

“For if medicine is really to accomplish its great task, it must intervene in political and social life, to point out the hindrances that impede the normal social functioning of vital processes, and effect their removal.” – *Rudolf Virchow (1849)*



OVERVIEW

Foundations of Public Health is an introduction to the dynamic and multidisciplinary field of public health. From emerging epidemics to continuing concerns over environmental quality and health, public health is a growing and exciting area of study. Though considered a “hot” and emerging scientific field, much of what is now within the scope of public health science and practice was already defined among forward-looking early practitioners nearly 100 years ago. Edward Winslow (1920), an early US leader in public health defined public health as: “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts for sanitation of the environment, the control of community infections, the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene, the organization of medical and nursing services for the early diagnosis and preventative treatment of disease, and the development of the social machinery which will ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health.” Much of this original definition of public health remains valid even if the tools, methods, technologies and priorities of public health have changed. In this course you will be introduced to both the history of public health including its scientific, political, legal and historical origins, as well as the state of the art in public health science and the current tools, strategies and policies currently used to keep the public safe from disease and injury. The class will involve a combination of lectures, readings, assignments and hands-on learning experiences to better understand the methods, tools and real-world challenges faced by public health professionals across a wide range of settings. Topics include infectious disease control, chronic disease prevention and health promotion, mental health and substance abuse, emergency preparedness, violence and injury prevention and environmental health. Along the way, I hope that you will develop a passion for public health, appreciate the many scientific and professional pathways with which it intersects, and consider career options and future studies that include public health.



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Foundations of Public Health: Learning Outcomes

No.	Description
C1	Identify eras in the historical development of public health and ways that public health emerges in literature and the arts, current events, and everyone's daily life.
C2	Illustrate the multidisciplinary, crosscutting, or ecological character of public health and the contributions of a range of disciplines and professions to improving health.
C3	Explain the basic principles of epidemiology, including rates, risk factors, disease determinants, causation, and public health surveillance.
C4	Explain how public health assesses the options for intervention to improve the health of diverse populations.
C5	Explain how public health can utilize health information and health communications to improve the health of populations.
C6	Explain how public health can utilize social and behavioral interventions to improve the health of populations.
C7	Explain how public health can utilize health policy and law to improve the health of populations.
C8	Explain the impact of the environment and communicable diseases on the health of populations.
C9	Explain the burden of chronic diseases on morbidity and mortality and approaches to prevention, early detection, and disease management.
C10	Identify the roles of public health in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations and health disparities.
C11	Identify the roles of public health in disaster prevention and management.
C12*	Apply the public health approach—problem, cause, intervention and implementation—to public health problems.
C13*	Apply principles of health communications and informatics to evaluate the quality of health information on the Internet and in the mass media.
C14*	Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of potential interventions.
C15*	Analyze the determinants of morbidity and mortality in a new situation.
C16*	Analyze the degree of success in implementing essential public health services in a new situation.
C17*	Synthesize the principles and tools of public health as applied to new and existing public health problems.
A1	Recognize the importance cultural diversity when developing public health programs.
A2	Value the work conducted by public health professionals to keep the public safe.
A3	Form sound ethical judgments about the use of public health interventions such as vaccines, fluoride and quarantine.
A4	Desire to be a positive force in improving the health and wellbeing of populations.

*Higher-level cognitive skills



COURSE OUTLINE

Foundations of Public Health Topics, Activities and Readings

Session	Date	Topic/Activity	Reading(s)
1	2-3	Review Syllabus and Practice Poll Everywhere	Syllabus Assignment 1 discussed in class
2	2-5	Concepts of Public Health	Streiner, et al Preface and Ch. 1-2
3	2-8	Concepts of Public Health Demographic and Epidemiological Transitions	Streiner, et al Chs. 1-2
4	2-10	Concepts of Public Health Eras in Public Health (cont.)	Streiner, et al Chs. 1-2
5	2-12	Concepts of Public Health Disease, Illness, and Sickness Overview	Blackboard reading
6	2-15	Surveillance/Monitoring and Outcomes (cont.) Outbreak Investigation	Streiner, et al Ch. 3-4
7	2-17	Surveillance/Monitoring and Outcomes (cont.) Outbreak Investigation	Streiner, et al Ch. 3-4
8	2-19	Immunizations—Choice vs. Public Health Controversy 1 Discussion	Carney, Ch. 12 Reflection paper 1 due before class on 2/19
9	2-22	Vaccines and Health	BlackBoard Readings
10	2-24	Vaccines and Health (cont.)	BlackBoard Readings
11	2-26	Public Health Controversies Binge Drinking on College Campuses Controversy 2 Discussion	Carney, Ch. 7 Reflection paper 2 due before class on 2/26
12	2-29	Perceptions of Risk Health Economics	Streiner, et al Ch. 5
13	3-2	Perceptions of Risk Health Economics (cont.)	Streiner, et al Ch. 5
14	3-4	Exam 1	EXAM 1 <covers 2/3-3/2>
15	3-7	Mitigation and Prevention	Streiner, et al Ch. 6
16	3-9	Mitigation and Prevention Population versus High Risk Approaches	Streiner, et al Ch. 6 Blackboard Reading
17	3-11	Deadly Agents and Epidemiology Review	Streiner, et al Ch. 7
18	3-14	Deadly Agents and Epidemiology Review (cont.)	Streiner, et al Ch. 7
19	3-16	Epidemics and Pandemics	Streiner, et al Ch. 7
20	3-18	Epidemics and Pandemics (cont.)	Streiner, et al Ch. 7
--	3-21 to 3-28	Mid-Semester and Easter Break	No Class
21	3-30	Re-review of Epidemiology	Blackboard reading

22	4-1	Infectious Disease: Climate Change and Antibiotic Resistance Controversy 3 Discussion	Carney, Chs. 14-15 Reflection paper 3 due before class on 4/1
23	4-4	Infectious Disease: Climate Change and Antibiotic Resistance	Carney, Chs. 14-15
24	4-6	TedTalk review	TBD
25	4-8	Exam 2	EXAM 2 <covers 3/7-4/6>
26	4-11	Social Connectedness and Capital Status Anxiety Horrendous Death Social Determinants of Health	BlackBoard Readings
27	4-13	Social Connectedness and Capital Status Anxiety Horrendous Death Social Determinants of Health	BlackBoard Readings
28	4-15	Obesity and Sugary Sweetened Beverages Controversy 4 Discussion	Carney, Chs. 3-4 Reflection paper 4 due before class on 4/15
29	4-18	Diabetes and Obesity	BlackBoard Readings
30	4-20	Diabetes and Obesity	BlackBoard Readings
31	4-22	<i>The Weight of the Nation</i>	BlackBoard Readings
32	4-25	Physical Activity and Health Controversy 5 Discussion	Handouts Carney, Chs. 17 & 20 Reflection paper 5 due before class on 4/25
33	4-27	Lifestyle Factors and Health	--
34	4-29	Smoking and Health	--
35	5-2	Drugs	BlackBoard Readings
36	5-4	Community-Oriented Medicine	--
37	5-6	Firearms and Injuries Controversy 6 Discussion	BlackBoard Readings Carney, Ch. 16 Reflection paper 6 due before class on 4/25
38	5-9	Occupational Rights and Health Helping Homeless Families Project Items and/or Service Learning Hour Documentation DUE by 5/9	--
39	5-11	Human Rights and Health Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals	BlackBoard Readings
40	5-13	Exam 3	EXAM 3 <covers 4/11-5/11>
Finals	5-17	Course Reflection Journal due by May 17 at 11:00pm	Course Reflection Journal Due

**All non-text readings are available on Blackboard in PDF format.*



GRADING

Assessment tool	Description	Points
Attendance	Each student starts with 150 points for attendance at the beginning of the semester. Each unexcused missed class results in a 15 point reduction in this area. Each unexcused class tardy or leaving early will result in a 5 point reduction in this area.	150
Overall Class Participation	Overall in-class participation will be evaluated based on the professor's perception of the type, quality, and quantity of student engagement throughout the course. Each student starts the semester with 75 points and the points are adjusted throughout the semester.	100
Assignment: Controversy In-Class Discussions	In-class participation will enable students to earn points for in class discussion on the six controversial topic discussion days. (6 controversy discussion days total)	60
Assignment: Controversy One-Pagers	Before each controversy discussion day, students will write a one page single-spaced paper that summarizes the issue in your own words and describes your opinion on the topic. (6 papers total)	90
Exams	There are three exams: Exam 1 worth up to 150 points; Exam 2 worth up to 150 points; Exam 3 worth up to 150 points	450
Deliverables & Assignments: Reflection Journal	Course Reflection Journal (2 pages single spaced)	50
Deliverables & Assignments: Homelessness Project	Helping Homeless Families Project	100
Deliverables & Assignment: Service Learning	Service hours through Service Learning (Bethany Brun)	100
Extra Controversy One-Pagers	Writing one-pagers on controversy topics not already assigned for this class will result in up to 15 points per extra paper	up to 60
Deliverables & Assignment: Extra credit	Extra credit can be granted for outstanding performance (on exams, papers, projects, or participations).	up to 35

The following grading scale will be applied to all course requirements:

A	≥910 points	B+	880-909 points	B	830-879 points
C+	800-829 points	C	750-799 points	D+	720-749 points
D	670-719 points	F	≤669 points		



ASSIGNMENTS/DELIVERABLES, PARTICIPATION & EXAMS

Readings and Lectures

All students are expected to pay attention to and comprehend readings and lectures. The professor should be asked or notified of any topics in need of clarification. Requests for clarification can occur by asking questions during class, emailing the professor, and/or visiting the professor during office hours.

Class Participation

Class Attendance

During each of these sessions, student class attendance will be assessed (typically through the completion of a class attendance sheet). Each student starts with 150 attendance points. Each missed session will result in a deduction of 15 attendance points. Being more than 5 minutes late will result in a 5 point reduction. Leaving class early will also result in a 5 point reduction.

Class participation

Each student can retain up to 100 points in class participation; like attendance, each student begins the semester with 100 points. Class participation will be reduced based on the professor's perception of the type, quality, and quantity of student engagement throughout the course. This is an overall subjective impression of a student's engagement on the part of the professor. Student engagement includes appropriate preparedness and responsiveness of students while in the classroom.

Examples of student engagement (not exhaustive):

Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions

Discussed ideas from your readings

Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions

Actively participated in community-based projects

Gave constructive feedback to classmates or professor

Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class

Used e-mail to communicate with professor

Met with professor during office hours to clarify thinking

Showed interest in topic

Being present physically and mentally in class

Examples of student disengagement (not exhaustive):

Not answering or asking questions

Head on desk or lack of consciousness

Disrespect and disinterest

Lack of communication

Deliverables and Assignments

Below is an overview of key deliverables/assignments for this course (please note that supplemental detail for any of these deliverables/assignments may be uploaded on BlackBoard).

Exams

There are three exams in this course. The method of assessment can vary across exams. The professor will NOT consider granting make-up exams, unless in accordance with preempting university policy. If a make-up exam is granted, it will likely be different than the original exam and will need to be completed within 2 class days. A missed or not turned in exam will result in a zero on the exam.

Reflection Journal

Students will complete a two page single-spaced (12 point font, 1 inch margins) reflection journal. The reflection journal should, at a minimum, cover the following six areas.

- 1) I learned...
- 2) I agreed with...
- 3) I disagreed with...
- 4) I would like to learn more about and/or become more involved in...
- 5) The course would be better if...
- 6) The material in the course change the way that I think about...

These papers should be emailed to jtcufcl@mercyhurst.edu on or before the due date. Please email in .doc, docx, or .pdf file format. Reflection papers are worth up to 50 points.

Helping Homeless Families Project

Students will collect items to help homeless families: young adult and men's clothing (especially plain t-shirts all sizes, winter jackets, gloves/hats, winter boots), baby basics (diapers/wipes/food/clothes), kitchen basics (paper plates, plastic spoons/forks/knives), sleeping basics (blankets), bathroom basics (toothbrushes/toothpaste, bar soap, shampoo, deodorant, towels), or child transition basics (toys and clothes). Students will be graded on the type, quality, and quantity of items collected. Items will be due on or before May 9.

Service Learning

Students can earn up to 100 points for completing approved service learning hours. These Service Learning hours must be approved by the professor or earned through Mercyhurst Service Learning (Bethany Brun). Each hour is worth 5-10 points, up to 100. 10 points if through Mercyhurst Service Learning. 5 points if agreed to by instructor but outside of Mercyhurst Service Learning. Appropriate Service Learning timesheets/documentation must be turned into Bethany Brun of Mercyhurst Service Learning (original) and the professor (copy). Note that completing approved service beyond 100 points could result in extra credit.

Controversy Discussions and One-Page Papers

On the six controversy discussion days, students have the opportunity to gain 10 points per day based on their discussion of the assigned public health controversies. Six one-page papers is worth up to 15 points each (1 single spaced page per paper, excluding cover page). Controversy papers will be due at the beginning of class on the controversy discussion day. Additional guidance will be uploaded to BlackBoard or presented in class.

Extra Credit

Extra credit may be granted by the professor. Up to 35 points could be earned through outstanding performance on an exam, paper, project, or participation.

PUBLIC HEALTH CURRICULUM

Foundations of Public Health is a required course for all Public Health majors and minors. We will cover multiple core public health education domains over the course of the semester through a combination of lectures, individual assignments, exams and in-class exercises and experiences. A list of the core domains covered in this course and corresponding periods of focus and methods of assessments is as follows:

CORE DOMAINS	ASSESSMENTS
The history and philosophy of public health as well as its core values, concepts and functions across the globe and in society	Exams
The basic concepts, methods and tools of public health data collection, use and analysis and why evidence-based approaches are an essential part of public health practice.	Exams
The concepts of population health, and the basic processes, approaches and interventions that identify and address the major health-related needs and concerns of populations	Exams
The underlying science of human health and disease including opportunities for promoting and protecting health across the lifecourse.	Exams Assignments/Deliverables
The socioeconomic, behavioral, biological, environmental and other factors that impact human health and contribute to health disparities	Exams Assignments/Deliverables
The fundamental concepts and features of project implementation, including planning, assessment and evaluation.	Exams
The fundamental characteristics and organizational structures of the US health system as well as the differences in systems in other countries	Exams
The basic concepts of legal, ethical, economic and regulatory dimensions of health care and public health policy and the roles, influences and responsibilities of the different agencies and branches of government.	Exams
The basic concepts of public health-specific communication, including technical and professional writing and the use of mass media and electronic technology.	Assignments/Deliverables



COURSE POLICIES

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability who needs any special academic accommodations should make an appointment for a confidential meeting with the director of the Learning Differences Program during the first week of class (814-824-3017).

Recording of Classroom Activities

Our learning environment encourages the open exchange of ideas. You and your classmates need to feel that you can speak openly during our discussions. Thus, you must receive written permission from me to record any part of the class. Recording will typically only be permitted as a reasonable accommodation for a disability.

Note Taking

You are encouraged to actively take notes during class. Some but not all of the material covered on exams will be based on your classroom experience. We will cover information in class that is not part of the class text or readings. Taking notes on a computer can be distracting for you and those around you. I encourage you to consider using pencil and paper. Transcribing those notes later into electronic form is a great way to reinforce the material and to help you study. If you don't know how to take notes or aren't sure what are the key elements of our discussion you should be capturing, arrange a time to talk with me and I can help you.

Extra Credit

Extra credit is granted for the course outlined in this syllabus.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices not used specifically to facilitate learning (including smart phones, iPads, computers, etc.) should be turned off before the start of class. Accidents happen (e.g., cell phone ringing during class), but please make them the exception and not the rule.

Course Changes

I've created a detailed course syllabus so you know what is expected of you during our time together. In some instances, modifications need to be made to the syllabus. I am cognizant that these changes can have an impact on your life so I'll do my best to keep changes to a minimum. An amendment to the syllabus will also be distributed in class and/or by Blackboard documenting any substantial changes.

Consequence of Academic Dishonesty

The next section of the syllabus clearly outlines my thoughts on academic integrity. I expect you to maintain the highest ethical standards inside and outside the classroom. The penalty for any academic dishonesty will result in an automatic failing grade for the particular assessment in question without exception. Depending on the severity of the incident, I reserve the right to give you a failing grade for the course for even a single act of academic dishonesty. All acts of academic dishonesty are reported to the college administration. Multiple acts of academic dishonesty by the same individual brought to the attention of college administration can result in expulsion.



HONOR AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Trust is a key element of public health (i.e., social capital) and is a key element of this course. Accordingly, colleges, universities and professors should develop an environment where students learn honor and trust and where the standards of academic integrity are taught and emphasized. The obligations of honor don't apply to students only; all participants in the educational process have an obligation to act honorably.

The following principles guide my conduct and are the basis of my expectations of you.

- The college should facilitate the development of a culture that fosters the intellectual and ethical growth of its students. The faculty should provide students with the tools necessary to construct their own ethical paradigms.
- Objectivity is critical to learning. Keep an open mind, think beyond (but don't ignore) your own experiences, and genuinely listen to others.
- Free speech is critical to learning. All individuals are expected to participate and all informed/reasoned thoughts are welcomed.
- It is better to earn a C than cheat an A.
- I am responsible for facilitating your learning. You are responsible for learning.
- Mutual respect and civility are important to learning. This does not mean, however, that students should not challenge the ideas of others.
- All members of the university community have an obligation to be proactive in preventing misconduct. Students have an obligation to consult their instructors (or other appropriate official) if there is any question whether a considered behavior is appropriate.

Preparation for Class

What you can expect of me:

- That I will have prepared material and conducted whatever additional research is necessary to facilitate your education.
- That I will plan the class session so that it is worthwhile to attend.
- That I keep current with the content topic and the educational literature of the area.

What I expect of you:

- Read the required material or perform the required tasks as many times as necessary to fully prepare for class.
- Be resourceful in your preparation and consult reference materials and other approved aids when necessary.
- Think about the material before class so that you can meaningfully participate.
- Meet with other individuals as scheduled/required.
- To be empowered and inform me of methods or topics that you believe improve student experience in the class.

During Class

What you can expect of me:

- I will attend all sessions unless an emergency or an important professional matter prevents my attendance. Where possible, I will ensure some form of productive activity will occur in my absence.
- I will be punctual in arriving to class.
- I will do my best to answer your questions or refer you to other resources where an answer can be found. I will be honest about my ignorance when I don't have an answer.
- I will conduct educational class sessions. While I want class to be interesting, entertainment is secondary to learning.
- I will encourage everyone to participate.
- I will promote academic inquiry by encouraging critical assessment. Everyone has a right to express him/herself (presuming relevance and time permits) in the classroom. All thoughtful views are welcomed and personal opinions will not be factored into your grades. Only your analysis, logic, etc. will be taken into consideration.
- I will maintain order and decorum in the classroom and to control those who seek to ridicule others or who otherwise act improperly in class.
- I will not intentionally humiliate any student. However, I will challenge you to support your statements/opinions.

What I expect of you:

- Attend all class sessions unless an emergency arises.
- Arrive to class on time and don't leave early.
- Do not expect to be relieved of a course requirement or deadline because another non-emergency commitment (e.g. family or work) prevents you from completing the requirement.
- Participate in class discussions without monopolizing class time.
- Act with decorum and civility even when in serious disagreement with another person.
- Participate in in-class assignments and group projects.
- Come to class fully prepared.

Deliverables, Exams and Grades

What you can expect of me:

- I will do my best to prepare you for exams and other assessment tools.
- When possible, I will use assessment tools for learning as well as assessment.
- I will design exams to promote the development of writing and cognitive skills, not just memorization.
- I will fairly grade you in the course.
- I will be available during my office hours to discuss the material with you.
- I will discourage cheating and I will deal with it when discovered.

What I expect of you:

- Seek my help before an exam if you don't understand the material.
- Accept responsibility for your performance without blaming the instructor or others when you don't perform well.
- Accept your limitations. Sometimes it is not possible to manage family life, school, and your job without sacrifices. Prioritize your obligations and accept the consequences of your decisions.
- Don't cheat in any form (see below).
- Don't assist another student in cheating.
- Begin your assignments early enough to be able to complete them in a timely manner. Study for exams all term - don't "cram."
- Satisfy all course requirements.

Cheating and Dishonorable Behavior

Cheating harms the offender, other students, and the academic process. All acts of cheating cannot be identified. If you have any question concerning whether an act is appropriate, please contact me before acting. What follows are examples of cheating and dishonorable behavior.

- Plagiarism. You must give credit to another person when you use a direct quote from another individual's work or when you use another's idea.
- Exam Cheating. Unless indicated otherwise, you may not use your books, notes, other individuals, other exams, etc. when answering your exam questions. I occasionally have "open book" exams and "take-home" exams where the rules are different. I will make it clear when such is the case.
- Multiple submission of work. You may not submit the same work to fulfill the requirements of more than one class without my approval. The second project is intended to enhance your knowledge of the material and this doesn't occur if you use previously completed work. We can design a new project (possibly with some overlap) that will increase your knowledge of the subject. To do otherwise is cheating you out of an opportunity to learn.
- Having another complete your work for you. Seek only approved assistance with your assignments.
- Completing another student's work for him or her.
- Treating the instructor or another student with disrespect.
- Intentionally misleading another in the education process by providing false or incomplete information.
- Interfering with another's education or disrupting the learning environment.
- Falsifying research, data, or other information submitted for credit or otherwise used to support your completion of the class.
- Assisting another in any form of cheating.
- Other acts prohibited by the Student Handbook, Course Catalog, other college publications, and all other acts generally regarded as unethical by reasonable students.