

PH 548: Community Organizing in Public Health

Online, Fall 2024

Contact Information

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Office: Virtual

Office Hours: Virtual (Zoom, etc.) By Appointment

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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

All readings for this course will be directly provided or linked on Blackboard. You do not need to purchase a textbook or any materials for this course. ****Please read description of Big Red Backpack program below!****

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

This course explores the social, political and economic forces that exacerbate health inequities in different communities and various organizational strategies for effective solution. Review and analysis of community organization and mobilization processes, legislative advocacy, cultural competency, and the role of mass media in conceptualization of public health issues. Transportation requirements for field trips will be provided. (Note: this course is fully online and asynchronous; there will be no live sessions)

Course Objectives

1. Compare the policymaking process at local, state, and national levels.
2. Integrate evidence into the analysis of public health policymaking.
3. Analyze ethical issues in public health policymaking and implementation.
4. Compare and contrast the roles of stakeholders from multiple sectors in public health policymaking.
5. Prepare a fact sheet and an elevator speech for a policymaker on a current public health issue.
6. Compare and contrast intended and unintended public health consequences of proposed or enacted policy on specific populations.
7. Create a plan to identify strategic community health issues, including drafting a vision statement and identifying community partners.
8. Integrate feedback from a community stakeholder outside of public health into a community health assessment.
9. Implement techniques for mediation among community partners with divergent needs and goals to improve community outcomes.

Course Assessments

Weekly activities:

Discussion board posts (count as attendance/participation), article annotations, and short application assignments. Address LO 1-9

Exams:

Midterm and final. Address LO 1-9

Community Organizing Project:

You will create an abbreviated community health assessment/community health improvement plan for your local community. Following the phases of the MAPP process, you will develop a plan for organizing and developing partnerships; creating a vision; planning a community assessment; identifying strategic issues; and formulating goals and strategies to address the issue. Addresses LO 7-9.

Advocacy Project:

You will select a public health issue that has been, or can be, addressed through policy. You will research the topic; identify all stakeholders involved; identify multiple policy options; analyze the consequences of each option on impacted communities; recommend one option; and prepare a fact sheet on the issue and record an elevator pitch to educate a legislator on the issue and advocate for action. Students may choose from a list of pre-approved topics to earn embedded GrAPE hours and create embedded GrAPE products; this will be done in collaboration with an outside agency. Addresses LO 2-6.

Grading

This course uses weighted grading. Each type of assessment described above is weighted differently.

Weekly activities and discussions: 25%

Exams: 25% (12.5% each)

Community Organizing Project: 25%

Advocacy Project: 25%

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](#).

Use of AI tools is prohibited in this course:

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted for any type of work in this class. If you choose to use these tools, your actions will be considered academically dishonest and a violation of the [WKU Student Code of Conduct](#).

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. 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.

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	
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.	
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	
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.	1, 2, 3
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes	4
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations	5
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity	6
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	7
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges	9
Communication	
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	5
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	8
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.	
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.	
27. Identify the direct and indirect population health effects of environmental hazards (biological, chemical and physical) on humans, animals and the ecology.	

Course Topics/Schedule

Readings, topics, and weekly activities subject to change, so we can adapt the course to fit student needs.

As a general rule, course weeks run from Mondays through Sundays. Weekly folders will open at 12:00 AM Mondays, and weekly assignments will be due at 11:59 PM Sundays. There are two major exceptions to this: (1) initial posts on discussion boards, which are due at 11:59 PM on Wednesdays, to give you time to read and respond to classmates by Sunday; and (2) the final exam, which is due 11:59 PM THURSDAY, December 5, the final day of the semester. Any other changes to the assignment schedule are clearly marked on the schedule.

Week	Dates	Topic/Activities	Assignments due
1	8/19-8/25	<u>Intro to course</u> Lecture: Course overview Reading: Bias, T. (2020); Windisch, S. & Wijaya, F. (2021)—on Blackboard Discussion: Introduction and Commentaries Other activity: Pre-course assignment	Pre-course assignment: 11:59 PM Sunday 8/25 Introduction Discussion Due Sunday 8/25 (No replies needed for this one!) Discussion board initial post: 11:59 PM Wednesday 8/21; response: 11:59 PM Sunday 8/25
2	8/26-9/1	<u>Community Organization</u> Lecture: Community organizing overview & approaches Reading: Minkler & Wallerstein (2012) Improving health through community organization & community building. Perspectives from health education & social work. Viewing: East Bay Community Foundation Discussion: Minkler & Wallerstein, East Bay Community Foundation Other activity: Viewing guide (application exercise)	Discussion board initial post: 11:59 PM Wednesday 8/28; response: 11:59 PM Sunday 9/1 Viewing guide (application activity): 11:59 PM Sunday 9/1
3	9/2-9/8	<u>Community Health Assessments, MAPP Process</u> Lecture: Overview of CHA process Readings: Hancock & Miller (2012) Community health assessment or healthy community assessment? Whose community? Whose health? Whose assessment?; Community Toolbox Section 13: MAPP process; Community Health Assessment 2022-2025, BRIGHT Coalition/Barren River District Health Department Discussion: Hancock & Miller reading Other activity: Community organizing project proposal	Discussion board initial post: 11:59 PM Wednesday 9/4; response 11:59 PM Sunday 9/8 Community organizing project proposal: 11:59 PM Sunday 9/8

4	9/9-9/15	<u>Leadership & Working with Stakeholders</u> Lecture: Leadership in public health & community stakeholders Reading: Community Toolbox Chapter Sections 1, 2, and 8; Community Toolbox Chapter 13, Sections 6 and 11 Discussion: The Visioning process Other activity: Stakeholder identification and analysis; visioning assignment	Discussion board initial post: 11:59 PM Wednesday 9/11; response: 11:59 PM Sunday 9/15 Stakeholder identification and analysis assignment; visioning assignment: 11:59 PM Sunday 9/15
5	9/16-9/22	<u>Community engagement and ethics</u> Lecture: Ethical concerns in community engagement Readings: Minkler, Pies, & Hyde (2012) Ethical issues in community organization & capacity building; AND CDC (2024) New Tools for Strengthening Partnerships between Health Departments and Communities Discussion: None Other activity: Identification, interview questions, and interview with key stakeholder	Key stakeholder identification and questions: 11:59 PM Wednesday 9/18 Key stakeholder contact: 11:59 PM Sunday 9/22
6	9/23-9/29	<u>Community Health Improvement Plans</u> Lecture: Identifying strategic issues, setting goals & strategies to reach them Reading: Community Toolbox MAPP process phases 4 & 5. Identifying strategic issues at-a-glance. Community Toolbox: Creating objectives Discussion: None Other activity: Strategic issues identification worksheet; Strategy development matrix worksheet	Strategic issues identification worksheet and strategy development matrix worksheet 11:59 PM Sunday 9/29
7	9/30-10/6	<u>Work week</u> for Community Organizing project	Community Organizing project: 11:59 PM Sunday 10/6
8	10/7-10/13	<u>Midterm exam</u> “Fall Break” is Monday and Tuesday 10/7-10/8. The Midterm exam will open at 12:00 AM Wednesday, 10/9 and will close at 11:59 PM Sunday, 10/13. You may take the exam on any date and at any time you prefer.	Midterm exam: 11:59 PM Sunday 10/13
9	10/14-10/20	<u>Public Health Policy</u> Lecture: Public health policy Reading: Wilensky & Teitelbaum, Chapter 1 Discussion: None Other activity: Advocacy Project Proposal	Advocacy Project Proposal: 11:59 PM Sunday 10/20
10	10/21-10/27	<u>Politics, Legislative Process</u> Lecture: Policy process Reading: Wilensky & Teitelbaum, Chapter 2	Policy Brief search assignment 11:59 PM Sunday 10/27

		Discussion: None Other activity: Policy Brief Search Assignment	
11	10/28-11/3	<u>Ethics in Public Health: focus on policy</u> Reading: Gostin, L. (2003). Tradition, Profession, & Values in Public Health; Scott, C. (2008). Belief in a Just World: A Case Study in Public Health Ethics Discussion: Ethics and policy problem definition--SCHIP expansion in Georgia Other activity: Case study analysis	Discussion board initial post 11:59 PM 10/30; response 11:59 PM Sunday 11/3 Case study analysis assignment: 11:59 PM Sunday 11/3
12	11/4-11/10	<u>Policy analysis: defining the problem</u> Lecture: how to define a problem. Reading: Wilensky & Teitelbaum, Chapter 14; Isett, Laugesen, & Cloud (2015). Learning from NYC: A Case Study of PH Policy Practice in the Bloomberg Administration; Smith (2015). Discussion: None Other activity: Case study analysis assignment; First draft problem definition worksheet	Case study analysis (NYC): 11:59 PM Sunday 11/10 First draft problem definition: 11:59 PM Sunday 11/10
13	11/11-11/17	<u>Policy analysis: Identifying and analyzing policy options</u> Lecture: finding policy options; disparate impact Reading: Roberts & Eichner, Disability... Discussion: Roberts & Eichner Other activity: Annotated bibliography assignment (sources for problem definition, policy options)	Discussion board initial post: 11:59 PM Wednesday 11/13; response 11:59 PM Sunday 11/17 Annotated bibliography 11:59 PM Sunday 11/17
14	11/18-11/24	<u>Advocacy and Public Health Policy</u> Lecture: How, why & when to advocate Reading: Friedman & Schwartz (2016) Advocacy & public health policy, Ch. 17 in Moreland-Russel et al Prevention, Policy, & Public Health. Collected resources on one-pagers and elevator speeches. Discussion: Friedman & Schwartz article, advocacy Other activity: Advocacy Campaign assignment	Discussion board initial post: 11:59 PM Wednesday 11/20; response 11:59 PM Sunday 11/24 Advocacy Campaign assignment 11:59 PM Sunday 11/24
15	11/25-12/1	<u>Thanksgiving Break</u>	
Finals	12/2-12/5	<u>Final Exam + Advocacy project work week</u>	Final exam: 11:59 PM THURSDAY 12/5 Advocacy Project: 11:59 PM THURS., 12/5