Tufts University
Introduction to Community Health (CH 1)
Syllabus, Fall 2017

Course Instructors
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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:45pm and Tuesdays, 10:12pm by appointment. Open office hours are Fridays between 10:12pm most weeks. Please email Laura Pinkham at laura.pinkham@tufts.edu to schedule a meeting during office hours.

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Course Director
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Office Hours: Drop in Thursday, 10:00am-1:00pm, or by appointment

Class and Recitation Schedule
The course meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-11:45am in 574 Boston Avenue, Room 401. Mandatory recitation sessions are held once a week. Recitation sections are assigned at time of registration and may NOT be changed without explicit approval. If you have any difficulty with your assigned recitation time, please contact Matt Chenoweth (matthew.chenoweth@tufts.edu)

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Course Description
This introductory survey course explores the complex determinants of health and is designed to help students use their understanding of these determinants to develop strategies to improve the health of communities and populations. First, we will consider theoretical concepts that are key to understanding community/public health, such as the meaning of health, the concept of community, the ways in which health problems are analyzed and framed, and how we study communities/populations and the health issues they face. We will then apply these concepts to specific areas of public health concern, including communicable and non-communicable diseases, nutrition, and environmental issues. Within each area, we will discuss the social, political, economic, and biomedical aspects of health and illness. We will also explore potential solutions (or “interventions”) to improve population health.

** Please note: CH1 is a survey course that serves as an introduction to the field of public health and community health and is intended for freshman and sophomores.

The course is divided into four units:
- Unit One- Principles of Public Health Science
- Unit Two- Public Health Issues: Problems, Social Determinants, and Interventions
- Unit Three- Public Health and Health Care
- Unit Four- Overarching Issues in Public Health

Course Objectives
This course is designed to expose students to a wide range of community/public population health issues. The course introduces students to public health theory and evidence, and their application to improve the health of communities and populations. There is a focus on how social determinants, including social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental factors impact the health of individuals, communities, and populations. As a field, community/public health has emerged from social movements that view health as a form of social justice. As such, we will examine health disparities and inequities, and strive to understand and create solutions for their elimination. Objectives of this course are to:

1. Describe the interdisciplinary, cross-cutting, ecological character of public health and the contributions of a range of disciplines and professions to improving health of communities/populations
2. Discuss social determinants of health, including the role of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors and how these factors can produce health disparities/inequities
3. Explain the basic principles of epidemiology, including rates, risk factors, disease determinants, and causation
4. Explain how evidence-based interventions are developed and applied to improve the health of communities/populations
5. Explain the impact of communicable and non-communicable diseases, as well as accidents and injuries on the health of communities/populations
6. Describe the basic organization of health care, insurance systems and public health systems in the U.S. and identify criteria for evaluating these systems
Grading and Evaluation

Final grades for this course will be determined by the following assessments:

1. Paper 1: Public Health Issue Statement 35%
2. Paper 2: Public Health in the Community 15%
3. Class Participation 5%
4. Recitation Participation 15%
5. Quizzes (three, each worth 10%) 30%

Paper #1- Public Health Issue Statement: The first paper will require you to investigate a public health problem. You will define the issue, describe the magnitude and scope of the problem, justify its importance to public health, and summarize research on the biomedical understanding and social determinants of the problem. In addition, you will identify and describe a community or population that is affected by this problem and describe evidence-based interventions. Detailed instructions are available on the CH1 Trunk site under the “Assignments” tab. Due date for Paper #1: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 before class.

Paper #2- Public Health in the Community: The second paper focuses on public health in action. You will observe, volunteer with or participate in a public health intervention in the local community. You will submit a reflection of your experience by describing what you did, connecting course concepts to the experience, and reflecting on the practice of public health. Detailed instructions are available on the CH1 Trunk site under the “Assignments” tab. Due date for Paper #2: Monday, November 20, 2017- before class.

Class Participation and In-Class Questions (5%): There will be in-class questions administered through Learning Catalytics during each lecture. Learning Catalytics is a software that students can purchase online. There will be at least one set of questions having to do with the prior lecture and at least one that refers to readings assigned for the session. In class responses are one way in which your class participation grade will be evaluated. Over the course of the semester you will also be expected to complete a series of online surveys before or after class, which will also make up part of your participation grade.

In addition to Learning Catalytics, we plan interactive in-class discussions within small groups as and as a class. Public health examines numerous complex topics from ethical, political and social perspectives. As such, we fully expect that there will be differences of opinions and, perhaps, debates. In fact, we hope that this will happen, as these discussions often generate very important learning opportunities. In order to maintain productive discussions, we have posted guidelines and expectations regarding participation on XX tab on the Trunk site.

Recitation Participation (15%): Attendance at recitation sessions is required. Recitations will focus on application of the material presented in class and in readings. Reading the assigned article(s) (available on the Trunk website under “Resources” tab) prior to recitation is vital to your successful participation in discussion. Please see guidelines and expectations regarding participation on the XX tab on the Trunk site. Also on the site is a grading rubric for recitation. Questions and critical challenges to the perspectives presented in class and in the assigned
reading are strongly encouraged. *Note that attendance at recitation sessions is required.*

In Class Quizzes (30%): There are three quizzes in the course. Each is worth 10% of your grade. The format of the quizzes will include multiple choice, true/false, fill-in, matching, and short answer questions. Unless you have documentation of a university-approved reason for missing the quiz, *all students are required to take quizzes on the date specified on the syllabus.* The final quiz will be administered on **Tuesday, December 19, 2017**, location to be announced.

**Required Materials and Texts**

All readings for the class will be available on the Trunk website under the “Resources” tab. Students are expected to have done the readings prior to coming to lecture/recitation.

One book is required: *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder. It can be borrowed from the Tisch Library, purchased through the Tufts Bookstore, or through you own sources. There are also several copies that may be borrowed from the instructor. We have selected *Mountains Beyond Mountains* as a semester-long reading because it offers viewpoints that encompass history as well as science, differences of language and culture, as well as stark inequalities in a public health context.

**Course Policies**

*Technology in the Classroom:* We will provide all PowerPoint slides on the Trunk website for your convenience. We will also use Learning Catalytics, a tool for student engagement, assessment and classroom response. All students must bring a laptop, tablet, or cell phone to class to utilize the Learning Catalytics system. Please remember to silence cell phones before class begins.

*Class Participation:* Learning is a collaborative process. Students are expected to be in class and to participate as actively as they feel comfortable. These contributions are invaluable to the learning process and are integral to success in this course. The class will utilize a variety of learning strategies, including lecture, discussion, interactive activities, Learning Catalytics, and electronic surveys. Participation in class and in these activities is expected and constitutes part of your overall grade (see above).

*Absences:* In fairness to classmates, attendance at all classes and recitation sessions is required. *Please email the Course Director (Matt Chenoweth) soon as possible in the case of an anticipated absence.* Unexcused absences may negatively impact your grade. University-excused absences, with documentation, will not affect your grade.
Submitting Written Assignments: **Hard copies of all assignments are to be submitted at, or before, the start of class AND electronically via the CH1 Trunk site.** As part of this course, we will utilize “TurnItIn” in the Trunk learning management system to help determine the originality of your work. TurnItIn is an automated system that instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student’s assignment with billions of websites, as well as a database of student papers that grows with each submission. When papers are submitted to TurnItIn, the service will retain a copy of the submitted work in the TurnItIn database for the sole purpose of detecting plagiarism in future submitted works.

Late Paper Policy: **Late papers will lose half a grade for every day past the due date.** “Late” is defined as being 1 minute past the deadline. Please note that computer or printer problems (e.g., lost work) are not acceptable reasons for having a late paper. Please be sure to save your work regularly on your computer and to back it up elsewhere (e.g., USB drive, DropBox, GoogleDrive).

Exam Etiquette: Please do NOT bring unauthorized materials, information, or any electronic equipment with you to a room in which a test is being administered. Do NOT engage in behavior that gives the appearance of cheating, such as passing a note to a friend, whispering to another student while the test is in progress, or looking in the direction of another student’s work. Do NOT bring your cell phone, tablet, music device, programmable calculator or any other electronic device to a test room. If a proctor sees you handling an electronic device even to silence a phone if it rings or vibrates in the middle of the exam, the Judicial Affairs Administrator will treat it as an academic integrity violation. DO turn off your cell phone and put it out of reach, out of sight, or as instructed before tests begin.

Academic Integrity
Tufts holds its students strictly accountable for adherence to academic integrity. The consequences for violations can be severe. It is critical that you understand the requirements of ethical behavior and academic work as described in Tufts’ Academic Integrity handbook. If you ever have a question about the expectations concerning a particular assignment or project in this course, be sure to ask for clarification. The Faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Engineering are required to report suspected cases of academic integrity violations to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. If cheating or plagiarism is suspected, this must be reported to the Dean. More information is available at: [https://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy](https://students.tufts.edu/student-affairs/student-life-policies/academic-integrity-policy)

Student Services
Tufts is committed to providing support and equal access for all students so that they may fully realize their academic potential. Our goal is to ensure that all students have access to the resources necessary to be successful. For those who need academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability will present documentation from the Academic Resource Center and should speak with the Course Director by the second week of class so that we can accommodate needs. Accommodations for testing must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the exam/test date. All discussions will be confidential. More
information can be found at the Tufts University Student Accessibility Services website: https://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibility-services

Additional Resources
Tisch Library: For research assistance- http://www.library.tufts.edu/tisch/subjectLib.html
Academic Resource Center (ARC): For writing and other academic assistance: http://students.tufts.edu/academic-advice-and-support/academic-resource-center

The Tufts University Counseling and Mental Health Service (CMHS). For personal and academic concerns- Sawyer House at 120 Curtis Street. 617.627.3360. http://students.tufts.edu/health-and-wellness

NOTE: This syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course content or requirements based on new evidence, class discussions, or other pedagogical objectives.
Unit One: Principles of Public Health Science

Session 1: Introduction to Public Health
Wednesday, September 6
Session Objectives:

- Define and differentiate community health, public health, and population health
- Differentiate “upstream” versus “downstream” approaches to public health interventions
- Review syllabus, course requirements

Class Reading:
- Read syllabus thoroughly and enter due dates in your calendar

Session 2: Population-Based Approach to Health
Monday, September 11
Session Objectives:

- Identify multiple ways that public health affects daily life
- Define and describe eras in the history of public health
- Illustrate the uses of health care, traditional public health, and social interventions in population health
- Identify ways that populations change over time, which affects health

Class Reading:
- Riegelman and Kirkwood: Chapter 1. “Public Health: The Population Approach” (available on Trunk under “Resources” tab)

Session 3: Why is Public Health Controversial?
Wednesday, September 13
Session Objectives:

- Discuss the scope of public health issues
- Describe, discuss and apply major ethical perspectives relevant to public health
- Discuss sources of controversy in public health, including varied perspectives on allocation of health services (social and market justice)
- Illustrate the potential tensions between individual rights and the needs of society using public health examples
- Apply a framework for examining ethical issues in the selection and development of public health programs

Class Reading:
Session 4: Introduction to Epidemiology  
Monday, September 18
Session Objectives:
- Define core concepts of epidemiology, including: incidence, prevalence, risk, causation/association, morbidity and mortality
- Describe how the distribution of disease may be used to generate hypotheses about the cause of a disease
- Discuss how epidemiological evidence can be used to improve population health

Class Reading:
- Scheider MJ. Introduction to Community Health. Chapter 5. Epidemiologic Principles and Methods. (Available on Trunk website under “Resources”)
- Scheider MJ. Introduction to Community Health. Chapter 6. Problems and Limits of Epidemiology. (Available on Trunk website under “Resources”)

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Session 5: Identifying, Evaluating, and Applying Evidence  
Wednesday, September 20
Session Objectives:
- Explain the steps of evidence-based public health
- Describe the process by which public health professionals develop questions that can be answered empirically
- Explain and understand the processes by which scientific evidence is incorporated into public health practice
- Explore the principles of evidence-based practice, as they apply to framing relevant problems and evaluating evidence on public health interventions

Class Reading:

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Session 6: Social Determinants of Health- Overview  
Monday, September 25
Session Objectives:
- Describe key categories of social determinants of health
- Understand pathways and mechanisms through which social determinants shape the health of individuals, communities, and populations
- Explain the utility of the socio-ecological model when assessing social determinants and developing public health interventions

Class Reading:
- Braveman PA, Gotlieb L. The Social Determinants of Health: It’s Time to Consider the Causes of the Causes. Public Health Reports. 2014; 129 (S2): 19-31
- Fuchs VR. Social Determinants of Health: Caveats and Nuances. JAMA. 2017;317(1):25-26
Session 7: Health Disparities
Wednesday, September 27

Session Objectives:
• Distinguish between health inequalities, disparities and inequities
• Describe and discuss the concept of “vulnerable” populations
• Think critically about the underlying factors contributing to disparities across populations, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and disability
• Identify strategies for ameliorating health disparities

Class Reading:

Recitation Reading:

Session 8: Health Disparities: Disability as “Vulnerable Group”
Monday, October 2

Session Objectives:
• Describe the role that disability has traditionally played in public health and the current movement toward disability as a social determinant of health
• Explain the difference between health and disability
• Describe the health status and health care outcomes of people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities
• Explain the strengths and weaknesses of current intervention efforts to address the health of people with disabilities
• Describe the difference between specialized and inclusive interventions for people with disabilities

Class Reading:

Session 9: Social Determinants: Economic Inequality, Evidence, Health Impact, and Policy Implications
Wednesday, October 4

Session Objectives:
• Describe inequality in income and wealth in the United States and abroad
• Discuss causal links between economic inequality and health
• Discuss specific associations between income and life expectancy in the United States
• Explore/discuss interventions that can address economic inequality

Class Reading:

Monday, October 9, 2017  Indigenous People’s Day (University Holiday): No Classes

Wednesday, October 11  Quiz #1

Unit #2: Public Health Issues: Problems, Root Causes, and Interventions

Session 10: Public Health Nutrition (I) Overview
Monday, October 16

Session Objectives:
• Define public health nutrition and discuss the magnitude and causes of over- and under-nutrition in the US
• Discuss the relationship between nutritional patterns and states of health/illness
• Characterize populations at the greatest risk for obesity, malnutrition, and nutrition-related disease
• Gain knowledge of the food system, including how food is produced, distributed, and consumed
• Understand key issues surrounding equitable access to healthy food

Class Reading

Session 11: Public Health Nutrition (II): Interventions, Problem Solving
Wednesday, October 18

Session Objectives:
• Understand how to apply frame public health problems in a complex, multi-causal environment
• Practice applying the socio-ecological model to public problem-solving.
• Identify public health nutrition interventions at individual, community, population and policy levels. Topics explored will include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs, menu labeling and other policy options

Class Reading:
Session 12: Communicable Diseases: Overview
Monday, October 23
Session Objectives:
• Describe the burden of disease caused by communicable diseases
• Understand the pathogenesis of infectious diseases including, route of pathogen entry, host responses, and environmental influences
• Understand the social, economic, behavioral, demographic and environmental determinants of infectious disease
• Describe the impact of Ebola Virus Disease in the U.S. and globally
• Describe interventions at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention & at various levels of the socio-ecologic model

Class Reading:
• Mukherjee JS, Farmer PE. Social Injustice and Public Health- Chapter 13: Infectious Disease (available on Trunk)

Recitation Reading:
• Gawande A. The Mop-Up. The New Yorker; Jan 12, 2004 (Available on Trunk)

Session 13: Non-Communicable Diseases: Overview
Wednesday, October 25
Session Objectives:
• Describe the burden of non-communicable disease mortality and morbidity in the United States
• Describe the social determinants and risk factors of non-communicable diseases
• Explain the multiple risk factor intervention approach to control a non-communicable disease
• Discuss the ‘lifestyle’ behaviors associated with chronic disease & the existence of multiple risk factors among groups
• Describe ways that population interventions can be combined with individual interventions to more effectively reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases

Class Reading:

Session 14: Non Communicable Diseases (II): Cancer and Screening  
Monday, October 30  
Session Objectives:  
• Describe the burden of cancer in the US and globally  
• Describe the ideal criteria for a screening program  
• Discuss how framing cancer screening as a public health issue has changed over time  
• Explore new ways that public health can increase the rate of evidence-based cancer screening and decrease disparities in screening rates  
 Class Readings:  
• Ubel P. How much are we over-diagnosing cancer? Accessible at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/peterubel/2015/05/22/the-question-isnt-whether-we-are-overdiagnosing-cancer-but-how-much/#207ee42479b0

Session 15: Accidents, Injuries and Gun Violence  
Wednesday, November 1  
Session Objectives:  
• Distinguish between accidents and injuries  
• Identify factors that increase risk for violence at the individual, community and societal level  
• Describe and discuss the pros/cons of interventions to minimize violence at the individual, community and societal level  
• Better understand the multifaceted role guns play in the U.S., including the history and legalities, and the everyday uses and abuses.  
• Be able to approach the issue of guns in society in a scholarly, objective, and nuanced manner, from a public health perspective.  
 Class Reading:  

Session 16: Substance Abuse  
Monday, November 6  
Session Objectives:  
• Identify the prevalence of substance use, by type of substances
• Explore the impact of substance abuse on individuals, families, and communities, in terms of physical, mental, and public health problems
• Explore the role of individual biases and beliefs about people who abuse drugs
• Discuss barriers to access of treatment
• Describe interventions at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention & at various levels of the socio-ecologic model

Class Reading:
• Behavioral Health, United States, 2012. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

**Tufts Academic Calendar:
Tuesday, November 7, 2017: Substitute Friday’s schedule on Tuesday
**Therefore. No recitation this week.

Session 17: Mental Health
Wednesday, November 8
Session Objectives:
• Describe mental well-being and categories of mental health disorders
• Discuss prevalence of mental health issues
• Discuss competing perspectives on the causes of mental distress or illness
• Explore the role of individual biases and beliefs about mental illness
• Outline major public health and medical strategies to promote mental health
• Describe interventions at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention & at various levels of the socio-ecologic model
• Discuss barriers to access of treatment and other interventions

Class Reading:
• TED Talk- Thomas Insel: Toward A New Understanding of Mental Illness. https://www.ted.com/talks/thomas_insel_toward_a_new_understanding_of_mental_illness

Monday, November 13 Quiz #2

Unit Three: Public Health and Health Care

Session 18: Overview of the US Health Care System
Wednesday, November 15
Guest Speaker
Alecia McGregor, PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Community Health; Tufts University
Session Objectives:
• Describe the major institutions that make up the healthcare system in the United States
• Describe approaches being used to define and measure quality, cost and access to health care
• Identify the major insurance systems in the United States and explain the basic principles of their financing
• Describe the features of the Affordable Care Act that represent key changes to the United States health insurance system

Class Reading:

Session 19: Integration of Public Health and Medicine
Tony Schlafl, MD, MPH Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine
Director, Public Health Programs, Tufts University

Session Objectives:
• Compare and contrast role of medical providers and public health practitioners in promoting individual and population health
• Discuss the benefits and challenges of combined medical and public health approaches to individual and population-level health
• Describe Community-Oriented Primary Care
• Explain the concept of primary care and differentiate it from secondary and tertiary care

Class Reading:
• Video: Out in the Rural (Available on Trunk)

Tufts Academic Calendar:
Thanksgiving holiday: No classes, Wednesday, November 22- Friday, November 24, 2017

Session 20: Issues in Public Health and Health Care Policy
Monday, November 27

Session Objectives
• Discuss moral questions related to ‘a right to health’ and access to healthcare services
• Explore the evaluation of healthcare systems in a comparative context
• Explain how the US healthcare system works, with focus on key principles of health system evaluation (Cost, Access, Quality, Value, Equity)

Class Reading
• Reid TR. The Healing of America. Prologue; Chapter 12.

Session 21: Public Health Policy and Politics
Wednesday, November 29
Session Objectives
• Describe the role that different levels of government and non-governmental organizations play in developing and implementing public health policy
• Describe the political history of public health policy in the US
• Identify ethical perspectives, values, and beliefs that support or contradict public health policy
• Define and explain the goal of Health In All Policies

Class Reading
• Sihto et al. Principles and challenges of Health in All policies. in Health in All Policies: Prospects and Potentials, ed. Stahl et al. 2006

Unit Four: Overarching Issues in Public Health

Session 22: Global Health/Mountains Beyond Mountains
Monday, December 4
Session Objectives
• Describe key public health concepts related to global health, including: measures of health status and the burden of disease.
• Describe how globalization has changed the patterns of the spread of disease
• Discuss how social and cultural factors can affect a society’s vulnerability to morbidity and mortality and its approaches to prevention and control.
• Identify key organizations and institutions, their roles in global health, and the manner in which they can cooperate to address key global health issues.

Class Readings
• Finish Reading Mountains Beyond Mountains
• Jamison, Somers, Allyene et al. Global health 2035. Read Executive Summary only. Lancet 2013
• Video available at: http://www.thelancet.com/cms/attachment/2010532020/2032647997/mmc6.mp4

Session 23: Health as a Human Right
Wednesday, December 6
Fernando Ona, PhD, MPH, Assistant professor of Public Health and Community Medicine
Tufts University
Session Objectives:
• Identify the ethical, resource, and economic implications of health as a human right
- Describe the arguments concerning the primary determinants of the state of the world's health
- Identify and begin to describe the international human rights system and the basic rights conventions

Class Reading:

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Session 24: The Future of Public Health
Monday, December 11

Session Objectives:
- Discuss potential interventions to maximize the potential for health
- Discuss persistent and emerging issues in public health
- Identify the social, economic, environmental & political determinants associated with these issues
- Describe opportunities for public health practitioners to impact these issues using a socio-ecological framework
- Discuss potential future directions for US healthcare reform

Class Reading:

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Tuesday, December 19
Quiz #3