



OEHS 5340 PUBLIC HEALTH IN RURAL POPULATIONS

Credit Hours: 3

Semester: SPRING

Year: 2025

Class Day/Time: N/A

Class Location: Online

Instructor of Record: Edward Dotherow

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Office Hours: Monday/ Thursday 10-12am

**To set up an appointment, please use email. Alternately, message me through Canvas, call my office phone and leave a message, or text me through TEAMS.*

****I do not check email, teams, Canvas, or any other work communication channel on weekends.**

Course Description: This course provides an overview of public health issues in rural populations and is designed to give students an understanding of the influence of rurality on health. Topics covered include rural health disparities, policy directions in rural health, and models of rural health service delivery. Practical public health strategies that lessen the severity of impact on rural populations related to lack of access to care, substance abuse, mental health, farm safety and unintentional injuries will be explored.

Course Rationale and Background: “**Health disparities** are differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and related adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups in the United States. These population groups may be characterized by gender, age, race, ethnicity, education, income, social class, disability, **geographic location**, or sexual orientation.”

– National Institutes of Health, 2005

“Many of the 61 million people who live in **rural America** have **limited access** to health care. Almost a quarter of the nation’s population lives in rural places, yet only an eighth of our doctors work there.” – Preface, Ricketts text, 1999

“Developing **leadership** and **public health workforce capacity** within **rural public health** is an essential agenda item for rural America.”

-- Hajat, Stewart and Hayes, J PH Mgmt Prac, 2003

Prerequisite: N/A

Co-requisite: N/A

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO or “course objective”):

At course completion, students will be able to:

1. Understand the population distribution and other demographic differences between rural and non-rural areas.
2. Understand how geographic location intersects with various social determinants of health.
3. Identify interventions that address barriers to care for rural or urban populations.
4. Engage in critical scholarship of the impact of “rurality” on health (including disease prevalence, access to/availability of care, health outcomes).

MPH Foundational and Concentration Competencies and assessment method:

Foundational Competency	Assessment Method
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	Environmental Town Hall Report and Presentation
19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation to a non-academic, non-peer audience with attention to factors such as literacy and health literacy	Environmental Town Hall Report and Presentation Article Analysis and Summary assignments
Concentration Competency	
5. Develop intervention recommendations based on the health profile of a community	Environmental Town Hall Report and Presentation SEM Exercise

Instructional Methods

Canvas is the online learning system used in the course. All communications must go through canvas, and you must use your patriot email account for any communications.

Please set up notifications from Canvas for this course to any additional email account you may use, to ensure you receive notifications from this course. **Failure to read your emails is not an excuse for late or missing assignments.**

Announcements are made through Canvas regarding any change or communication required for the course. Please look at announcements at least daily.

Readings

You are expected to complete all weekly assigned readings. Beyond the assigned readings students may be required to use various sources of information (e.g., print and online books, newspapers, peer-reviewed journal articles, relevant professional organization's websites, government websites and legal documents) to explore or address topics covered each week. This provides a broader context of the concepts and principles presented in the course and allows for more meaningful dialogue in online discussions. Please share your findings with the class and use them as references in your submitted assignments which include discussion board postings, presentations, and research papers. You are responsible for any additional materials provided, so please check Canvas regularly.

Module PowerPoint Slides

PowerPoint slides will be provided as guidance on the material that students should pay closer attention to.

Multi-media Resources

Videos, podcasts and websites will be assigned for review in order to provide the most current and relevant sources of information from the field.

Live Conference Sessions

A live conference will be held on the 1st, 5th, 8th and 12th week of class; dates/times to be posted as announcement in Canvas. This is a synchronous meeting via Teams to discuss course content and any other issues the class wishes to discuss. A schedule for these live conference and links to the Teams meeting will be posted on Canvas. If you are unable to attend, these sessions will be recorded and uploaded to Canvas.

Course Assessments/Methods of Evaluation

SEM assignments (SEM) 30%

Article Analysis and Summary (AA) 20%

Discussion Board posts (DB) 10%

Town Hall Report and Presentation (presentation, paper) 40%

Social Ecological Model (SEM)

There are two (2) SEM assignments in this course. For each SEM, you will analyze a public health issue/disparity through the lens of the Social Ecological Model. You will identify the causes (determinants, mediators, moderators), public health implications, and potential solutions/recommendations/interventions at each level of the SEM.

Article Analysis and Summary (AA)

There are 4 Article Analysis and Summary Assignments in this course. For each AA, you will analyze and summarize (250-500 words, single-spaced) an academic journal article. Using layman's terms, you will describe the background, aims/objectives, methods, results, and conclusion of the study. You are responsible for finding the article and must submit it alongside your summary (PDFs only, no links). Additional details for AA assignments are as follows:

- AA 1- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article that either discusses, evaluates/assesses, or features the Social Ecological Model.
- AA 2- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article related to environmental health.
- AA 3- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article related to environmental health. In addition to the summary, you will make a 2-3 video in which you present your summary. You may prepare **1** PowerPoint slide to provide the article title/authors and key information, but **DO NOT** make this a presentation. Present this information as though you are telling a co-worker or friend about an article you just read. Post your video to the AA 3 Video Submission discussion board and comment on at least two (2) of your classmates' videos.
- AA 4- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article related to environmental health. You will make a 2–3-minute video summarizing your study. This time, focus on more on why we should care about article. In other words, focus on what it means to everyday people and their lives. **Power Point slides ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Post your video to the AA 4 Video Submission discussion board and comment on at least two (2) of your classmates' videos.

Discussion Board posts (DB)

Forums are asynchronous discussions which you will use to process and synthesize course content. In each forum, I will provide you with a newspaper or magazine article, brief video or audio recording, or prompt related to Rural Public Health issues. After reading, watching or listening, it is expected that you will engage in an online discussion board with other members of the class. Leading questions will be posted with each discussion board. It is expected that you give your initial impressions in your first post and then engage your

classmates in subsequent posts. Your initial post will always be due by Thursday, 11:59pm. You are expected to respond to two other posts; your follow-up posts are due by Sunday, 11:59pm.

Town Hall Report and Presentation

This course examines the impact of place on the health. Both urban and rural communities experience issues that pose significant risks to the health of a population. The culminating exercise for this course is the Town Hall Report and Presentation. Students will investigate a current environmental health issue facing a community of their choosing. The report will provide a background of the issue, the public health implications at multiple levels of the Social Ecological Model, and potential evidence-based solutions. Students will present their issue and findings. The final product will be a report approximately 6-8 pages in length (minimum 10 references, APA formatting).

A 10-15-minute oral presentation is a required component of this assignment. You will present your findings as though you are speaking at a town hall event, meaning:

- Use layman's terms
- Use minimal PowerPoint slides
 - Keep them simple (language and terminology)
 - Don't fill them with information (key points)
- Don't present your entire paper
 - Key points on background/SEM
 - Focus on what can be done and why it should be done

Your paper topic is due via email on March 2, 2025, by 11:59pm

Other Class Policies:

Grading

Scale:

A= 90-100

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

D= 60-69

F= 0-59

Please be aware that NO EXTRA CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN at the end of the semester. The average of each student's grade will determine the final course grade, and **no additional work** will be allowed. The grades in the gradebook at the end of the semester are the final grades, no curves will be given.

Late Work:

If you are unable to submit an assignment by the deadline, a late submission will be arranged **ONLY** if the reason is deemed legitimate by the instructor, **AND** if the instructor is notified **IN ADVANCE** (a minimum of 24 hours unless it is an emergency), either by phone or email. Students who fail to make appropriate arrangements will receive a grade of "0" for the assignment missed. There will be no exceptions.

LATE DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. If you submit your initial or follow-up response after Thurs/Sun at 11:59pm, you will receive a score of 0.

Student Responsibilities/Expectations

Class etiquette dictates that you will:

1. Be active in class online as will be evidenced by participation in assigned activities as well as any synchronous or asynchronous discussions.
2. Submit required assignments on time per requirement of the professor. If there is any reason that may prevent a student from doing so, the student must inform the professor ahead of time and not make any excuses for failing to do so. It is your personal responsibility to complete assignments on time; make sure to use an electronic or paper calendar to keep up with your due dates for continued success in this course.

Week	Lecture	Writing Assignment	Discussion Board	Live Conference
1 (1/13)	Course Introduction and Expectations		✓	✓*
2 (1/20)	Public Health and Ecological Perspectives	✓ (AA 1)		
3 (1/27)	Defining Rurality and Social Determinants of Health			
4 (2/3)	Urbanization and Social Determinants of Health		✓	
5 (2/10)	SEM Assignment 1	✓ (SEM 1)		✓*
6 (2/17)	Health and the Environment I		✓	
7 (2/24)	Health and the Environment II		✓	
8 (3/10)	One Health	✓ (SEM 2)		✓*
9 (3/17)	Spring Break			
10 (3/24)	Migrant Workers	✓ (AA 2)		
11 (3/31)	Obesity/Diabetes and Physical Activity/Nutrition	✓ (AA 3)	✓	
12 (4/7)	Mental Health	✓ (AA 4)	✓	✓*
13 (4/14)	Ethical Issues in Rural Communities		✓	
14 (4/21)	Final Project and Presentations		✓	
15 (4/28)	Course Wrap-up			

Textbook:

Foundations of Rural Public Health in America
 Joseph N. Inungu, MD, DrPH, MPH; Mark J. Minelli, PhDMA, MPA
 ISBN: 9781284182453

***The Textbook is NOT Required**

***NOTE:** Additional course readings and media will be assigned in Canvas within class content or within the required reading page.

Academic Honesty:

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Cheating

Dishonesty of any kind involving examinations, assignments, alteration of records, wrongful possession of examinations, and unpermitted submission of duplicate papers for multiple classes or unauthorized use of keys to examinations is considered cheating. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class.
- Falsifying or inventing any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise.
- Helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Materials, even ideas, borrowed from others necessitate full and complete acknowledgment of the original authors. Offering the work of another as one's own is plagiarism and is unacceptable in the academic community. A lack of adequate recognition constitutes plagiarism, whether it utilizes a few sentences, whole paragraphs, articles, books, audio-visual materials, or even the writing of a fellow student. In addition, the presentation of material gathered, assembled or formatted by others as one's own is also plagiarism. Because the university takes such misconduct very seriously, the student is urged to carefully read university policies on Misconduct in Research and Other Scholarly Activity 05.00. Examples of plagiarism are:

- Submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another.
- Submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source.
- Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult [Chapter 8 of the Student Affairs Manual of Policy and Procedures](#).

Adding/Dropping:

The official deadline for adding and dropping courses is as published in the academic calendar and Graduate Bulletin (typically the day before Census Day). However, students are strongly encouraged to meet with their graduate advisor or the Program Coordinator prior to adding/dropping courses. Movement into and out of classes after the 4th class day requires approval of the Program Director. Students can drop until mid-semester without a WP or WF. Drops after mid-semester require approval of the Dean. Each student is responsible for their own enrollment status with the university.

UTHSCT Technical Assistance:

Any student unfamiliar with using the Canvas learning management system may want to view the resources at the following site:

[Canvas 101](#)[Links to an external site.](#) (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)

Online Student Orientation: provided by UTHSCT: 30T<https://www.uthct.edu/new-student-orientation>30T

For technical assistance throughout the course please contact: Technical Support Student Services and Technical Support: 30T<https://www.uthct.edu/technical-support>30T

Canvas - Has a 24/7 technical assistance service through which one can obtain additional assistance regarding canvas technical problems. More info on this can be found in my course content technical support page.

Helpful information on using the different features of Canvas can be accessed at the [Canvas Student Guide \(Links to an external site\)](#),

UNIVERSITY POLICIES and STUDENT RESOURCES

Link to Syllabus Requirements: (contains links to student resources & policies)
https://www.uttler.edu/academicaffairs/files/syllabus_information_2021.pdf

MPH Program Competencies:

Competencies met by this course are in **BOLD**

CEPH Competencies

Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health

1. Apply epidemiological methods to 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 care, public health, and regulatory 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 at organizational, community and systemic levels**

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
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs

Policy in Public Health

12. Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence
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

Leadership

16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges

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**
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

UT Tyler MPH Program Competencies

23. Utilize community assessment and analysis tools to address factors that contribute to disparities in rural populations
24. Develop a risk assessment and management plan relevant to PH programs and services
25. Develop strategies for obtaining resources for PH programs, projects, and services
26. Evaluate major environmental laws and their effects on environmental factors in health.
27. Develop intervention recommendations based on the health profile of a community