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Current Topics in Public Health - Course Syllabus 2011-2012

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Current Topics in Public Health

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is designed to introduce medical students to population health sciences research and the context in which it is developed and disseminated. Students will become introduced to the forums in which population health research is disseminated to clinical and lay audiences and how the messages for each are crafted. This course provides students the opportunity to interact with faculty and guest lecturers on topics currently making headlines and to explore how research from the past informs present day public health research and our understanding of what makes effective public health practice and policy. Students will be expected to stay informed on current clinical and population health research, preparing them for participation in journal clubs and similar professional clinical exchanges as part of academic medical careers. We will discuss what research makes headlines and how lay and professional audiences interpret the findings. Students are expected to actively participate in discussions and to generate ideas for the discussion.

INSTRUCTOR

Kathleen Y. Wolin, ScD
Assistant Professor
Division of Public
Health Sciences

CLASSROOM

KHB 2306

TIME

Wed 12p-1p

OFFICE HOURS

By appointment

CONTACT

p: 314 454 7958
e: wolink@wustl.edu
o: Kingshighway
Building, Suite 2306

COMPETENCIES

- 1) Be familiar with key sources of population health research & news
- 2) Review news making population health stories for balance and understanding
- 3) Communicate population health research for multiple audiences
- 4) Discuss how population health and clinical medicine intersect in media communication settings

M19 500

Your grade is based on:

- 10% attendance
- 20% presentation
- 30% written project
- 40% class discussion participation

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation in class discussion (40%)

Each student in the class is expected to actively participate in the class discussion each week. Students should come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings, ready to review science and implications of the research presented. Each week students are also expected to come to class with a news or journal article of interest that was published or presented in media in the previous week.

Class attendance (10%)

All students are expected to attend the lectures that occur as part of the Siteman Prevention and Control Program that conflict with regular class time. Students should be prepared to ask questions and interact with the program.

Written project (30%)

Peer review is a critical part of scholarly work, but so is the ability to communicate research findings with lay audiences and the media. Students will be expected to select a recently published article relevant to public health and provide a written commentary worthy of publication in the original article's journal of publication. Students will then provide a written summary of the article for the media. Finally, students will prepare a blog post, in the style of Cancer News in Context on the article and the topic in the article.

Presentation (20%)

Each student will present his/her written project as a class discussion topic one week.

Required Reading

While M19-500 doesn't use a textbook, students are expected to read current health news in major sources, such as the NY Times, and to keep up on publications in major medical journals, such as JAMA

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Class attendance is required. As a courtesy to other students, you are expected to arrive on time. More than one unexcused absence from class may result in a lowered grade. Do not enroll if you have absences already planned. Be especially responsible about attendance during guest lectures dates. The value of the class stems from the quality of the dialog and conversations with peers and course instructors.

Blackboard

Blackboard will be the primary course communication vehicle. Please check the site regularly for class announcements and readings. Blackboard can be accessed at <https://bb.wustl.edu>. Login with your WUSTLKey. Important updates and reminders will be posted in the Announcements section on Blackboard.

We will utilize the Discussion threads for general questions related to lectures and assignments. Students should post all general questions that may be relevant to others in class to the Discussion thread. The instructor will monitor questions once a day (with the

exception of weekends) and post answers.

Student-specific questions (e.g. related to a grade or conflict) should be emailed directly to the instructor. Every effort will be made to answer student emails within 24-hours (excluding weekends). **Students are encouraged to post materials related to class (e.g. link to a news story) on Blackboard for the rest of the class to access.**

Readings

You should complete the required readings *before* each class session.

Course assignments

All written assignments must be submitted electronically through Blackboard before the start of class on the due date. Written assignments must have a minimum of 1 inch margins and be completed in 11- or 12-point font. Do not use email for submitting course assignments. Be responsive to deadlines as they also impact other students. Exceptions or changes to due dates will not be granted.

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date.

Policy on Late Assignments

Late assignments will result in a deduction of five percentage points for each day late (including weekends) unless prior approval is obtained from the instructor or a compelling situation prevents prior approval. The instructor will allow for documented family emergencies, such as birth or death in the family. Health-related issues must be documented by a physician.

Mobile phones/IM/social networking

Phone ringers should be silenced during class. Please resist the urge to utilize IM or social networking sites during class.

Lunch

Recognizing that class occurs during lunchtime, students are welcome to bring and eat lunch during class provided it doesn't disrupt the ability of the instructor(s) to teach or other students to learn. Please be considerate if you choose to eat during class. Please check before bringing lunch to guest lecturers' offices.

Classroom environment

This is a course where students explore how research is conducted and presented. Ideally, everyone should be involved in classroom discussions. In order for everyone to feel comfortable presenting work and voicing opinions and suggestions, a climate of tolerance and respect is essential. Misappropriation of intellectual property, including the unauthorized use of ideas or text is considered plagiarism and falls under the definition of scientific misconduct.

Academic honesty

Students are expected to complete the problem sets, article critique, quiz and final exam in accordance with Washington University in St. Louis' academic rules and regulations regarding honesty and integrity. Any evidence of academic misconduct, including **cheating, failure to cite sources, and/or plagiarism** will result in appropriate action as dictated by Washington University in St. Louis. Violations of academic honesty will result in notification to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at the Washington University School of Medicine, as well as the to MPHS Director, Assistant Director(s), and Program Committee. Any hint of violation during an examination or in a written assignment will result in no grade for the exam/assignment. For more information see the [University's Student Academic Integrity Policy](#).

SPECIAL NEEDS

Per University policy, students with learning, sensory, or physical disability or other impairment should contact the Washington University Center for Advanced Learning Disability Resources (DR) at 314-935-4062 or visit

<http://disability.wustl.edu/DisabilityResources.aspx>. The DR Office is located in Cornerstone on the Danforth Campus.

Students whose second language is English and/or those in need of assistance in lectures, reading or writing assignments, and/or testing, should contact the University Writing Center at 314-935-4981 or visit <http://artsci.wustl.edu/~writing/home.html>.

M19 500
2011 Syllabus, Class Schedule, and Deadlines
Kathleen Y. Wolin, ScD

August				31 Introduction to public health.
September	7 Attend P& C Lecture – Dr. Deborah Bowen – CAM, Farrell Conf Room 1	14 Fluoridation. Guest Lecture from Dr. Arnold (KHB 5031)	21 Smoking & bladder cancer	28 Submit proposed hot topic to Dr. Wolin Vaccines & Autism. Guest Lecture from Dr. Goodman (KHB 5004)
October	5 Student hot topic	12 Risk communication. Guest Lecture from Dr. Waters	19 Submit proposed project topic HIV Surveillance	26 rBGH, Monsanto & cancer
November	2 Attend P&C Lecture – Dr. Maureen Dobbins – CAM, Farrell Conf Room 1	9 HPV. Guest lecture from Dr. Arnold (KHB 5031)	16 Submit proposed hot topic to Dr. Wolin Hot topic	30 Student hot topic
December	7 Attend P&C Lecture – Dr. Kathryn Weaver – CAM, Farrell Conf Room 1	14 Written project due Students present project		