

Critical Issues in Public Health

PHS 3603/PHC 6937

Fall Semester 2013

Monday- Periods 1 and 2 (8:30 am -10:25 am)

Wednesdays- Period 2 (8:30 am – 9:20 am)

Room: G301

Instructor(s): Jamie L. Pomeranz, Ph.D.
Office: HPNP Building – Room 4156
Telephone: (352) 273-6566
Email: pomeranz@php.ufl.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching Assistants:

Stacey Griner staceygriner@ufl.edu
Gail Castaneda gcastane@ufl.com

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to provide students the opportunity to learn multiple ways to view current controversial topics in public health. The course covers current public health topics encompassing biomedical issues, social and behavioral factors related to health, and the environment.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) List and describe various methods used to investigate controversial public health topics.
- 2) Locate and evaluate peer-reviewed publications addressing controversial public health issues.
- 3) Understand the influence of personal bias on how public health issues are presented.
- 4) Understand how to work in small groups to discuss public health issues from both a proponent view and an oppositional view.
- 5) Discuss the complex public health issues and challenges that need to be faced in the 21st century.

Course Materials

Text: Peer-reviewed journal articles focusing on contemporary public health issues will be provided at the beginning of the semester. There is no course text.

Subscription: You will need to purchase a subscription to online software called LectureTools. This software allows you to participate in class with your phone or laptop, access course materials from anywhere, and organize, search, and review all lecture content. The fee is \$15 per term and can be purchased from www.lecturetools.com/pricing.

Other readings: Additional readings may be assigned as the semester progresses. You will be given a minimum of 1-week notice for any additional readings and all additional readings will be made available to you electronically.

Components of the Course

- 1) **Weekly Readings:** Each week you will have assigned readings directly related to the current week's controversial public health topic. Readings will be made available to you at least one week before the class for which they are assigned.
- 2) **Group Participation/Discussion Activities:** We will meet two days per week as outlined below. One day per week will be devoted to discussion, the second to an introduction of the next topic. The first day (Monday) will involve a discussion of the controversial issues. During the first session each week the class will engage in a "reasoned discourse" (like a debate, but without the contentious connotations) about a controversial public health issue. You are responsible for reading the assigned material prior to the discussion. You will be assigned into one of five groups. Each group will be assigned a position to argue: two groups on the pro side, two groups on the con side. The fifth group will be in the 'jury' and it is your job to convince them of your group's position.

Full participation within these discussions will count towards your participation grade. Points will be deducted from your group participation grade for the following (but not limited to): not involved in the group discussion, performing activities other than the course discussion such as texting, studying for other exams, etc., frequent absences, and unprofessional behavior.

- 3) **Exams:** There will be two exams in the course. Each exam will consist of 50 questions (multiple choice). The exams will not be cumulative.

A note about make-up exams: Make-up examinations are not normally given in this course. The **only** circumstances in which a makeup exam will be given are: 1) an official, University sponsored event requires you to be off campus during the exam; 2) a medical emergency prevents you from attending class; 3) a family emergency prevents you from attending class; 4) jury duty; and 5) military service, a religious observance, or a similar obligation prevents you from attending class. If you miss an examination for any reason, you must contact us before the exam and you must provide written documentation of the event of emergency in order to schedule a make-up exam.

- 4) **Reaction Papers:** Undergraduate students will be required to submit two reaction papers throughout the semester. The first paper is due on **Monday, October 14, 2013** and the second paper is due on **Monday, November 25, 2013**. Reaction papers will be based on the discussion of specific topic presented in class. More details on the reaction paper will be provided in class.
- 5) **Film Critique:** Undergraduate students will be required to complete a 1-2 page film critique on a movie selected from a list of films provided by the instructor. More information regarding the film critique will be provided in class. The Film Critique is due **December 4, 2013**.
- 6) **Research Paper:** Graduate students will complete an 8-10 page research paper on one of the topics discussed in class. Additional details on the paper assignment will be given as the semester progresses. The paper due date is noted in the course schedule. The paper is due on **December 4, 2013**. The policy for late papers is the same as that for missing exams (see below).
- 7) **Class Presentations:** Graduate students will conduct a brief PowerPoint presentation for 10

minutes at the end of the semester on a topic discussed in class. More information on presentations will be provided in class.

UNDERGRADUATE Grading:

1.	Two Exams @ 100 each	200 points
2.	Two Reaction Papers @ 50 each	100 points
3.	Attendance/Professionalism	50 points
4.	Film Critique	25 points
5.	Group Participation	25 points
	TOTAL POINTS	400 points

GRADUATE Grading:

1.	Two Exams @ 100 each	200 points
2.	Research Paper	75 points
3.	Attendance/Professionalism	50 points
4.	Class Presentation	50 points
5.	Group Participation	25 points
	TOTAL POINTS	400 points

Translating Number of Points to Letter Grades

A (93-100%)	=	372 - 400	C+ (77-79%)	=	308 - 319
A- (90-92%)	=	360 - 371	C (70-76%)	=	280 - 307
B+ (87-89%)	=	348 - 359	D+ (67-69%)	=	268 - 279
B (83-86%)	=	332 - 347	D (63-66%)	=	252 - 267
B- (80-82%)	=	320 - 331	D- (60-62%)	=	240 - 251
			E (<60%)	=	<239

General Policies:

1. **PROFESSIONALISM:** During class, students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and conduct themselves accordingly (e.g., no excessive talking during class, passing notes, reading newspapers, or distracting classmates).

Class is considered an appointment. Students taking an advanced course in a helping profession are expected to keep appointments and arrive to each class on time and to remain for the entire class. There will be 12 random attendance checks at 5 points each. 50 of those points will be counted towards your total grade for the course. This gives you 2 chances to make up two missed attendance checks.

BONUS: If you are present for all 12 attendance checks, then you will receive 5 bonus points.

2. Assignments to be submitted in Sakai by 5:00 pm on the day noted in the syllabus. Five points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late (no exceptions).
3. Faculty within the Department of Behavioral Science and Community Health have received feedback from students and other colleagues regarding students frequently arriving to class late. When a student enters the classroom late it is disruptive to the entire class. Class is considered an appointment. Students taking an advanced level course in a helping profession are expected to arrive to appointments on time and prepared to learn. **Tardiness is not acceptable in the helping profession, and will not be tolerated in the classroom.** If a student will be tardy by more than 5 minutes after class begins, you have two options:
 - A. Refrain from class.
 - B. The first row of class will be reserved for students arriving late. Since this will be a large class, it is very disruptive to the instructor and other students when a late student is trying climb over classmates to find a seat. Therefore, you are required to take a seat in the front row. A TA will ask you to sign a late sheet once you take a seat. **If you are more than five minutes late three times, you will lose an attendance check worth five points.**

We do realize that students may have a class directly before this course at a distant location, making it difficult to arrive to class on time. Students in this situation must provide written documentation to the instructors no later than the second week of class.
4. Each student is responsible for checking their e-mail (Gator link address required) for hand-outs and other information pertaining to the class. We will not be using the email system within Sakai.
5. Every effort will be made to have notes provided to the student prior to the beginning of class on Sakai. Preparation is a necessity to provide a consistent learning environment. However, last minute changes may be made to the learning material prior to class, resulting in updated material being provided after class.

Course Outline

Date	Week	Day	Topics
08/21	1	Wednesday	Course Overview
08/26	2	Monday	Discussion of Genetic Testing & Biorepositories
08/28		Wednesday	In-Class Exercise
09/02	3	Monday	Labor Day: No Class
09/04		Wednesday	Introduction to Herd Immunity Theory
09/09	4	Monday	Discussion of Herd Immunity Theory
09/11		Wednesday	Introduction to Environmental Justice
09/16	5	Monday	Discussion of Environmental Justice
09/18		Wednesday	Introduction to Civil and Political Rights vs. Government

			Involvement
09/23	6	Monday	Discussion of Civil and Political Rights vs. Government Involvement
09/25		Wednesday	Introduction to Role of Schools v. Parental Responsibilities
09/30	7	Monday	Discussion of Role of Schools vs. Parental Responsibilities
10/02		Wednesday	Introduction to Gun Control
10/07	8	Monday	Discussion of Gun Control
10/9		Wednesday	Special Discussion
10/14	9	Monday	Exam One Reaction Paper 1 Due
10/16		Wednesday	Introduction to Human Enhancement
10/21	10	Monday	Discussion of Human Enhancement
10/23		Wednesday	Introduction to Marriage Equality and Legislation
10/28	11	Monday	Discussion of Marriage Equality and Legislation
10/30		Wednesday	Introduction to Assisted Suicide
11/04	12	Monday	Discussion of Assisted Suicide
11/06		Wednesday	In-Class Exercise
11/11	13	Monday	Veteran's Day
11/13		Wednesday	Introduction to Social Media and Microblogging
11/18	14	Monday	Discussion of Social Media and Microblogging
11/20		Wednesday	In-Class Exercise
11/25	15	Monday	Student Presentations Reaction Paper 2 Due
11/27		Wednesday	Thanksgiving
12/02	16	Monday	Exam Two
12/04		Wednesday	Culminating Experience Film Critique Due Research Paper Due– Fall Classes End

Academic Honesty

Please review the University's complete policy regarding academic dishonesty, found online in the DSO's Judicial Affairs website: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>. Students are expected to abide by the University's Academic Honesty Policy, and to adhere to the following pledge:

"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

According to the UF Student Guide, Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

Cheating – copying another's work for academic gain

Plagiarism – representing another's work as your own

Misrepresentation – altering facts

Conspiracy – planning with others to commit academic dishonesty

Fabrication – making up information to avoid punishment or other difficulty

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either

stated or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in completing this assignment."

Accommodations and other Services:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodations.

OTHER SERVICES

UF Counseling and Wellness Center
3190 Radio Road, Gainesville, FL 32611
(352) 392-1575
Monday through Friday, 8 am through 5 pm
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

UF Reading and Writing Center
Located in the Teaching Center Mezzanine in SW Broward Hall
(352) 392-6420
Monday through Friday, 9 am through 5 pm
<http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html>

OFFICE HOURS:

Dr. Pomeranz's office hours will be by appointment only. You may email or call to schedule a time that works for you. However, emailing is the best way to get in touch.