

Boston College
Global Public Health Sequence
Spring 2016



Course Number:	NURS 3210
Course Title:	Contemporary Issues in Public Health
Credits/Level:	Three credits/Undergraduate
Hours:	This course involves a minimum of 3 didactic hours per week
Placement in Curriculum:	Global Public Health Sequence Course II
Pre-requisite:	NURS1210 or NURS4260
Class Location:	Cushing 212
Class Time:	Tuesdays/Thursdays 10:30-11:45

Faculty:

Summer Sherburne Hawkins, PhD, MS
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*Sign up through Google calendar for both Profs Hawkins & Edmonds

**For all course-related questions, please email Professor Hawkins AND cc Professor Edmonds

Course Description:

This course explores contemporary public health issues using core public health concepts. It builds on foundational knowledge developed in NURS1210 “Public Health in a Global Society” or NURS4260 “Population Health Nursing Theory”. The course integrates available public health/population data and public health research to examine the major burdens of disease for groups and society in select emerging areas of concern. With a consistent emphasis on the need to reduce health disparities, the course identifies population-level risk factors as well as evidence-based interventions for health promotion and disease prevention.

This is the second in a three-course sequence in global public health, which is an interdisciplinary collaboration across the Boston College Schools of Social Work, Connell School of Nursing, and Lynch School of Education. The sequence integrates foundational principles of public health with research on health topics, populations, and settings to learn about the field and application of skills to real-world problems. All courses use a broad view of health that includes physical, mental, and social well-being. Similarly, the sequence uses a broad view of ‘global’, which transcends national boundaries to include domestic issues in the US and around the world.

Course-Level Learning Outcomes

- Define the goals of public health, its appropriate limits in society, and the role of stakeholders
- Describe the most essential methods for generating public health data and understand the importance of data in public health practice and research
- Describe the complexity of public health issues, including the identification of multiple risk factors, challenge of population-level interventions, and breadth of public health's concerns
- Identify populations most at risk for health disparities as well as develop a thorough understanding why they exist, why they matter, and what public health can do in response
- Describe what makes an intervention evidence-based and identify several evidence-based interventions for the major burdens of disease

Required Text

Schneider, M. K. (2014). *Introduction to public health* (4th ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

Required Readings

In addition to the required reading from your text (see course outline), there is selection of articles that are also required assignments in the course. The readings are posted in Canvas.

Course and Evaluation Methods and Grading

Students will be responsible for the following assignments and exams

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| ○ Attendance, participation, and in class activities | 10% |
| ○ Public Health Grand Rounds | 15% |
| ○ Public Health PSA | 15% |
| ○ Two exams (15% each) | 30% |
| ○ Final Paper | 30% |

Course Evaluation Methods

Formative and summative course evaluations will be used. A midterm formative assessment will be used to obtain feedback about the teaching and learning experience. We are also open and interested in constructive feedback at any time throughout the semester. A standard, anonymous, online survey will be sent to you at the end of the course and serve as the summative evaluation for the course.

Course Policies

Absence from Class

Please notify the instructor prior to class, if possible. Please make arrangements to receive announcements and notes from fellow students. Students are responsible for the material and assignments covered in all classes.

Cancellation of classes

Call 552-INFO to determine if Boston College has canceled classes or go to the BC website. Students may also check cancellation listings on WBZ News Radio (1030 AM), WBZ News Channel 4, and WCRB- Channel 5 News. Decisions about cancellation or delay of classes for any reason is made by Boston College administration.

Class during BC closures

It is still important to maintain learning activities and academic work during disruptions such as inclement weather or university closures. Please be prepared to participate in alternate activities, such as online discussions, instead of

attending face-to-face class when circumstances prevent on-campus instruction. When BC is closed on a class day, please check your email for instructions.

Examinations

All examinations must be taken as scheduled. To be eligible to take a quiz/examination at a non-scheduled time, the student must have a serious unavoidable reason for not taking the exam as scheduled and must have notified the instructor prior to the quiz/exam. Rescheduling of examinations is at the discretion of the instructor.

Academic Integrity

This course will use the statement on academic integrity outlined by the University:

“The pursuit of knowledge can proceed only when scholars take responsibility and receive credit for their work. Recognition of individual contributions to knowledge and of the intellectual property of others builds trust within the University and encourages the sharing of ideas that is essential to scholarship. Similarly, the educational process requires that individuals present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique, and eventual reformulation. Presentation of others’ work as one’s own is not only intellectual dishonesty, but it also undermines the educational process.”

All students are expected to follow the Boston College University Statement on Academic Integrity as outlined in the BC catalog. <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html>.

Request for Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability seeking reasonable accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. NOTE: We ask that students notify us of the need for accommodations **at least two weeks** prior to an exam and provide us with the required paperwork.

Late Assignments

Assignments will be collected at the start of the class period on the due date. Any assignment submitted after that time will receive a penalty of 5 points per 24 hours late, but the total penalty will not exceed 50% of the points available for the assignment. Reasonable exceptions will be considered.

Technology and Assignments

Sadly, technology breaks, servers go down, transfers time out, and files become corrupt. The list goes on and on. These are not considered emergencies and are considered part of the normal process of technology use in our modern society. An issue you may have with technology is no excuse for late or incomplete work. You need to protect yourself by managing your time, backing up your work, saving your work, and keeping your computer’s anti-virus software updated. The instructor will consider reasonable exceptions.

Technology Use in the Classroom

Several studies - formal and informal - suggest that the majority of college students who bring their laptops, iPads, and other mobile electronic devices to class do not use them for academic purposes. Computers should be used for note-taking or in-class assignments only. If computers are used for non-academic purposes computer use in class may be revoked. This policy is in the best interest of our shared teaching and learning goals.

Assignment Overview

Assignment descriptions, expectations, and due dates will be discussed in class. A brief description of each assignment is listed below. Assignments completed for another course at Boston College will not fulfill the requirements of assignments in NURS 3210 (refer to academic integrity policy). It is highly recommended that you maintain personal copies of all assignments.

Attendance, participation, and in class activities (10%)

Class attendance is considered mandatory. Attendance and evidence of active participation (e.g., contributing and giving feedback during class discussions and exercises) is expected of all enrolled students. **It is expected that students come to each class having completed the required readings.**

Public Health Grand Rounds (15%)

Starting Week 4 a team of students will present on an assigned topic in a highly structured format (10 slides for 10 minutes). The team will present one final slide with three statements/questions that consider how to address the public health issue, which should fuel a class discussion. You will sign up for one topic, based on the week's learning objectives, on the Canvas website no later than **Thursday, January 28th by midnight**. All PowerPoint presentations **must be posted to Canvas no later than midnight the day before the presentation (Monday) in PowerPoint (.pptx) format.**

Public Health PSA (15%)

Public service announcements (PSA) are a type of communication intervention used in public health to increase knowledge or awareness, influence beliefs or attitudes, and/or prompt action or change behavior. Working in groups of four, students will develop a research based 1.5-2 minute **video PSA** that is targeted to a specific at-risk population or audience about a contemporary public health issue of your choice. Video PSAs will be submitted electronically using Canvas and presented on the last day of class.

Two exams (30% total)

Two examinations (15% each) will be based on content from the **required readings, class discussions, videos and course lectures.**

Final Paper (5% for part 1 + 25% for Final Paper = 30%)

Topics in public health are often controversial, and it is important to consider both sides of the issue. However, in most cases, a decision needs to be made, either yes or no. The final paper allows students to explore a topic of interest, research both sides of the issue, and make a recommendation based on the current evidence. Use appropriate public health terminology and language as discussed in both Courses 1 and 2. The paper should be in APA format, double-spaced (no smaller than 11-point font and 1-inch margins), 5-6 pages in length, and the bibliography does not count toward the total page limit. References should be timely and published within the last 5 years. Submit electronically using Canvas. Page limits below are provided for guidance.

- Brief description of topic in terms of person, place, and time (1/2 page)
- Review the topic and present data on the prevalence of the issue using at least 3 references (2 must be peer-reviewed and the other can be data from a reputable website (government, WHO, non-profit, etc.) (1-2 pages)
- Provide 2 arguments for the issue and 2 against the issue using at least 3 references (2 must be peer-reviewed); describe relevant stakeholders involved in decision making process (2-3 pages)
- Based on the evidence presented, provide justification for your recommendation on the issue (1 page)

Although you cannot use a case study discussed in class, feel free to use other topics presented on in the lectures. The following are provided as suggestions:

- Should psychiatric hospitals ban smoking?
- Should SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – formerly Food Stamps Program) not allow the purchase of sugary drinks?
- Should female genital mutilation be allowed in the US if it is part of a family's cultural tradition?
- Should all men be circumcised to reduce the risk of HIV transmission?
- Should exemptions for the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine be allowed?
- Should BC students be required to get a flu vaccine?
- Should food be genetically modified (GM) to reduce food shortages?
- Should electronic products (i.e. phones) be taxed to pay for their environmental impact?
- Should giving farm animals antibiotics be banned to reduce antibiotic resistance?
- Should there be travel restrictions to prevent the spread of Ebola?

Part 1 (5%) – First draft of paper due February 25th (1 page): One-page overview of final paper, which will provide the instructors with the opportunity to give helpful feedback. Format as double-spaced, no smaller than 11-point font and 1-inch margins. Submit electronically using Canvas; late policy will apply.

- Brief description of topic in terms of person, place, and time
- Provide 1 argument for the issue and 1 against the issue
- Provide at least 2 references (at least 1 peer-reviewed) and write bibliography using APA format

Course Schedule

Week 1 Part 1 – Introduction; Why is Public Health Controversial?

- Identify contemporary and controversial public health issues
- Discuss why public health is controversial
- Describe the many stakeholders necessary for the success of public health

Week 1 Part 2 – The Art of Reading a Scientific Article

- Perform a fitting search of scientific literature
- Find and interpret a scientific article, including the interpretation of study design and graphs
- Define the most common study designs in public health and their associated methodology

Week 1 Readings:

Chapter 2 – Why is Public Health Controversial?

Chapter 5 – Epidemiologic Principles and Methods

Raff, J. (2013, August 25). How to read and understand a scientific paper: a guide for non-scientists. Retrieved from www.violentmetaphors.com

Week 2 – Social Epidemiology

- Understand the social determinants of disease causation from a socio-ecological perspective
- Identify and critically appraise data addressing the social determinants of health that generate health inequities and inequalities
- Define primary and secondary data collection and describe the usefulness and challenges of each

Week 2 Readings:

Chapter 8 – The Role of Data in Public Health

Braveman, P. A., Kumanyika, S., Fielding, J., LaVeist, T., Borrell, L. N., Manderscheid, R., & Troutman, A. (2011). Health disparities and health equity: The issue is justice. *American Journal of Public Health* 101(S1).

Week 3 – Ethics

- Understand the essential ethical principles of public health
- Identify limitations of epidemiology
- Understand the application of ethical problem solving strategies to address contemporary public health issues

Week 3 Readings:

Chapter 6 – Problems and Limits of Epidemiology

Keenan, J. (2013). Developing HIV/AIDS discourse in Africa and advancing the argument for universal health care. In Paterne Mombe, Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, Danielle Vela (Eds.) (pp. 63-82). *AIDS: Thirty Years Down the Line: Faith Based Reflections about the Epidemic in Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines.

Week 4 – Cardiovascular Disease

- Describe the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- Describe evidence-based policies and prevention efforts for cardiovascular disease
- Case Study: Should Americans reduce their salt intake? If so, how much?

Week 4 Readings:

Chapter 11 - The Biomedical Basis of Chronic Diseases

Case Study:

Cappuccio, F. P., Capewell, S., Lincoln, P., & McPherson, K. (2011). Policy options to reduce population salt intake. *BMJ*, 343, 4995.

The Editorial Board. (2014, August 23). The debate on salty foods, continued. *The New York Times*.

Week 5 – Tobacco

- Describe the major risk factors for tobacco usage and its health effects
- Describe evidence-based tobacco control policies and prevention efforts
- Case Study: Should BC go smoke free?

Week 5 Readings:

Chapter 15 – Public Health Enemy Number One: Tobacco

Arrazola RA, Singh T, Corey CG, Husten CG, Neff LJ, Apelberg BJ, Bunnell RE, Choiniere CJ, King BA, Cox S, McAfee T, Caraballo RS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Tobacco use among middle and high school students – United States, 2011-2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*, 64(14), 381-385.

Case Study:

Neyfakh, L. (2013, December 8). How cigarettes became uncool on campus. *The Boston Globe*.

Week 6 – Mental Health

- Describe the major categories of disease related to mental health
- Describe evidence-based policies and prevention efforts for mental health
- Describe how stigma influences individual health and social understanding of disease

Week 6 Readings:

Chapter 19: Mental Health: Public Health Includes Healthy Minds

The Editorial Board. (2015, November 25). Treating mental illness in New York, from all angles. *The New York Times*.

Week 7 – Obesity & Exam

- Describe the major risk factors for obesity and its health effects
- Describe evidence-based policies and prevention efforts for obesity
- Describe the challenges of addressing obesity at the individual and population levels

Week 7 Readings:

Chapter 16 – Public Health Enemy Number Two and Growing: Poor Diet and Physical Inactivity

Week 8 – Sexual Health

- Understand the definition and scope of the term sexual health
- Describe how risk factors and prevention efforts differ across the lifespan with a focus on sex education in schools
- Describe evidence-based policies and prevention efforts for sexually transmitted infections with a focus on HPV

Week 8 Readings:

Bearinger, L. H., Sieving, R. E., Ferguson, J., & Sharma, V. (2007). Global perspectives on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents: Patterns, prevention, and potential. *The Lancet*, 369(9568), 1220-1231.

Satcher, D., Hook, E. W., & Coleman, E. (2015). Sexual health in America: Improving patient care and public health. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 314(8), 765-766.

State Policies on Sex Education in Schools-State Comparison Class Exercise

<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-policies-on-sex-education-in-schools.aspx>

Week 9 – Is Gun Violence a Public Health Issue?

- Describe the scale of gun violence in the US within the global context
- Understand viewpoints both for and against public health efforts to address gun violence

Week 9 Readings:

Bidgood, J. (2015, December 24). When gun violence felt like a disease, a city in Delaware turned to the C.D.C. *The New York Times*.

Hemenway, D., & Miller, M. (2013). Public health approach to the prevention of gun violence. *NEJM*, 368, 2033-2035.

Week 10 – Vaccines and Eradicating Disease

- Understand the complexity of presenting and interpreting data and its implications on public health
- Describe the public health success of vaccines as well as its related challenges-polio
- Case Study: Should the HPV vaccine be required or recommended?

Week 10 Readings:

Review Chapter 9 – The “Conquest” of Infectious Diseases

Chapter 10 – The Resurgence of Infectious Disease

McNeil Jr, D. G. (2013, July 21). Pakistan battles polio, and its people’s mistrust. *The New York Times*.

Case Study:

Stewart, A. M., & Cox, M. A. (2011). Should HPV vaccine be required for school entry? In *Essential Case Studies in Public Health*. Hunting, K. L., & Gleason, B. L. (ed). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett.

Week 11 – Environmental Health

- Describe global public health efforts in environmental health
- Describe the role of data and policy in addressing major environmental health issues

Week 11 Readings:

Explore UN Sustainable Development Goals

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

Vogel, S. A. (2009). The politics of plastics: The making and unmaking of Bisphenol A “safety”. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(Suppl 3), S559-S566.

Week 12 – Life course Introduction and Maternal Mortality

- Describe the importance of a life course perspective for public health
- Understand the proximal and distal causes of maternal mortality in the global context

Week 12 Readings:

Braveman, P., & Barclay, C. (2009). Health disparities beginning in childhood: A life-course perspective. *Pediatrics*, 124, S163-S175.

Thaddeus, S., & Maine, D. (1994). Too far to walk: Maternal mortality in context. *Social Science & Medicine*, 38(8), 1091-1110.

Week 13 – Life course: Adolescent and Young Adult

- Describe domestic and global public health priorities during adolescence
- Understand the transition from adolescence to young adulthood and the associated public health implications

Week 13 Readings:

Buckelew, S., & Knopf, D. (2013) Improving adolescent health in the 21st century. In *Maternal and Child Health: Programs, Problems, and Policy in Public Health*. Kotch, J. B. (ed). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett.

Blum, R. W., McNeely, C., & Nonnemaker, J. (2001). Vulnerability, risk, and protection. *Adolescent Risk and Vulnerability: Concepts and Measurement*, 50-72.

Week 14 – Life course: Aging

- Describe why age is a risk factor for lower health status, and explain why public health has a particular interest in aging
- Understand the public health perspective on successful aging

Week 14 Readings:

Chapter 29 – Public Health and the Aging Population

Munnell, A. H., & Rutledge, M. S. (2013). The effects of the great recession on the retirement security of older workers. *ANNALS of the American Association of Political and Social Science*, 650, 124-142.

Week 15 – Exam & Student Presentations