

PubH 6020 - Section 001 Fundamentals of Social & Behavioral Science Spring 2009

Credits:	3
Meeting Days:	Online
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I. Course Description

This course fulfills the behavioral science core requirement for MPH students. This course provides both depth and breadth in addressing social and behavioral science.

Material will address theories and applications in public health. The course will focus on four major approaches to public health problems:

- psychosocial
- community
- economic
- policy

The psychosocial unit will include exposure to multiple behavioral theories, application of theory in understanding etiology and planning interventions, and measurement issues.

The community unit will include a review of community change concepts and theories and exposure to community organizing techniques.

The economic unit will address such functions as supply and demand, opportunity costs, taxes and subsidies, economic evaluation of goods and services, and costs versus benefits and effectiveness in the examining the role of economics in decision-making about public health.

The policy unit will address the structure of government, institutional behavior and theories, and administrative, judicial and legislative processes.

Lectures provide students with an overview of theory and implementation.

Access to the Website

You will be notified of your access to the course materials on the website through your University of Minnesota email account. Note: you will need to complete the orientation to the online learning tutorial prior to obtaining access to course materials.

II. Course Prerequisites

Public health [MPH or MHA or certificate] student or health journalism MA major

III. Course Goals and Objectives

After completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how behavioral sciences can be used to understand and intervene upon current public health problems
- Articulate how psychosocial and community theories are used to design, implement, and evaluate public health programs
- Understand the application of economic theory to public health
- Describe the major models and theories from political science and public policy that influence change
- Communicate how public and private institutions create change in public health behaviors or the environment in which individual behavior responds
- Acquire skills in the application of behavioral science to current public health problems

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

The course includes lectures, group learning activities, group discussions, and a paper. All material related to lectures, learning activities, and the paper can be found on the course website.

We've done our best to make the online course as complete and accurate as possible. If you notice inconsistencies or misspellings, if you have trouble accessing anything, or if you'd simply like to propose improvements, please let us know or contact the Distance Education Coordinator, Jim Harpole by phone: 612-626-5069 or email: harpo002@umn.edu

Lectures

Lectures are organized into the four units: Psychosocial (Charles Oberg, MD.MPH and Keryn Pasch, PhD, MPH lecturers); Community (Charles Oberg, MD, MPH and Keryn Pasch, PhD, MPH lecturers) Economic Approaches (Roger Feldman, PhD) and Policy and Politics (Lynn Blewett, PhD)

Group Learning Activities

Each unit will have at least 1 small group learning activity that will be completed in small groups. Group learning activities provide an opportunity for students to apply skills and concepts learned in lecture as well as prepare students for writing their paper.

During the second week of class, you will be assigned to a group for completing learning activities and given information on the names and email addresses of group members. Go to the discussion board on the course web site to locate the area on the discussion board your group is assigned. You will use this area to discuss questions and submit your responses to learning activity questions.

For each learning activity, every group will be asked to select a Facilitator and a Recorder. The facilitator's role is to contact members, discuss roles and responsibilities of group members, facilitate discussion on-line, and help the group reach consensus. The Recorder's role is to write up the assignment based on the group's discussion and make sure members have an opportunity to review it before posting it on the course discussion board. The Recorder should post a copy of the group's learning activity on the discussion board in the area the group is assigned. Group members should include their names and roles at the end of the completed assignment before it is posted on the discussion board. **Start early and allow adequate time to discuss questions and complete learning activities. Also, please be respectful of everyone's time**

and follow through on tasks you have been assigned in a timely manner. At the end of the course, your participation in the discussion group will be graded by team members.

We want to make everyone aware of a web-based tool outside of WebVista which some may find useful in producing a final work product for the learning activities. **Google Docs** is a tool that allows multiple people to work on a document simultaneously and at different times. It saves automatically, updates in real time, and saves all past drafts which are always available and easy to which to revert.

It is NOT required that you use this tool. Each group can simply post to the discussion board and have the recorder gather the information and organize it before submission. However, some may prefer the ease of Google Docs and the ability to continually have a work-in-progress instead of waiting until the recorder creates the document.

All group members must have a Google account in order to access and edit documents. However, you do not need Gmail to have a Google account and setting up a new account is easy to do.

1. Have one group member who has a Google account sign into (<http://docs.google.com>).
2. On the next page, select New/Document and type text into the body of the document OR upload an already created document.
3. On the right side of the screen, click "Share" and enter e-mails of group members.

Online Group Discussions

During the course, we will post three articles or news videos on the discussion board from the popular press (e.g., opinion or editorial pieces from the newspaper) on topics relevant to the course and ask you to react to the articles (e.g., what did you learn new from the article; do you agree or disagree with the authors conclusions). You should feel free to post related articles with your response. This exercise is designed to stimulate dialogue among students and is **optional**. Your reactions to popular press articles and videos will not be graded. We will let you know when articles are posted during the course.

Paper

For this assignment, you will select a public health topic and design a theory-driven intervention that addresses the topic. You will submit sections of your paper throughout the semester and submit a revised paper based on feedback from your TA or the Instructor at the end of the course. The paper will have six sections: 1) Abstract; 2) Background, Significance, and Theory; 3) Intervention Design (Community Level); 4) Intervention Design (Policy Level); 5) Economic Implications; and 6) Summary. Details for the paper can be found on the course website under Paper. There are sample papers on the home page of the course website. *(Please note that for this year the Significance, Background, and Theory sections have been combined).*

Communication

We will use pop-up announcements, the discussion board, and University of MN X500 email to communicate important information to you. Please check for our messages throughout the semester. We will **NOT** use the WebVista email tool. Please feel free to contact us via email or the discussion board if you have questions regarding the course, assignments or other issues relevant to the course. The TA's and I monitor the discussion board and will respond to any questions you have within **24 hours** (except on weekends). If you're in the Twin Cities, please feel free to make an appointment and come in to our offices. Simply call or email for an appointment.

Expected Effort

Our expectations and requirements in this course are no different than the expectations and requirements in a typical lecture course, so you will need to properly pace yourself through this course according to the scheduled due dates for activities and assignments. Students must have World Wide Web and e-mail knowledge as a prerequisite; you will be required to use those skills to complete and submit assignments and via WebVista.

Workload, Deadlines, Late Assignments

University of Minnesota policy states that work expectations per credit hour are fixed at a ratio of 1:3. That is, a single credit course assumes three hours of work per week including class attendance. So, a three-credit course such as this one assumes that you will work an average of **nine** hours per week. The course has

been designed with this expectation in mind, however, this is an average. Some weeks may require more time, other weeks less. Given the course workload, anyone working full-time is discouraged from taking more than one online course and everyone is discouraged from taking too many online classes at one time.

Due dates for all the learning activities and paper assignments are posted on the course calendar and noted in the directions of each assignment on the course website. If you anticipate any difficulty meeting a deadline (due to family emergency, documented illness, or attendance at a professional conference), arrangements must be made with your TA or instructor a minimal of **24 hours** in advance of the actual due date to receive full credit for the assignment. We will deduct **2 points** for each day a learning activity or paper assignment is late without prior approval from the TA or instructor.

We will try to be flexible about due dates, but it is not always possible to consider every student's individual personal issues or honor every request. Just as we would in any class, we will always try to accommodate individuals with documented disabilities, illnesses, and family emergencies.

Strategies for Taking Online Courses

- 1) You may need several passes through the material to learn online. The lesson modules online will be most helpful to you if you have read the assigned readings. In that way, the lecture material will have an air of familiarity about it.
- 2) Actively participate in learning activities and on line discussions with class mates to get the most out of the course. You can access student email addresses by clicking on class emails in the WebVista course menu. Students are also free to share helpful comments with the class as a whole using the class discussion board.
- 3) If you are having difficulty with the material, email or ask for help early from the TA or instructor.

Do Not Panic: WebVista offers Technical Support

- 1) Please remember there are people behind this course. We understand that there can be technical problems or computer “glitches”. If you experience a technical problem, DO NOT PANIC. These types of problems can be solved and we can make allowances for such problems.
- 2) So if you are in the middle of an assignment at 11:59 pm on a Saturday night and the website shuts down and you try to get back in and can't and the deadline for the assignment is at 12:01 am Monday. DO NOT PANIC. We will help you on Monday morning. We will understand that you had a problem, and we can give you a break.
- 3) Other helpful tips:
 - a. For content-related problems such as broken links, content or tables not available: post a note in the “Bugs!” folder of the discussion board or contact the class TAs or instructor.
 - b. For WebVista-related technical problems, contact: webvista@umn.edu. They respond to questions and concerns within 24 hours. Additional support for WebVista can be found at: <http://webct.umn.edu/students/>
 - c. For all other computer- and software-related problems, contact the Help Line at 612-301-4357, <http://1help.umn.edu>.

V. Course Text and Readings

The text is Glanz, Lewis & Rimer (eds) 3rd edition, *Health Behavior and Health Education*. The text is available in the bookstore. Additional readings are available on the course website. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to the lesson in which they will be covered.

VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

On course web site

VII. Evaluation and Grading

Final grade will be assessed on a 185 -point scale. Grades will be based on Learning Activities (15 points each for a total of 75 points), Learning Activity Participation (10 points and based on team members assessment of your contributions) and a Final Revised Paper (100 points) in which students submit sections of their paper throughout the course (See Overview of Paper Assignment).

Grades will be based on the following scale (numbers below represent percentages):

A	93 - 100	B-	80 - <83	D+	67 - <70
A-	90 - <93	C+	77 - <80	D	63 - <66
B+	87 - <90	C	73 - <77	D-	60 - <63
B	83 - <87	C-	70 - <73	F	below 60

The S/N option is available for this course. A grade of B- or better is required for an S.

This course is designated as part of the public health core requirement and effective Fall 2005, MPH students must take this course for a letter grade (A-F). MPH students will be required to achieve no less than a B- grade in each of the public health core courses.

Course Evaluation

Beginning in fall 2008 the SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval. The system will send email notifications to students when they can access and complete their course evaluations. Students who complete their course evaluations promptly will be able to access their final grades just as soon as the faculty member renders the grade. All students will have access to their final grades two weeks after the last day of the semester regardless of whether they completed their course evaluation or not. Student feedback on course content and faculty teaching skills are important means for improving our work. Please take the time to complete a course evaluation for each of the courses for which you are registered.

Incomplete Grade

A grade of incomplete "I" shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented illness or hospitalization, death in family, etc.), the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an "I" requires that a contract be initiated and completed by the student before the last day of class, and signed by both the student and instructor. If an incomplete is deemed appropriate by the instructor, the student in consultation with the instructor, will specify the time and manner in which the student will complete course requirements.

Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year (or earlier if designated by the student's college). For more information and to initiate an incomplete contract, students should go to:

www.sph.umn.edu/grades.

University of Minnesota Uniform Grading and Transcript Policy

A link to the policy can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

VIII. Other Course Information and Policies

Grade Option Change (if applicable)

For full-semester courses, students may change their grad option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester) can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

Course Withdrawal

Students should refer to the Refund and Drop/Add Deadlines for the particular term at onestop.umn.edu for information and deadlines for withdrawing from a course. As a courtesy, students should notify their instructor and, if applicable, advisor of their intent to withdraw.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course after the noted final deadline for a particular term must contact the School of Public Health Student Services Center at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

Student Conduct, Scholastic Dishonesty and Sexual Harassment Policies

Students are responsible for knowing the University of Minnesota, Board of Regents' policy on Student Conduct and Sexual Harassment found at www.umn.edu/regents/polindex.html.

Students are responsible for maintaining scholastic honesty in their work at all times. Students engaged in scholastic dishonesty will be penalized, and offenses will be reported to the Office of Student Academic Integrity (OSAI, www.osai.umn.edu).

The University's Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as "plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; or altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying of data, research procedures, or data analysis."

Plagiarism is an important element of this policy. It is defined as the presentation of another's writing or ideas as your own. Serious, intentional plagiarism will result in a grade of "F" or "N" for the entire course. For more information on this policy and for a helpful discussion of preventing plagiarism, please consult University policies and procedures regarding academic integrity:

http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/plagiarism_index.html

Students are urged to be careful that they properly attribute and cite others' work in their own writing. For guidelines for correctly citing sources, go to <http://tutorial.lib.umn.edu> and click on "Citing Sources".

In addition, original work is expected in this course. It is unacceptable to hand in assignments for this course for which you receive credit in another course unless by prior agreement with the instructor. Building on a line of work begun in another course or leading to a thesis, dissertation, or final project is acceptable.

If you have any questions, consult the instructor.

Disability Statement

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services to have a confidential discussion of their individual needs for accommodations. Disability Services is located in Suite 180 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street. Staff can be reached by calling 612/626-1333 (voice or TTY).