade Components:**

HPM 719
Spring 2018

W. Oscar Fleming
UNC-Chapel Hill
Assignments and Course Activities: | Points:
---|---
Discussion Board Posts (7) | 10
Individual Paper 1 | 10
Individual Paper 2 | 10
Group Paper 1 | 10
Group Paper 2 | 10
Group Paper 3 | 10
Final Implementation Plan | 15
Final Course Reflection Paper | 10
Participation | 15
**Total** | 100

**Grading Scale**: 
90-100: *Honors* indicates exceptional graduate-level work. Assignments must meet or exceed performance expectations, as defined for each assignment.

70-89: *Pass* indicates that assignments are acceptable with regard to both content and presentation, but contain one or more deficiencies related to performance expectations.

65-69: *Low pass* indicates marginally acceptable graduate-level work. Assignments show some major deficiency with respect to content or presentation.

< 65: Fail indicates that the assignment does not meet an acceptable level for graduate-level work.

*These are guidelines, and are not meant to be absolute numbers.

**UNC-Chapel Hill Resources:**
The UNC-CH Learning Center (http://learningcenter.unc.edu) provides assistance and tutoring in expository writing. All students are encouraged to make use of this resource regardless of whether English is a first language or not.

**Valuing, Recognizing, and Encouraging 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 we expect in this program. 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 others 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 will follow principles of inclusion, respect, tolerance, and acceptance that support the values of diversity.

**Disability Accommodation:**
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.
Course Evaluation:
HPM participates in the UNC-CH’s online course evaluation system. 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.

I will conduct an independent course evaluation via Qualtrics before spring break. The purpose of the evaluation is to gather feedback from students regarding how I can improve the course in the second half of the semester.

UNC Honor Code:
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). Please see “The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance” (http://instrument.unc.edu).
Course Outline:

Module 1 (1/10-14/2018): Introduction to Implementation Research and Practice
- Quality gaps and the poor translation of research into practice
- Defining key terms
- Examining the scope and utility of implementation research in a broad array of contexts internationally and domestically
- Prioritization of implementation research and practice

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “Welcome to Introduction to Implementation Research and Practice in Public Health”
- “Core elements of implementation research and practice”

Readings:

Additional Reading (Optional)

- Introduction to a broad conceptual model of implementation research
- Evidence-based practices, implementation strategies, and implementation outcomes
- Purpose of using frameworks and theories
- Types of frameworks and theories
- Range of conceptual frameworks available
- Determinant, Process and Evaluation frameworks

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “Introduction to frameworks and theories in implementation research”
• “How frameworks can guide the evaluation of implementation determinants, the design and execution of implementation processes, and the assessment of implementation outcomes.”

Readings:

Videos:

Additional Reading (Optional):


- Defining implementation strategies
- Range of strategies available and Importance of careful specification
- Selecting and tailoring strategies to context
- Overview of characteristics likely to influence adoption, implementation, and sustainability
- Designing for dissemination and implementation
- Common elements of evidence-based interventions
- Fidelity and adaptation

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “Defining, identifying, specifying, selecting, and applying implementation strategies.”
- “Intervention-focused determinants and how they can be leveraged to promote implementation”

Readings:


Videos:


- Assessing the range of individual-level determinants that influence implementation
- Available measures that could inform individual-level determinants
- Developing and applying implementation strategies that address individual determinants
- Examining the strengths and limitations of training as an implementation strategy

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “Assessing individual-level determinants of implementation”
- “Applying implementation strategies to address individual-level determinants”

Readings:

Video:

- Assessing organizational-level determinants such as organizational structure, organizational Culture and climate, networks and communications, psychological safety, organizational readiness for change, implementation climate, and leadership.
- Foundational principles of organizational change
- Implementation teams
- Facilitation
- Examples of innovative organizational implementation strategies

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “Assessing organizational-level (or “inner setting”) determinants of implementation”
- “Foundations of organizational implementation strategies and common strategies”
- “How innovative implementation strategies are addressing common organizational-level determinants of implementation”

Readings:
Videos:

Tools:

SPRING BREAK 3/12-3/16/2018

Module 6: Organizational-Level Implementation Strategies (Part 2)
- Foundational principles of organizational change
- Implementation teams
- Facilitation

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “Foundations of organizational implementation strategies and common strategies”

Readings:

Videos:
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTSGGvKAmck)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB9cbs3zDY4)

Tools:
1. Implementation Climate Measures 

   (http://4mplementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-3)

Additional Readings (optional)

Module 7: Assessing and Changing the Enabling Environment; Multi-Level Determinants and Implementation Strategies
- Policy implementation research
- Importance of addressing the enabling environment (i.e., the “outer setting” or “policy ecology”)
- Effective implementation may require multilevel implementation strategies
- These strategies should be carefully selected and thoughtfully aligned
- Case examples illustrate the need and potential utility of these strategies

Introductory PowerPoint:
- “The oft-neglected outer context: The need for the identification, development, and testing of strategies that address financial, policy, and societal structures”
- “The importance of addressing multi-level determinants in implementation research and practice”

Readings:


**Videos:**


**Additional Reading (Optional):**


**Module 8: Sustainability and Scale-Up; Future Directions in Implementation Research and Practice**

- Defining sustainability and scale-up
- State of the literature and key conceptual frameworks
- Consolidate “lessons learned” in the course
- Cast the vision of what is to come in implementation research and practice

**Introductory PowerPoint:**

- “The challenges of sustainment and scale-up”
- “A provisional agenda for the future of implementation research and practice”

**Readings:**


**Videos:**


**Tool:**

1. Program Sustainability Assessment Tool (https://sustaintool.org)