

## PH 578: Health Inequities

Online Spring 2024

### Contact Information

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Email is the best means of communication with me; I answer all emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday and within 36 hours over weekends.

### Required Text/Materials

There is no required textbook to be purchased; all readings will be made available on Blackboard.

**\*\*Be sure to read the item below explaining Big Red Backpack.\*\***

### Automatic Textbook Fee: Big Red Backpack

A per-credit-hour-enrolled fee will be charged to your account for textbooks -- regardless of whether your courses require them -- as part of WKU's Big Red Backpack initiative. **To avoid being charged this fee, you must opt-out every semester.** [Learn more and opt out here.](#)

### Course Description

Introduce and discuss the manner in which minority status, within the United States, results in health inequality. Specific topics to be discussed, in relation to health disparities, are race, sex, gender, disability, and nationality. Through course readings, lectures, and assignments, the student will gain an understanding about how individual and structural factors impact health outcomes within our population.

### Course Objectives

1. Compare the impact of socio-cultural factors in producing and perpetuating health inequalities across communities and populations.
2. Formulate how social, economic, and political structures shape health behaviors and determinants of health.
3. Evaluate how existing policies, on local, state, or federal levels, either foster or inhibit achieving health equity.
4. Compare the strengths and weaknesses of the three explanatory models for health inequities (Behavioral, Psycho-social, Materialist)
5. Integrate the life course theory, theory of fundamental causes, health lifestyle theory, or theory of intersectionality with various minoritized statuses to explain inequalities in health outcomes.
6. Develop a comprehensive plan for implementing a community-based program to address existing health inequalities.

This course also meets the following MPH foundational knowledge objectives:

9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health
10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities

### **Course Assessments**

Weekly assignments: discussion (including discussion facilitation) and article annotations (including creation of questions for classmates). Address LO 1-5.

Major assignments. Address LO 1-5:

- Theory/Model presentation
- Summary, current state of a health disparity
- Article review
- Policy case study

Midterm exam. Addresses LO 1-5

Final paper and presentation. Addresses LO 5-6

### **Grading**

This course uses weighted grading. Each category of assessment is worth the following percentage of your final grade in the course:

Weekly assignments:	25%
Major assignments:	30%
Midterm exam:	15%
Final paper and presentation:	30%

Grading scale:

Grades are based on university standards.

A = 90% and higher

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 59% and lower

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is essential to students' intellectual development, and is a core value of the MPH program. Thus, the work you do in this course – and all MPH courses -- is expected to reflect academic integrity through responsible behaviors, including avoiding plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, cheating, or other types of [academic dishonesty](#). Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive a failing grade on the assignment/assessment, or a failing grade in the course. [Per policy](#), students may also be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary sanctions and/or the Graduate School for dismissal from the program. A student who believes a faculty member has dealt unfairly with him/her/them in a course involving academic dishonesty may seek relief through the [Student Complaint Procedure](#).

## **Diversity, Inclusivity, & Equity**

*We promote social justice by creating a respectful, collaborative, diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment through teaching, service, and research.*

The strength and success of WKU's MPH program is built on the foundation of a wide range of perspectives and experiences. We embrace diverse backgrounds, embodiments, and experiences and are committed to fostering inclusive and accessible environments. We respect physical, social, and cultural differences among us, which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender identity and presentation, citizenship and immigration status, national origin, race, religious and political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status. Please talk with your instructor, advisor, or MPH staff member right away if you experience disrespect in this class or while part of our program. Whenever possible, we will work to address it in an educational manner. Resources on inclusive language and document accessibility are provided in the MPH Guidebook and MPH Student organizational site on Blackboard

## **ADA Accommodations**

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

## **Title IX/ Discrimination & Harassment**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

## **WKU's COVID Statement**

All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). In accordance with WKU policy, all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the [Healthy on the Hill](#) website for the most current information.

## Regular and Substantive Interaction

The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, please visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#).

In this course, regular and substantive interaction will take place in the following ways:

- Faculty participation in weekly discussion boards
- Weekly announcements
- Timely and detailed feedback on assignments provided within one week of submission.



## MPH Competencies

This course contributes to the development of the following competencies:

MPH COMPETENCY	Obj.
Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health	
1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice	
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context	
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate	
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice	3, 6
Public Health & Health Care Systems	
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health systems across national and international settings	
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities, and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity.	1, 2
Planning & Management to Promote Health	
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health	
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs	6
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention	
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management, specifically after funding for a project is secured	
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs	
Policy in Public Health	
12. Discuss the policy-making process.	
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes	
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations	
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity	3
Leadership	
16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue; such principles may include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration, and guiding decision making	
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges	
Communication	

MPH COMPETENCY	Obj.
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	
19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation	
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content	
Interprofessional and/or Intersectoral Practice	
21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health	
Systems Thinking	
22. Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative	
WKU MPH Program Competencies	
23. Apply health behavior theories and models to address public health problems.	4, 5
24. Locate, cite, and integrate credible and/or peer-reviewed literature into professionally written products.	
25. Apply methods of field epidemiology.	
26. Describe the impact and importance of social determinants of health.	2
27. Identify the direct and indirect population health effects of environmental hazards (biological, chemical and physical) on humans, animals and the ecology.	

## Foundational Knowledge

This course contributes to the foundational knowledge of public health by addressing the following:

FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE	Obj
Profession & Science of Public Health	
1. Explain public health history, philosophy and values	
2. Identify the core functions of public health and the 10 Essential Services.	
3. Explain the role of quantitative and qualitative methods and sciences in describing and assessing a population's health	
4. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program	
5. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.	
6. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge	
Factors Related to Human Health	
7. Explain effects of environmental factors on a population's health	
8. Explain biological and genetic factors that affect a population's health	
9. Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health	4, 5
10. Explain the social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities	2
11. Explain how globalization affects global burdens of disease	
12. Explain an ecological perspective on the connections among human health, animal health and ecosystem health (e.g., One Health)	

## Course Topics/Schedule

Detailed schedule will be available on Blackboard.