

**SYLLABUS**  
**Introduction to Public Health**  
**SPHG 600.001, Fall 2015**

**Course Time and Location**

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 – 12:15

2306 McGavran-Greenberg Building

**Course Instructors** (*Office hours are by appointment*)

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**Course Description**

*Introduction to Public Health* is a graduate level course that provides graduate and professional students, with foundational knowledge of public health's historical contributions; the ethical bases; key terms and concepts; system organization; and the social, behavioral, environmental, and biological factors that contribute to specific individual and community health outcomes through interactive learning strategies and the application and integration of concepts to understand and prevent current public health problems and those facing public health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand how historical events and threats to public health have informed the evolution of public health.
- Utilize public health concepts and data to prevent and address population based health outcomes.
- Engage others in dialogue to identify solutions for public health issues.
- Compare public health in the U.S. to other countries to realize the global nature of the discipline.

**Course Competencies**

*Course competencies are based on the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) Critical Content for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

1. Embrace and justify a definition of public health that captures the unique characteristics of the field in terms of its history, core values, functions, and philosophy.
2. Demonstrate understanding of key public health concepts, processes, methods, and data that are essential in understanding a public health problem and the approaches essential to public health practice.
3. Describe how biological, environmental, social, economic, behavioral, cultural, and other factors that impact human health, influence the global and societal burden of disease, and contribute to health disparities as well as specific individual and community health outcomes.
4. Communicate and value the legal and ethical bases for public health and the respectful engagement with people of different cultures and socioeconomic structures.
5. Demonstrate and value the contributions of the multiple public health disciplines and other disciplines and stakeholders in working collaboratively with diverse communities, constituencies (e.g. researchers, practitioners, agencies and organizations) to advance public health goals.
6. Explain the evolution of the public health system and characterize the U.S. public health system in terms of its organizational structure, policies, and objectives, and how the U.S. system compares to public health systems in other countries.

**Course Communications**

All communications related to the course including messages to the lead instructor or TA should be sent using the Sakai message tool. *All assignments should be submitted using the Assignment tool in Sakai. Please do not submit via Drop Box.*

### Course Structure

Multiple forms of learning will be used to meet the course competencies. One technique that will be used throughout the course is cooperative learning. This technique allows students to work in small groups to fulfill structured learning tasks. In addition, the course includes several guest lecturers to reinforce concepts using real world experiences.

### Required Course Resources

There is no required textbook. Course resources, including readings, lectures, videos, and podcasts will be available on the Sakai site.

**Course Materials:** The course schedule, assignments, and syllabus are available on Sakai.

### Overview of Course Assignments – *All assignments are due by 5pm on the date due.*

Assignment	Type	Percent of final grade	Due Date
What is Public Health	Individual	5 %	8/19
Culminating Project		50 %	
Part 1	Individual		9/8
Part 2	Individual		10/1
Part 3	Group		10/29
Part 4	Group		TBD
Discussion Forums	Small groups	20 %	9/17, 9/22
Public Health Reflections	Individual	15 %	11/19
Participation	Individual	10 %	9/3
• Completion of CITI training and Plagiarism tutorial			ongoing
• Attendance			

### Description of Assignments – *Please visit the class's Sakai Assignment folder for additional details on the assignments.*

1. **What is Public Health? (5% of grade):** Find a video or identify a photo to use in conveying what you see as public health and use it as a tool for introducing yourself to the class. Be prepared to explain what you chose and to introduce yourself during class on August 20<sup>th</sup> (due to Sakai by 5:00 pm 8/19 to be compiled by TA in class PowerPoint). You will only have 1.5 minutes to deliver your introduction.
2. **Courageous Discussion Forums (10% of grade each session):** There will be two sessions for students to delve more deeply into discussion of sensitive topics – race and socioeconomic status – that are relevant to public health. Each group will need to assign the following roles to its members: discussion facilitator, note-taker, article synthesizers, and blogger. Everyone should be active discussants in addition to their role. At the end of the session, the note taker will be responsible for summarizing the discussion, getting feedback from group, and posting it on the class's blog site.
  - a. **Pre-session assignment:** Recommended resources will be provided.
  - b. **Post-session blog:** Following each Courageous Discussion Forum, each student should be prepared to respond individually and substantively to the various summaries posted by the other groups. This activity is designed to encourage active engagement in the course session and to facilitate ongoing discussion of sensitive topics. You will be expected to engage at least 2 online discussions of group summaries.

3. **Public Health Seminar Reflections (15% of grade):** The purpose of this assignment is for students to gain exposure to current public health topics and methodologies that are outside of their program of study. Students are required to attend two public health seminars over the course of the semester and write a 1-page reflection on their experience. And submit through Sakai using Assignment tool. This assignment may be fulfilled by attending any public health seminar held in the Gillings School that is not sponsored by your home department. For a list of public health seminars/events in the Gillings School, visit and sign-up for *This Week in Public Health*, <http://sph.unc.edu/comm/sph-weekly-news/>. If you are unable to find a time to attend a seminar outside of your field of study then you may consider exploring live webcasts on public health topics available at [www.CDNetwork.org](http://www.CDNetwork.org) – often you can sign up and view the webcast at a later date than when scheduled. Think of this as an opportunity to explore who your SPH faculty and staff are and what research and projects are going on at the school. Your **reflection** should not simply be a summary of the seminar, rather it should include thoughtful considerations about what you learned (e.g., salient points relevant to your own work/research, considerations on how this information can be used in public health, how the information may relate to another public health topic, the value provided by the specific research, etc.)
4. **Culminating Project (4 parts - 50% of grade):** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the public health concepts covered in the course by selecting a topic related to the University's *Food for All* theme (further information provided here: <http://uncnews.unc.edu/2015/04/28/unc-chapel-hill-explores-food-for-all-with-2015-2017-campus-theme>; example topics: malnutrition, obesity, infant and toddler feeding). This assignment consists of four parts that will be spread across the semester.

**Part I:** Provide a summary and rationale for your chosen topic that includes public health measures (e.g. statistical data and trends); the population most affected by the issue; a synopsis of the public health literature on the topic; and the historical and cultural aspects and/or ethical implications related to topic. This is an individual assignment that entails a 4-5 page paper and it will be worth 10% of your final culminating project grade – due: 9/8. **Example:** Poor nutrition is a reality for 165 million children under the age of 5 in the world today. Approximately one in four children under 5 years old are stunted (26 per cent in 2011) and 80% of the world's 165 million stunted children live in just 14 countries. --- etc. (Reference: [http://www.unicef.org/media/files/nutrition\\_report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/media/files/nutrition_report_2013.pdf))

**Part II:** In this section, you will need to individually address and discuss in 3-4 pages the following as they relate to your topic: 1 social/behavioral determinant; the underlying biological mechanism; a public health theory, model, or framework that was presented in class (e.g. life course framework, social-ecological model); identify and justify relevant public health policies or laws; and describe current efforts to address the problem. This individual assignment will be worth 15% of your final culminating project grade – due: 10/1. **Example:** Dietary habits and physical activity are two behavioral determinants of obesity. A biologic pathway may involve the immune system. (Reference: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16150379>)

**Part III:** This is a team-based component that will require the identification of a shared topic based on each individual team member's Parts I and II. This component will require in-depth discussion and the analysis of the multiple concepts, approaches, and frameworks/models. Once an agreed upon topic has been determined, the team will repeat Parts I and II. In addition, this component should include what your group has selected as the novel/innovative approach or next step to eliminate/or curtail the issue with justification. A 3-4 page group summary of your team project along with peer assessments will determine the final grade for this component which will be worth 15% of your final culminating project grade. You will have class time on 10/8 to work as a group. The summary will be due on 10/29.

**Part IV:** Presentation of Part 3 – Using PowerPoint/Prezi and any other innovative/creative elements, each group will present their chosen approach. This assignment entails a 30 minute "flip-class" presentation (i.e. when each group has an opportunity to design and implement a class session on their group topic). This part will be worth 10% of your final culminating project grade and includes peer assessments. Dates for the final presentation are 11/10 -11/19.

5. **Class Participation (10% of grade):** Students are expected to be actively engaged in all class discussions and to contribute to the discourse in a positive and valuable manner. The participation grade will be based on attendance and contributions to the blog site.
- Only 1 excused absence is allowed. An excused absence is one that is due to religious observance, immediate family or personal major illness, death in immediate family, or required attendance as a university representative. Each instructor will monitor contributions, conduct, and attendance and a combined score will be assigned as the final grade. Adhering to the following is strongly encouraged.

Classroom Etiquette and Expectations:

- Please arrive promptly. Please notify the lead instructor (Dr. Vines) ahead of time if you must miss a class for an important reason.
- Please do not use laptops during class unless the session requires use.
- Please turn off all cell phones.
- Please schedule time to meet with instructor if you have any questions or concerns.
- All assignments including readings and/or viewing of media are expected to be done prior to class.
- Please avoid all forms of academic misconduct. For more information, please visit the UNC Office of Student Conduct.
- CITI Training – Students should submit proof of completion to the instructor through Sakai by 9/3. You may access CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative) training at <http://research.unc.edu/offices/clinical-trials/training/citi/> or [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)
- Plagiarism Tutorial: Students should submit proof of completion to the instructor through Sakai by 9/3. <http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/plagiarism/>.

### Final Grading Scale

The letter grade equivalence to the graduate scale that will be used in the course is:

- H (94-100%)
- P (75-93%)
- L (70-75%)
- F (<70%).

Note: Late group work will not be counted. Individual assignments that are late will lose 5 points for every day late. Rounding of the final course grade is at the discretion of the instructor.

### Writing Resources for Course Assignments

The UNC Writing Center is a free service available to students for assistance with the writing process. Assistance is available through face-to-face consultation, online, and by phone. The Center also hosts a number of workshops, presentations, and short courses to assist students, especially international students. Please visit the Center's website for more information including hours of operations: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>.

The Health Sciences Library (HSL) is another resource that will prove invaluable throughout your tenure at the Gillings School. The library offers a range of classes designed to help you make the most of the resources available to you. Additionally, the School of Public Health librarian, Mellanye Lackey ([mjlackey@unc.edu](mailto:mjlackey@unc.edu)), is available to assist you with your research information needs.

### UNC Chapel Hill Honor System

As set forth in the [Instrument of Student Judicial Government](#), Carolina students pledge to maintain ideals of academic honesty, personal integrity, and responsible citizenship. **We expect your full participation and observance of the Honor Code. No form of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism or unauthorized collaboration will be tolerated.** Please review the Instrument and make sure you understand the policies contained in it. If you have any questions or concerns during the course, please immediately consult with the instructor or the TA. In addition, please take a moment to complete this brief [Plagiarism Tutorial](#) created by the librarians of area UNC-system schools.

## **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 course. Our own closely held ideas and personal comfort zones may be challenge. 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, 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.**

## **Course Evaluation**

We strongly encourage your completion of an anonymous online course evaluation assessing the quality of the course. Instructors only see aggregate data with any comments provided after the final grade roster has been submitted. The system opens during the last two weeks of class in late November. It is your responsibility as the student to complete the evaluation. Class time (15 minutes) will be provided on 12/1 to complete the evaluation.

### **Note:**

**The instructors for this class reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus, including assignment due dates, when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules.**

## Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
1	8/18	What is Public Health? Part I	Instructors
	8/20	What is Public Health? Part II	Instructors
2	8/25	Public Health Leadership	Claudia Fernandez
	8/27	Ecological Basis and Evidence Based Public Health	Anna Schenck
3	9/1	Public Health Ethics	Instructors/Small groups
	9/3	Cultural Humility	Instructor
4	9/8	Social and Behavioral Theories and Frameworks	Erline Miller
	9/10	Health Disparities	Instructor
5	9/15	Biological Basis of Public Health	Lydia Feinstein
	9/17	Race and Genetics	Group
6	9/22	Socioeconomic Status	Group
	9/24	Public Health Systems Science	Kristen Hassmiller-Lich
7	9/29	Community-based Public Health	Alexandra Lightfoot
	10/1	Food for All – Public Health Relevance	Alice Ammerman
8	10/6	Public Health Preparedness	Aaron Fleishauer
	10/8	OPEN – final project synthesizing session	Groups
9	10/13	No Class	
	10/15	No Class – Fall Break	
10	10/20	Overview of U.S. Public Health System	Anissa Vines
	10/22	Local Public Health	Colleen Bridger
11	10/27	Tobacco: Public Health Priority – Science, Policy, and Current Challenges	Kurt Ribisl
	10/29	Public Health: State Relations to Local and Federal	Leah Devlin
12	11/3	Global – Local Public Health	Peggy Bentley
	11/5	Cuban Public Health System	Anna Maria Siega-Riz
13	11/10	Student Team Presentations	TBD
	11/12	Student Team Presentations	TBD
14	11/17	Student Team Presentations	TBD
	11/19	Student Team Presentations	TBD
15	11/24	No Class	
	11/26	No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday	
16	12/1	Future of Public Health, Course Evaluations	All