

TUFTS UNIVERSITY
CH 30 Community Health Methods Syllabus
Fall 2017

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Class: Tuesday and Thursday from 10:30-11:45 @ 574 Boston Avenue, Room 404
Writing Fellows: To be determined

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory research course is designed to enable students to develop knowledge and skills to *access, generate, critically evaluate, adapt* and *implement* evidence in public health practice (“evidence-based public health” or EBPH) to improve community health. The practice of evidence-based public health incorporates the best available evidence supporting public health interventions with consideration of community preferences, values, resources and assets. In this course, my goal is for students to gain an appreciation for the value and power of research as a tool to improve community health. In that effort, the course will be divided into three units:

Unit 1: In this unit, we will focus on defining EBP, discuss why EBPs are critical to improving community health and learn where one can *access* information about EBPs.

Unit 2: In this unit, we will gain skills to both *generate* evidence and *evaluate* currently existing EBPs.

Unit 3: In this unit, we will discuss how to *implement* and *adapt* EBPs in community settings.

Specific topics will range from a basic introduction to ethical considerations in research, sample and study design, a basic introduction to qualitative and quantitative methodologies and an introduction to program evaluation. There will a particular emphasis on facilitating the acquisition of practical research and evaluation skills including an introduction to grant writing.

Note: This course does not presume any prior research or evaluation experience nor does it presume a background in research methods.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the value of EBPs
- Understand the role of theory in informing EBPs
- Understand how to identify issues to target in community health improvement
- Learn about sampling and study design
- Learn the basics of quantitative data collection (e.g. surveys) and elementary analysis
- Learn the basics of qualitative data collection (e.g. interviews and focus groups) and elementary analysis
- Learn about participatory research and evaluation approaches to engaging communities in research
- Understand the basics of conducting program evaluation
- Understand the steps in the community health assessment process
- Learn how to deliver an effective professional research presentation
- Learn about the components of a grant proposal and how to seek out funding

COURSE TEXT AND READINGS

The course textbook is: The Process of Social Research. Jeffrey C. Dixon, Royce A. Singelton, Bruce C. Straits (2016). Other required readings will be available at the course website on Trunk (trunk.tufts.edu). Students are expected to have completed the readings prior to coming to the class at which they will be discussed. The textbook will be placed on reserve in the Tisch Library. You can access this by visiting the front desk in the library. Our course has also been selected to be part of the Tisch Textbook Pilot program (up to 5 copies). More information about reserve texts can be found at: <http://tischlibrary.tufts.edu/find/course-reserves>

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Your grade in this course consists of the following assignments, also described in greater detail below:

Course Assignment	% of Total Grade	Due Date
Class Participation	5%	N/A
Online Human Subjects CITI Training	5%	9/21/17
Article Review and Critique	10%	9/28/17
Mid-Term Exam	40%	10/10/17
Final Group Paper	30%	12/5/17 or 12/7/17
Final Group Presentation	10%	12/5/17 or 12/7/17

Class Participation (5%)

Class participation is a critical component of your learning in this course and is *encouraged*. I define class participation as follows:

- Attendance and punctuality. Class attendance and punctuality will influence the evaluation of a student's performance and grade. If you cannot attend class, please notify me beforehand. I want everyone to succeed and acknowledge that life can sometimes present unanticipated challenges. Unexcused absences however, will affect your grade. If you are going to be absent from class for any reason, please email me BEFORE class to let me know you will be absent.
- Attentiveness, including refraining from texting and use of computers during class, unless required.
- Completing readings before class and being prepared to apply them in discussions.
- Engagement/participation in respectful interactions with students, faculty and guest speakers.

Online Human Subjects CITI Training Certificate (5%)

Due Dates: 9/21/17 By 11:55pm; Upload to Trunk

It is important that anyone conducting research with human participants be aware of human subjects guidelines and ethical dilemmas to prepare them for the conduct of research. The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) offers a course on Human Subjects Research (HSR) that is directed towards anyone who will be involved in research with human participants. Access instructions are located at http://viceprovost.tufts.edu/sberirb/files/CITI_Registration_Step_by_Step.pdf When asked to select your IRB training course, select the Social-Behavioral-Educational researchers course. You **DO NOT** need to take the "Good clinical practice and ICH (GCP) course. You are required to complete all 13 modules to receive your certification. Upon completion, students will be able to print a certificate of completion that will enable them to participate in future research projects. If you have already completed this training previously at Tufts or another institution, please upload proof of completion to Trunk.

Article Review and Critique (10%)

Due Date: 9/28/17, By 11:55pm; Upload to Trunk

A peer reviewed article will be provided to the class at the start of the semester. You are asked to critique this article using a template provided to you. In the template, you will be requested to outline the a) the research questions/study aims, b) study design, c) population and sampling procedures, d) intervention /comparison conditions if relevant, e) data collection methods and measures, and f) findings for the study. You will also be asked to discuss the strengths and limitations of the study. Please do not copy large amounts of text to include in the review. Summarize information when possible, in bullets, from the articles to include in the review template. An electronic copy of the article review should be submitted via Trunk no later than 11:55pm on the due date. Please do not submit a PDF copy of this review. The review should be submitted in a form that is editable by the instructor.

In Class Mid-Term Exam (40%)

Date: 10/10/17

A mid-term exam will assess learning of materials from classes 1-8. The exam format may include multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks, short response and True/False questions. The instructor will determine which chapters/content will be covered in the mid-term exam, based on the progress made by the class.

Three Draft Components, Final Group Paper (30%) And Group Presentation (10%)

Component #1: 10/24/17 by 12 pm Turn in on Trunk (will be reviewed by writing fellows)

Component #2: 11/9/17 by 12 pm Turn in on Trunk (will be reviewed by instructor)

Component #3: 11/16/17 by 12 pm Turn in on Trunk (will be reviewed by writing fellows)

Final Paper: 12/5/17 or 12/7/17 by 11:55pm

Group Presentation: 12/5/17 or 12/7/17 by 11:55 pm

- The final assignment consists of a group paper and final group presentation based on the paper. This paper will be developed by students in groups of no more than 3 students.
- The group paper will be developed by students, in three draft components over the course of the semester. These individual components will not be graded however the final paper and presentation will be graded.
 - Component #1: Understand a public health problem and a community affected by this problem (~10 pages)
 - Component #2: Identify existing evidence-based practices (matrices using the Article Review format, so the page count will vary)
 - Component #3: Adapt, Implement and Evaluate the EBP for your community (5 pages)
- Students will receive feedback on Component #1 and #3 from one of our two CH30 writing fellows. The writing fellows are an integral part of this class, and these highly trained peers will help you to become better writers. No student should graduate Tufts without having worked to improve his or her writing. Our CH30 writing fellows are: Ravali Mukthineni (point fellow) and Vivian Tam.
- Each group will be required to meet with their assigned writing fellow twice in the semester. If you do not meet with your writing fellow on an initial draft of your component or if you do not submit an initial draft of your component at all, you will lose points on that component in the final paper submission. Late submissions of initial drafts will result in the imposition of late penalties on the revised draft. I regularly consult with the writing fellows to see which students have kept their appointments. It is your responsibility to make and keep appointments with your writing fellow. The writing fellows will provide constructive feedback, but they are not your copy editors, your advocates, or your graders. A positive attitude will guarantee a positive experience. Please remember that the Writing Fellows are busy students just like you, and they work hard to find time to meet with you. If you must be late or miss a meeting, it is your responsibility to let the Fellow know as soon as possible and to re-schedule your meeting at his or her convenience, keeping in mind that it may simply not be possible to find a new time given the Fellows busy schedules.

Group work is hard. This is why I think it's important for you to learn how to do it well.

- Working in groups allows you to work together to apply course concepts and problem solve together
- Research is a collaborative endeavor.
- You will learn life-long skills whether you chose to pursue research or not.

Component Details

Component #1: Pick a public health problem and community (10 pages total)

- Identify a public health problem you seek to address in your paper.
- Compile information from the peer reviewed literature and online data sources to describe the scope, extent and magnitude of the public health problem.
- Present data to show the different populations/communities affected by this problem. Do not focus on just one community initially, but talk about different communities affected by this problem. “Community” can be defined in various ways (e.g., people who share a racial/ethnic background, age, geographic location etc.) For example, if your topic is HIV, you might talk about how population groups disproportionately affected by HIV, including gay or bisexual men, or injection drug users.
- If relevant, include the scientific understanding of the problem (i.e., what is the current biological, physiological or medical understanding of the “causes” or “contributing factors” for this problem).
- Now pick one community (be as specific as possible) from those you identified above, and describe key characteristics of this community that you would need to know if you were planning to implement an evidence-based program with this community. Characteristics could include information on community values, attitudes or perceptions related to the public health topic etc.)
- In the next component you will select an EBP and adapt and apply it to this community. Before you do this, you will need to seek out “data” to better understand the issues and assets of this community that should be taken into account when planning an evidence-based intervention within this community and any information that you may have about the community’s perception of the issue, priority placed on the issue, and desired solutions. The type of data you will seek out should include quantitative and qualitative data on the relevant characteristics of the selected population (including assets, resources, challenges, barriers). This may mean reading about cultural, religious, socio-economic, historical, and political issues that might influence the feasibility, appropriateness, and/or relevance of interventions you might choose to implement with your selected population. Learning more about one specific population/community group will also enable you to consider the most appropriate setting in which you intend to implement the intervention (e.g., school, workplace, community, homes, community-based organizations, media, etc).

Component #2: Identify evidence-based practices to address your public health problem

- Now, cull through the literature and identify 3-4 evidence-based practices (interventions) that have been designed to address your public health problem that are potentially adaptable to suit your selected community. For example, if your selected public health problem is obesity you might choose to include an article that describes the evaluation of a school-based program to address obesity among children and an article that describes the study of a nutritional intervention to tackle obesity among adults.
- Do not select studies that focus just on one particular population/community or specifically focus on your chosen community, but explore how your public health problem has been addressed in various population/community groups.
- For each study you select, complete the article critique/review template
- Also include a summary 1-2 paragraphs assessment of the, state of the science across all these studies (i.e., is there a lot of high level evidence? Are there gaps in the evidence?).
- Your submission should consist of the article review matrices and the 1-2 paragraph overall assessment.

Component #3: Adapt, implement and evaluate your EBP (5 pages total)

- Pick one EBP from Component #2 to adapt or change to suit your selected population. Rationalize each proposed adaptation based on your knowledge of your selected community. Discuss any potential adaptations or modifications that you feel are warranted based on the characteristics of the selected population/community, setting or context (refer back to component 1).
- Describe how the program will be implemented in your community (e.g., by whom, in what setting, what are the objectives, how will it be sustained).
- Include a 1-page description about how you would evaluate the intervention including outcomes, data collection methods, strengths and limitations.

Final Paper: Integration of Components 1-3

The final group paper should consist of an integration of the three components developed throughout the semester by each student group. Please ensure that the final paper integrates the comments provided by the instructor and writing fellows throughout the semester and includes text to connect the components together. Each group will turn in 1 joint final paper.

Final Group Presentation

The final presentation should be about 15 minutes long (with about 3 minutes for questions at the end). The presentation should be a summary of your paper and every member of each group should have a role in creating and delivering the presentation. You are welcome to use Powerpoint or Prezi if you prefer, just ensure the technology works before your presentation day. Upload copies of your final presentation and final paper to Trunk no later than 11:55pm on the due date.

PARAMETERS FOR WRITTEN WORK

All written work must fall within the page parameters, excluding title page, references, and appendices. All written work must also be typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, 1" margins, and double-spaced. All citations for references used in written work and all reference lists must follow the American Psychological Association (APA) Manual, Sixth Edition (2009). Students are encouraged to use Zotero for reference management (a training will be provided during the semester). Written work is to be edited for clarity of thought, grammar, and spelling. Failure to do so will result in a reduction of the assignment grade. If you need help with writing (and/or have other academic concerns), please contact the Center for Academic Achievement at 617-521-2479. Extensions on work are granted only for serious extenuating circumstances and with the prior permission of the instructor. Prior permission is defined as well before the due date. Papers turned in late without prior approval of extension will lose one half of a grade for every day the paper is late, starting the day the paper is due.

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONICS

In course evaluations from previous semesters, students have reported that laptops and mobile devices (including phones) are a distraction. Therefore, *use of laptops, tablets or smartphones is not permitted in class unless requested by instructor*. Please remember to turn off/silence your cell phones when class begins.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Tufts is committed to providing support and equal access for all students so that they may fully realize their academic potential. If you need academic accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. All discussions will remain confidential. For specific accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams), you are responsible for making arrangements with the Student Accessibility Services office and notifying the instructor two weeks in advance to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarizing is defined as intentionally or unintentionally using someone else's words or thoughts without giving proper credit. When a source is not cited, it is assumed that the words thoughts and ideas are the sole product of the student. When a student uses material from another source, the extent and nature of the borrowing must, to avoid the charge of dishonesty, be fully and explicitly noted in the text or footnotes. Direct quotations must be differentiated from the text by using quotation marks or by indenting or single spacing and be accompanied by appropriate APA citation. It is the responsibility of the student to learn the proper forms of citation. The use of papers or other work obtained from commercial or other services is a clear case of plagiarism and is specifically prohibited. Handing in as one's own work a paper on which a student has received extensive help without acknowledging that help is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and it is reportable to the Dean.

Please read the Academic Integrity Handbook at

<http://uss.tufts.edu/studentAffairs/documents/HandbookAcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to alter the course requirements and/or assignments based on new materials, class discussion, or other legitimate pedagogical objectives.

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1			
What is Evidence-Based Practice, where can one access evidence based practices and why are they important for community/public health?			
Class # Date	Class Agenda	Required Reading	Assignment Due
1 9/5/17	An Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice and Research Methods Class Introductions Course Overview/Syllabus Review Learning Styles Assessment	No readings	
2 9/7/17	The Process of Evidence-Based Practice in Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brownson RC, Fielding JE, Maylahn CM. Evidence-based public health: A fundamental concept for public health practice. Annual Review of Public Health 2009; 30: 175-201. 	
3 9/12/17	Accessing Evidence-Based Strategies & Interventions in Public Health	<i>Briefly skim the links below:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAMSHA's National Evidence-Based Registry http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ ▪ Cochrane http://www.cochrane.org/evidence 	

UNIT 2 Gain skills to both generate evidence and evaluate currently existing EBPs			
Class # Date	Class Agenda	Required Readings	Assignment Due
4 9/14/17	An Introduction to Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Text: p. 1-13 	
5 9/19/17	Paradigm, Theory and Social Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Text: p. 14-37 	
6 9/21/17	The Ethics and Politics of Research Lara Sloboda IRB Operations Manager & Lecturer of Department of Psychology (confirmed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course Text: p.38-70 ▪ Skim the link below: http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html 	Complete online CITI training <i>(link in course TRUNK site, resources section) and turn in hard copy of CITI certificate</i>
7 9/26/17	Structuring Inquiry: Research Design, Measurement and Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • p. 73-99 (design) • p. 104-134 (measurement) ▪ p. 137-168 (sampling) 	
8 9/28/17			Article Review #1 Due: TBD
9 10/3/17			
10 10/5/17	Exam Review		
11 10/10/17	MID-TERM EXAM		
12 10/12/17	Library Session (confirmed)		

13 10/17/17	Library Session (confirmed)		
14 10/19/17	Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Text: p. 173-200 	
15 10/24/17	Qualitative Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Text: p. 242-284 Watch Nvivo introduction 	Component #1 Draft Due: Understand a Public Health Problem and Community
16 10/26/17	Qualitative Research: Analysis		
17 10/31/17	Quantitative Analysis (Dr. Andrea Acevedo, to be confirmed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Text: p. 352-391 	
18 11/2/17	Survey Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Text: p. 204-238 	
11/7/17	No class, Substitute Friday schedule on Tuesday		
19 11/9/17	Community Health Needs Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	Component #2 Draft Due: Understand potential evidence based programs
20 11/14/17	Community-Engaged Research Albert Pless, Program Manager Cambridge Men's Health League (to be confirmed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minkler M. Community-based research partnerships: Challenges and opportunities. Journal of Urban Health 2005; 82(2): ii3-ii12. Mikesell L, Bromley E, Khodyakov D. Ethical community-engaged research: a literature review. American Journal of Public Health 2013; 103(12): e7-e14. 	

21 11/16/17	Criteria for Selecting Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rychetnik L, Frommer M, Hawe P, Shiell A. Criteria for evaluating evidence on public health interventions. Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 2002; 56: 119-127. Jacobs JA, Jones E, Gabella BA, et al. Tools for implementing an evidence-based approach in public health practice. Preventing Chronic Disease 	Component #3 Draft Due: Adapt, Implement and Evaluate the EBP for your community
22 11/21/17	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation To be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WK Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide (Intro, Chpts 1 &2) CDC's Framework for Program Evaluation 	
23 11/23/17	Thanksgiving Holiday		
24 11/28/17	Adapting Evidence-Based Strategies to suit your setting and context	TBD	
25 11/30/17	Funding Research: The Basics of Grant Writing	TBD	
26 12/5/17	Group Presentations		
27 12/7/17	Group Presentations		