

Eastern Kentucky University
Department of Health Promotion and Administration
HEA 880 Special Projects
Spring Semester 2008

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Derek Holcomb, Associate Professor

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description: HEA 880 Special Projects in Health (3). Individual research into a special health problem. Student must have the independent study proposal form approved by faculty supervisor and department chair prior to enrollment.

In this course the student works individually with the instructor on the completion of an approved special research project. Some aspect of the project must be original, whether it is the topic itself, an analysis of newly collected or extant data, the reinterpretation of others' findings, or the design and completion of a community project.

Through this research/scholarship experience the student must demonstrate proficiency with MPH Program core and option specific competencies, chosen in collaboration with the instructor. Thus the student must synthesize and integrate advanced knowledge and skills acquired in the Program, and apply those to some aspect of public health specific to Community Health Education.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Define a problem as the basis for an area of independent study.
2. Identify relevant and appropriate data and information sources.
3. Identify and apply basic research methods used in public health.
4. Identify, retrieve, and analyze current relevant scientific evidence.
5. Write a paper detailing the study

MPH Program Objectives and Competencies Addressed in the Course

MPH Program objectives for the course will be agreed upon in the context of MPH Program competencies, through collaboration between the student and the instructor. (See the MPH Student Handbook referenced below, and the Course Schedule for a timeline.)

TEXTBOOK

No textbook is required for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to:

1. Have the course enrollment approval form signed by the student advisor or CHE Option Coordinator and the department chair prior to registering for the course.
2. Successfully complete the NIH Tutorial on the protection of Human Subjects. (This may be completed in advance of the course. If so, keep proof of completion.)
3. Complete appropriate Institutional Review Board forms and documentation relative to the independent study project. All projects must be approved and meet appropriate IRB criteria, if required.
4. Complete all project work independently. (The faculty supervisor serves as a resource person to the student as the project is developed and completed.)
5. Establish a schedule of regular consultation or meetings with the faculty instructor.

6. Meet with the faculty instructor to identify appropriate MPH Program objectives and competencies to be addressed through the course project, and secure the instructor's approval.
7. Establish a Special Projects Committee consisting of the course instructor and one additional faculty member. Each student is responsible to invite the additional faculty member to serve, following consultation with the course instructor. The additional faculty member typically will be from the Department of EHS or HPA, but a faculty member from another department may be invited, with approval from the course instructor.
8. Develop a research proposal (Introduction, Initial Review of Literature, Methods) for a special project, and submit and present the proposal to the Special Projects Committee for approval. The primary purpose of the Committee's review is to determine the appropriateness of the project's relationship to the MPH Program objectives and competencies. The student is responsible to contact both members of the Committee to establish a date to present the proposal.
9. Meet regularly with the faculty instructor, following an agreed upon schedule, to review progress on the project. Consultation and communication may occur by email, phone, or regular mail.
10. Submit a final written report of the project that includes the following specific sections: Introduction, Review of Literature, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusions, Appendices (if needed), and References. The guide to be followed in writing the report is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. (2001), published by the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

The final grade for this course will be determined by the following:

1. Completion of the NIH Tutorial on the protection of Human Subjects and appropriate Institutional Review Board forms and documentation relative to the special project.
2. Adherence to scheduled consultations/meetings with the faculty instructor*
3. Written and oral presentation of a research proposal to the Independent Study Project Committee which meets guidelines outlined by the course instructor
4. Submission of a final written report of the project, which meets guidelines outlined by the course instructor

| Requirement | Points* |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| NIH Tutorial & IRB Approval | R |
| Scheduled meetings | R |
| Written & Oral Proposal | R |
| Final Report | 100 |
| Total Points | 100 |

*R = required to pass; no points assigned.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

| Grading Scale | |
|---------------|---|
| 90-100% | A |
| 80-89.9% | B |
| 70-79.9% | C |

***Attendance and independent work:** The attendance policy will be discussed with each student. Meeting times, chat room times, and/or office visits will be clarified within the first two weeks of the semester. Students are expected to consult and/or meet with the instructor as

indicated. Further, students are expected to complete all project work on their own, in a timely fashion, utilizing the faculty instructor as a resource person. The instructor reserves the right to deduct points for failure to meet attendance and progress expectations.

COURSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE MASTERS IN PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) PROGRAM

To achieve its mission, the ECU MPH Program “prepares professionals for broad-based practice in public health, through the integration of core competencies in the five areas of knowledge basic to public health (behavioral sciences, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health science, and public health administration) with specialized knowledge, competencies, and expertise in a selected public health discipline area.” This course relates directly to accomplishment of the MPH Program educational objectives, and the core competencies and option-specific competencies. (See the MPH Student Handbook http://www.mph.ecu.edu/Student_Resources/MPH_Handbook_Summer07_vs_082207.pdf#page=23&zoom=100).

Students choose MPH Program objectives and competences to address through the course project, **in consultation with the instructor**. This process includes identifying project goals and objectives, and establishing the relationship of the study experience to the MPH Program educational objectives and competencies. Please reference the objectives and competencies throughout the semester as they will provide a framework for this course and will contribute to your preparation for successfully completing other degree program requirements (e.g., comprehensive examination, capstone course, culminating experience presentation).

Relationship of this course to the MPH Program Culminating Experience

The MPH culminating experience required for completion of the MPH degree occurs through three components or experiences, and the project developed in this course is the foundation component. Students will:

1. **Execute a research/scholarship project in either a thesis or research course.**
2. Complete MPH 895, the MPH Capstone Course (1 credit hour).
3. Complete a presentation of their research/scholarship project that demonstrates their knowledge and mastery of selected public health objectives and competencies. (See the MPH 895 syllabus on the Program website (<http://www.mph.ecu.edu/Curriculum/>)).

Students in this course should be familiar with all three components, and as the course project is developed, think about how this project ultimately would be presented to an audience of faculty and students to meet the requirements of the culminating experience presentation. (See the MPH Student Handbook for a more detailed description of the presentation component of the culminating experience.)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Prior to enrollment, students must have the Enrollment Approval Form signed.

- By end of Week 2: Meet with instructor to identify objectives and competencies, and clarify schedule and timelines. Establish the Independent Study Committee.
- By end of Week 3: Approval of project proposal with the Independent Study Committee.
- Weeks 4 - 13: Continue work on project; consult with instructor as needed.
- By end of Week 14: Submit final paper.

GUIDELINES FOR THE INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT PROPOSAL, PROCESS, AND PAPER (see instructor for further information).*

**Note that although thesis work is completed in much more depth, this independent study/special projects course is similar to a thesis in the nature of the process and the final paper. You may find reviewing the 2008 Graduate School Guidelines for Thesis to be useful <http://www.gradschool.ecu.edu/current/thesis.php>.*

Internet Sites:

**OSHA.gov EPA.gov CDC.gov/NIOSH CDC.gov/NASD ACGIH.org
NEHA.org**

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you are registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please make an appointment with the course instructor to discuss any academic accommodations you need. If you need academic accommodations and are not registered with the Office of Services for Individuals with Disabilities, please contact the Office directly either in person on the first floor of the Turley House or by telephone at (859) 622-1500 V/TTY. Upon individual request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Eastern Kentucky University will honor the University's Academic Integrity policy. By honoring and enforcing this policy, the University affirms that it will not tolerate academic dishonesty.