



UT Tyler

SCHOOL OF
HEALTH PROFESSIONS

OEHS 5340 PUBLIC HEALTH IN RURAL POPULATIONS

CREDIT HOURS: 3

SPRING 2023

CLASS LOCATION: ONLINE

Modules open on Wednesdays at 8am and close on Tuesdays at 11:59pm.

All times are CST

INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD: Vanessa Casanova, PhD

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 9am – 12pm

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: None

Co-requisite: None

Subject-specific Skills:

Identify rural communities utilizing various definitions; incorporate skills from a variety of disciplines including geography, sociology and public health to understanding health issues in rural populations.

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

1. Understand population distribution and other demographic differences between rural and non-rural areas. (PLO 3)
2. Engage in critical scholarship of the impact of rurality on health (including disease prevalence, access to/availability of care, health outcomes). (PLO 1-6)
3. Understand how geographic location intersects with various social determinants of health. (PLO 1-6)
4. Apply social and behavioral science theories to rural public health issues. (PLO 1-6)
5. Identify health information, health education, and health promotion activities designed to reduce health risk and promote better health among rural populations. (PLO 3)
6. Identify interventions that address barriers to care for rural populations. (PLO 3)
7. Recognize the importance of research and evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of rural health programs.

Linked Program Learning Outcomes:

- PLO1 - The student will demonstrate mastery in each of the five core knowledge areas in public health: Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Social & Behavioral Sciences, Health Policy and Management, and Environmental Health Sciences.
- PLO2 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in the four core functions of public health, as well as be able to explain the principles and interrelatedness of the ten essential public health services.
- PLO3 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in using multiple informational resources to gather, analyze, apply and report solutions to public health problems with a special emphasis on rural community health.
- PLO4 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in English communication in both oral (public speaking) and written forms as they pertain to conveying key concepts in public health.
- PLO5 - The student will demonstrate proficiency in using computers and other forms of digital technology and media as they pertain to research, office management and public health issues.
- PLO6 - The student will demonstrate independent and critical thinking skills.

Required Textbook:

Foundations of Rural Public Health in America

Joseph N. Inungu, MD, DrPH, MPH; Mark J. Minelli, PhD, MA, MPA

ISBN: 9781284182453

Instructional Methods:

Readings

You are expected to complete all weekly assigned readings. Beyond the assigned readings students will 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) in order to address the topics covered each week. This will provide you with a broader

context of the concepts and principles presented in the course and allows for more meaningful dialogue in the 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.

Module PowerPoint Slides

PowerPoint slides will be provided to provide 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, 9th and 13th week of class. 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.

Course Assessment/Methods of Evaluation:

Midterm 30%

Reading Response Entries (RRE) 20%

Forum Discussion (Forum) 20%

Project presentation (presentation, paper, peer evaluation) 30%

Mid-Term Exam

One mid-term exam will be administered on-line using ProctorU. Exam format will be closed book and closed notes. Dates will be announced in the course module. The mid-term exam will be worth 30% of the final grade. The exam may be any combination of true/false and multiple-choice questions.

Reading Response Entries (RRE)

There are 3 Reading Response Entries assigned in this course. You have 1 week to complete each Reading Response Entry. Reading response entries are at least 500 words in length. They are meant to be a brief but thoughtful response to all of the readings for that week. **Insightfulness and clarity are important.** The weekly response entries are meant to help me gauge your understanding of the week's lectures and readings. A reading response entry does not re-tell the "story" in the material but it does identify the main ideas as well as the relationships of these ideas to course themes/issues and to other course materials (synthesis).

Forum Discussions (Forum)

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 from current events related to Rural Public Health issues. After reading, watching or listening, it is expected that you will engage in an online forum discussion with other members of the class. Leading questions will be posted with each forum. 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 first follow-up post is due by Saturday, 11:59pm and your second follow-up post is due by Tuesday, 11:59pm.

Final Project: Rural Public Health White Paper and Presentation

This course examines the experiences of the impact of rurality on health in the United States through review of current scholarship in this field. As part of this process, students will investigate a current issue significant to the health outcomes of rural populations in the U.S. The paper will address the background, challenges, and solutions

for a particular rural public health issue of the student's choosing. Students will prepare a Power Point presentation that summarizes their findings and reflects their position on the issue.

Upon completing this project, students will:

- Organize and outline their rural public health issue
- Develop supporting evidence for challenges and solutions including factual knowledge, statistical evidence, authoritative testimony

The final product will be approximately 6-8 pages in length (minimum 10 references) and take the form of a white paper. A 10-minute oral presentation will be a required component of this assignment. Before you begin your project, familiarize yourself with how to write paper. There are many sources on-line that can be found through a simple Google search. Remember that the aim of this project is to persuade your audience that you are knowledgeable on the issue and you can support your position with evidence. You must cite all your sources. Your sources (minimum of 10) should come from academic, popular (reputable) and on-line research. You should format your paper in APA style.

<https://www.ruralhealthresearch.org/dissemination-toolkit/products/paper-report>

Your paper topic is due via email on March 1, 2023.

Other Class Policies:

Grading Scale:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = below 60

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 and Make-Up Exams:

If a student is unable to take an exam as scheduled, a make-up exam will be arranged **ONLY** if the reason is deemed legitimate by the instructor, **AND** if the instructor is notified **IN ADVANCE** of the time the exam is scheduled, either by phone or email. Students who fail to make appropriate arrangements will receive a grade of "0" for the exam or assignment missed. There will be no exceptions.

Student Responsibilities/Expectations ONLINE

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.



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Week	Lecture	Chapter	RRE	Forum	Live Conference
1 (1/11)	Public Health 101			✓	✓
2 (1/18)	Defining Rurality	1			
3 (1/25)	Determinants of Health in Rural Communities	2	✓		
4 (2/1)	Ethical Issues in Rural Communities	3			
5 (2/8)	History of the Development of Rural Health in the U.S.	4		✓	✓
6 (2/15)	Federal Rural Health Organizations	5	✓		
7 (2/22)	U.S. Rural Health Systems in Transition	6			
8 (3/1)	MIDTERM				
9 (3/8)	Obesity, Type 2 Diabetes and Physical Activity/Nutrition	8, 9		✓	✓
10 (3/15)	Spring Break, No Class				
11 (3/22)	Maternal and Child Health	10		✓	
12 (3/29)	Oral Health/Cancers	11, 12			
13 (4/5)	Environmental Health	13	✓		✓
14 (4/12)	Occupational Health/Migrant Workers	14, 16		✓	
15 (4/19)	Mental Health/Aging Populations	15, 18			
16 (4/26)	Final Project Presentations				