

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Health and Human Services

Course Number: GCH 300 (3:3:0)

Course Title: Introduction to Public Health

Faculty: Ali Weinstein, PhD
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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:15 – 10:15 am
Thursday 12:00 – 1:00 pm
By Appointment

Course Time and Location: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 – 11:45 am
Robinson A, Room 105

Course Description:

This course addresses population-focused healthcare and examines concepts of community and public health, and health policies affecting US populations. The course also emphasizes primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention related to health problems/diseases.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Analyze principles of public health as they relate to the health of populations.
2. Examine epidemiological principles associated with the health of specific populations.
3. Differentiate public health's core functions and assess how they are operationalized in practice.
4. Examine the role of governmental and nongovernmental agencies in the management and prevention of disease and the promotion of health of US populations.
5. Analyze primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of prevention that are appropriate for populations of interest.
6. Examine health policy's impact on health care delivery.
7. Examine the social, cultural, and behavioral factors that influence health behavior.
8. Examine the role of public health in emergency preparedness and response.

Required Textbook:

Schneider, M., (2006). Introduction to Public Health. 2nd Edition. Boston, MA: Jones & Bartlett.

Additional required readings and other materials will be available on the GMU Library's E-Reserves or Blackboard – <http://courses.gmu.edu>.

Academic Honesty:

George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>). If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 211; 993-2474; www.gmu.edu/student/ods) to determine the accommodations you might need; and 2) talk with the instructor to discuss reasonable accommodations (preferably during the first two weeks of the semester).

Course Requirements:

- **Course Exams:** A mid-term and final exam will be given during the semester and could include multiple choice, true-false, matching, short answer, and essay questions. Exams will be designed to test knowledge of key concepts and ability to synthesize, analyze, and apply what the student has learned. Only students with a valid **pre-authorized** excuse will be allowed to take a make-up exam. Except in special cases and with the instructor's permission, the make-up exam must be taken within one week following the scheduled exam date. If an emergency occurs before an exam, the student must contact the professor within **24 hours** of the exam and **must have** proper documentation for the absence.
- **Pop Quizzes:** Six pop quizzes based on readings, lectures, and class discussions will be given at unannounced times during the semester. Pop quizzes will consist of objective and/or short-answer questions that will be completed in the first 10-15 minutes of class. The pop quizzes are meant to help the student learn material, and encourage the student to remain current in reading, arrive to class on time, and attend class regularly. Selected pop quiz questions will appear on the subsequent exam. There will be **NO** make-up pop quizzes. The instructor will drop the lowest pop quiz score and assess student performance based on the remaining five quizzes.
- **Group Powerpoint Presentation:** Groups of 4-5 students will choose a disease or health behavior. They will develop a Powerpoint presentation to discuss this disease or health behavior in a 15-minute presentation. These group presentations will take place throughout the course.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to stay current in readings and assignments and to actively participate in class discussions. Lectures are geared to supplement material available in the text. Other in-class time will be spent working on exercises that address key concepts and principles. Students are responsible for getting additional notes (not

included in the powerpoint slides) from a classmate if they do not attend a lecture. I will pass around an attendance sheet at each lecture. Although attendance, itself, is not graded, this information will be used for students on the borderline between grades for the final grade.

Component	Points	% of Final Grade
Mid-term Exam	100	20
Pop quizzes	75	15
Group Powerpoint Presentation	75	15
Participation	50	10
Final Exam	200	40
TOTAL	500	100

Grade	Points	Percent	Grade	Points	Percent
A	465-500	93-100	C	365-384	73-76
A-	450-464	90-92	C-	350-364	70-72
B+	435-449	87-89	D+	335-349	67-69
B	415-434	83-86	D	300-334	60-66
B-	400-414	80-82	F	0 - 299	0-59
C+	385-399	77-79			

Proposed Schedule (subject to change):

Date	Topic	Readings/Activities	Assignments
<i>Part I: What is Public Health</i>			
Sept. 1	Introductions Syllabus Review What is Public Health?	Schneider - Prologue	
Sept. 3	Public Health: Science, Politics, and Prevention	Schneider: Chapter 1	
Sept. 8	Why is Public Health Controversial?	Schneider: Chapter 2	
Sept. 10	Powers and Responsibilities of Government	Schneider: Chapter 3	
<i>Part II: Analytical Methods of Public Health</i>			
Sept. 15	Epidemiology: The Basic Science of Public Health	Schneider: Chapter 4	Group Presentation
Sept. 17	Epidemiologic Principles and Methods	Schneider: Chapter 5	
Sept. 22	Problems and Limits of Epidemiology	Schneider: Chapter 6	Group Presentation
Sept. 24	Statistics: Making Sense of Uncertainty	Schneider : Chapter 7	
Sept. 29	The Role of Data in Public Health	Schneider: Chapter 8	
<i>Part III: Biomedical Basis of Public Health</i>			
Oct. 1	The “Conquest” of Infectious Diseases	Schneider: Chapter 9	
Oct. 6	The Resurgence of Infectious Diseases	Schneider: Chapter 10	Group Presentation
Oct. 8	The Biomedical Basis of Chronic Diseases	Schneider: Chapter 11	
Oct. 13	NO CLASS – Monday Classes Meet		
Oct. 15	Mid-term Exam Review		Group Presentation
Oct. 20	Mid-Term Exam		
<i>Part IV: Social and Behavioral Factors in Health</i>			
Oct. 22	Do People Choose Their Own Health?	Schneider: Chapter 13	
Oct. 27	How Psychosocial Factors Affect Health Behavior	Schneider: Chapter 14	Group Presentation
Oct. 29	Tobacco	Schneider: Chapter 15	Group Presentation
Nov. 3	Poor Diet and Physical Inactivity	Schneider: Chapter 16	
Nov. 5	Injuries are not Accidents	Schneider: Chapter 17	Group Presentation

<i>Part V: Environmental Issues in Public Health</i>			
Nov. 10	A Clean Environment: The Basis of Public Health	Schneider: Chapter 19	Group Presentation
Nov. 12	Clean Air, Clean Water, and Wastes	Schneider: Chapters 20-22	
Nov. 17	Population: The Ultimate Environmental Health Issue	Schneider: Chapter 24	Group Presentation
<i>Part VI: Medical Care and Public Health</i>			
Nov. 19	Is the Medical Care System a Public Health Issue?	Schneider: Chapter 25	Group Presentation
Nov. 24	Why the U.S. Medical System Needs Reform	Schneider: Chapter 26	
Nov. 26	NO CLASS – Happy Thanksgiving!		
Dec. 1	Health Services Research: Finding What Works	Schneider: Chapter 27	
<i>Part VII: The Future of Public Health</i>			
Dec. 3	Emergency Preparedness	Schneider: Chapter 29	Group Presentation
Dec. 8	Public Health in the 21 st Century	Schneider: Chapter 30	
Dec. 10	Final Exam REVIEW		
Dec. 17	FINAL EXAM --- 10:30 am to 1:15 pm		