

**Graduate School of Public Health**  
Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences  
BCHS 2509: Social and Behavioral Sciences in Public Health  
Fall 2020, Wednesday 1:15 – 4:10pm, Remote & 102 O’Hara Student Ctr

Instructor: Thistle Elias, DrPH, MPA

6123 Parran Hall

[elias@pitt.edu](mailto:elias@pitt.edu)

412.624.5531

Office Hours: By appointment

*(pronouns: she/her)*

Teaching Assistant: Mike Glantz

[MEG176@pitt.edu](mailto:MEG176@pitt.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment

*(pronouns: he/him)*

---

### ***Introduction***

---

This course provides an overview of the social and behavioral sciences and public health, with specific emphasis on the ecological model of community health problem analysis and development of effective interventions. The course content is organized around the competencies set out by CEPH. It includes selected social and behavioral theories and models used by public health professionals to plan, implement, and evaluate program strategies and policies for the improvement of community health.

---

### ***Course Rationale***

---

To more fully inform research and intervention efforts, and policy-making, public health professionals must look beyond biological risk factors to the complex influence of social, behavioral and environmental factors on the public’s health and welfare. They must come to understand multiple social determinants of health, and the “theoretical underpinnings of the ecological model” (Institute of Medicine, “Who will keep the public healthy?” 2002). As such, in recent years there has been a growing recognition that the social and behavioral sciences play a critical role in public health practice, training and academics. Disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and health education have emerged as contributing important theories, methods and skill sets to public health.

Students in this class will gain an understanding of the importance of using social and behavioral sciences theory and information to 1) examine public health problems; 2) develop and plan programs and policies to address public health problems; 3) implement, manage and evaluate programs and policies; 4) conduct community-based applied research; 5) communicate information to policymakers and the public; and 6) advocate for program development and policy change.

## ***Course Objectives – based on CEPH cross-cutting competencies for an MPH***

---

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Explain the social ecological framework and how factors at the various levels are connected to health;
- 2) Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health;
- 3) Discuss how structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to health equity at community, organizational and societal levels;
- 4) Explain social, political and economic determinants of health and their role in population health and health inequities;
- 5) Select appropriate qualitative data collection methods ;
- 6) Analyze qualitative data;
- 7) Interpret results of qualitative data analysis for public health research, policy and practice;
- 8) Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect community health;
- 9) Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design and implementation of public health programs and policies;
- 10) Select methods to evaluate public health programs; and
- 11) Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships to impact public health outcomes.

## ***Teaching Philosophy***

---

I believe that learning and teaching should be engaging and include exposure to challenging ideas. The diversity of experiences and backgrounds that we all have enriches the learning potential of every discussion. I see the class as a partnership between teacher and students in which we each bring experience and perspectives that can enrich our learning. I encourage each of you to create and sustain an environment in which all students can speak freely.

In addition, I believe that students are ultimately responsible for the depth of their own learning. Thus, actively preparing for and engaging in class discussions (including being brave enough to ask questions!) are critical to mastering the learning objectives, as is seeking clarifications from the instructor and TA outside of class as needed.

While there is a formal course evaluation conducted at the end of the semester, constructive comments on the class are welcome throughout the semester.

---

## **Principles of Ethical Practice**

GSPH affirms its commitment to the [Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health](#). We adhere to the highest ethical standards in the conduct of all components

of our mission. We acknowledge that improving health for all requires that public health professionals secure and maintain the trust of our communities.

## ***Course Policies***

---

### **Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to adhere to the school's standards of academic honesty. Any work submitted by students for evaluation must represent their own intellectual contribution and efforts. The GSPH policy on academic integrity, which is based on the University policy, is available online at <http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/interior.php?pageID=126>. The policy includes obligations for faculty and students, procedures for adjudicating violations, and other critical information. Please take the time to read this policy

Students committing acts of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, cheating on exams, misrepresentation of data, and facilitating dishonesty by others, will receive sanctions appropriate to the violation(s) committed. Sanctions include, but are not limited to, reduction of a grade for an assignment or a course, failure of a course, and dismissal from GSPH.

All student violations of academic integrity must be documented by the appropriate faculty member; this documentation will be kept in a confidential student file maintained by the GSPH Office of Student Affairs. If a sanction for a violation is agreed upon by the student and instructor, the record of this agreement will be expunged from the student file upon the student's graduation. If the case is referred to the GSPH Academic Integrity Hearing Board, a record will remain in the student's permanent file.

### **Writing Center**

Communicating clearly in written and spoken word is a critical professional skill. For those of you in need of additional practice and feedback on your writing, the University offers invaluable help through its Writing Center (412.624.6556).

**Disabilities:** If you have any disability for which you may require accommodation, you are encouraged to notify both your instructor and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890) [Disability Resources and Services](#) no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations.

### **Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting, and Title IX**

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any

instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware:

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here: [www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality](http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality)

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work.

Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

- Title IX Office: 412-648-7860
- SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: [www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0](http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0)

### **Diversity Statement**

The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and critical to its educational mission. Pitt Public Health is committed to creating and fostering inclusive learning environments that value human dignity and equity. Every member of our community is expected to be respectful of the individual perspectives, experiences, behaviors, worldviews, and backgrounds of others. While intellectual disagreement may be constructive, no derogatory statements, or demeaning or discriminatory behavior will be permitted.

If you feel uncomfortable or would like to discuss a situation, please contact any of the following:

- the course instructor;
- the Pitt Public Health Associate Dean for Diversity at 412-624-3506 or [nam137@pitt.edu](mailto:nam137@pitt.edu);
- the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion at 412-648-7860 or <https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/make-report/report-form> (anonymous reporting form).

**Attendance:**

Attendance in class is an absolute necessity for this course. Though Power Point presentations will be used, they are for talking points only. A great deal of the learning in this course will be through class discussion, which occurs spontaneously and cannot be scripted. If you have to miss a class, please inform the instructor or TA prior to the absence (if possible). You are responsible for getting notes from another student for any class you miss, and may request access to a missed lecture recording from the TA. **Note: For Fall 2020 IP denotes a class that will be in-person if the university stance is 'Guarded'. Engagement will be possible for students remotely on those days.**

**CANVAS:**

The course format will involve the use of CANVAS and on-line sources for class assignments and enrichment materials. CANVAS is a web-based application. Use the web browser, Chrome, to access your course information online.

- Go to the web address: <http://canvas.pitt.edu>
- "Log in" with your user name, type your password and log in!

**Technology in and for class****Cell Phones:**

Please be courteous to the instructor and your fellow classmates and refrain from cell phone use during class, including texting.

**Laptops:**

Because this class relies heavily on class discussion and active participation, when we meet in-person no laptops will be allowed in class.

**Emails:**

Be sure the subject line of the email indicates what the email is about (e.g. 2509 Question about the Quiz). When initiating an email conversation with an instructor or TA, you should always begin with "Dear/Hello/Hi/Good Afternoon" and conclude by signing your full name. Informal language (e.g. hey can you tell me my grade, thx, btw,) is unprofessional - people make judgments about you based on how you communicate and as such it is important to write emails in a professional manner. We will make a good-faith effort to respond to your email within 48 hours.

**Recording:**

Students may audio-record class ***with the permission of the instructor.***

**Readings/videos:** NO TEXT BOOK is required for this course. Students are expected to have completed reading articles and viewing videos in time for class, as they relate to each lecture. Many weeks will be a 'flipped' classroom model, in which the slides will be provided several days before class and be part of your

assigned reading/preparation for class. Required readings and videos will be posted on line, in CANVAS.

**Lecture Notes/Slides:** When lecture notes/slides are expected reading for class they will be posted by/before Sunday night preceding class. Otherwise notes will be posted in CANVAS before midnight the evening before class so that you may print them for class notetaking if you choose.

**Grading:**

**Grades will be assigned on the basis of 200 possible points:**

- Participation – attendance, exercises, reading/reflection comments on discussion board (**40** pts),
- 4 one-page papers (10 pts each, **40** pts total)
  - Social Ecological Framework
  - Social determinants of health
  - Behavioral and Psychological factors
  - Needs assessment
- 2 two-page papers (20 pts each, **40** pts total)
  - Methods (10pts)/Qualitative analysis (10pts)
  - SMART objectives/Eval plan
- 2 in-class/on-line quizzes (15 pts each = **30** pts total)  
Final exam on-line (**20** pts)
- Team “poster” presentation on-line (20pts) + peer rating (10pts) = **30** pts total.

Percentage	Letter	Percentage	Letter	Percentage	Letter	Percentage	Letter
97-100	A+	87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+
93-96	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-

Below 60% is a failing grade.

**Participation** will be determined by your attendance, participation in exercises (in class and take-home), contributions to class discussion and your use of office hours as needed. When classes are held remotely I ask you to have your camera on so that we can all get to know each other and better build community - of course if there are circumstances that make this difficult just let me know. Take home exercises will include responding to several readings via the **CANVAS discussion board**.

**All assignments** are due by **noon** on the date indicated in the course overview matrix, in Word; late assignments will be assessed a 5% deduction for each late day. **Submit your assignment through CANVAS** – NAMES must be in file name and on paper. (If you have issues submitting work through CANVAS, please let Mr. Glantz or Dr. Elias know)

- **Each student will choose a public health concern (that is impacted by any range of behaviors), and a region/culture to use for assignments throughout the semester. We will help you refine your topic as needed.**
  - As examples, you might choose HIV/AIDS rates (concern) in Accra, Ghana (region) – (which is impacted by condom wearing for example); or pediatric oral health (concern) among Pittsburgh children (region) (which is impacted by tooth-brushing, diet, etc). Generally, weekly assignments will apply what was learned in the previous week's class to your topic.
- You will be allowed **one week** to rewrite weekly assignments IF you get 65% or lower and if you choose (this is not required, only recommended for your learning). There is not a rewrite option on the final term paper. *Rewrites should be submitted directly to Dr. Elias' and Mr. Glantz' emails along with a copy of the original graded assignment - AND submitted on CANVAS.*

**Assignment Expectations:** Written assignments are limited to *the number of pages noted in the course outline (excluding references), 1.5-spaced 1-inch margins, 12 point font; may be bulleted lists when appropriate.* Please check for proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and agreement between nouns/verbs. Assignments are to be submitted using Word as an uploaded document, not a link.

Citations for all references used should follow one of the following formats:

- 1) AJP (references in the text are numbered, and the bibliography is listed numerically, NOT alphabetically); author(s). title. *journal or book.* year; volume#:pp.
- 2) APA – check out the rules at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05>

### **Discussion Board:**

At four times over the term you will be asked to respond to several readings/videos via the **CANVAS discussion board.** with a brief (300-500 word) 'reflection/reaction' comment, on weeks 4, 7, 10, 11 (noted in course overview matrix attached). You will also be expected to respond briefly and thoughtfully to two peers' comments by the following Sunday 3pm. (So for example submit your own by midnight Sept 8, and then respond to your peers' by Sept 13<sup>th</sup>). Reflections on readings/videos are not intended to summarize the contents, with which we are familiar! Rather this is the opportunity for you to write what you are thinking about these, how they connect with or contradict what you have encountered in life, in other classes, etc., any concerns that they raise for you.

**Final "Poster" Presentation (PowerPoint slides):** You will be assigned to a group for the "**poster**" presentation, which will cover a topic of the group's choosing but not addressed by anyone in the group in the individual assignments. Guidelines are provided on CANVAS. **10 points of the 30 points will come from peer ratings,** completed by all group members and indicating the extent to which each member met her/his/their responsibilities and made contributions to the final product. **Due**

**to pandemic times, these will be submitted electronically only, as a PPT presentation, not a hard copy poster.**

**Note: For Fall 2020 **IP** denotes three dates that class that will be **in-person** if the university stance is 'Guarded'. Engagement will be possible for students remotely on those days.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Competencies</b>	<b>Readings Due/Class Activities</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Aug 19</b>	<p>Introductions Framework and expectations</p> <p>What is this thing we call BCHS?</p>	<p>Alcabes, K. (2007). What Ails Public Health? <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>, Nov. 9, 2007.</p>	<i>None</i>
<b>2</b>	<b>Aug 26</b>	<p>Explain social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities.</p> <p>Social ecological framework</p> <p>[Comp K10, ~ K12]</p>	<p>Hong, JS &amp; Garbarino, J. (2012). Risk and Protective Factors for Homophobic Bullying in Schools: An Application of the Social-Ecological Framework. <i>Educ Psychol Rev</i> 24:271-285.</p> <p>Larios et al. (2009). An Exploration of Contextual Factors that Influence HIV Risk in Female Sex Workers in Mexico: The Social Ecological Model Applied to HIV Risk Behaviors. <i>AIDS Care</i> 21(10):1335-1342.</p> <p>Sterling, SP &amp; Sadler, LS. (2008). Contraceptive Use Among Adolescent Latinas Living in the United States: The Impact of Culture and Acculturation. <i>Journal of Pediatric Health Care</i> 23(1):19-28.</p> <p>PPG Article on <i>Where you live can determine how long you live and why.</i></p>	<p><b>Submit a public health issue (that is impacted by at least one behavior), in a region/culture to use for assignments throughout the semester. Ref syllabus for examples.</b></p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Sept. 2</b>	<p>Discuss how structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health, and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels.</p>	<p>Link, BG and Phelan, JC (2002). McKeown and the Idea That Social Conditions Are Fundamental Causes of Disease. <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> May 2002, 92 (5): 730-732.</p> <p>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2014). The Relative Contribution of Multiple Determinants to</p>	<p><b>Social Ecological Framework (1 page)</b> Outline at least <b>three</b> specific factors on at least <b>four</b> levels of the social ecological framework relevant for</p>

		[Comp 6]	Health Outcomes. Researchers continue to study the many interconnected factors that affect people's health.  Woolf et al, 2007.  <i>Revisiting Social Ecological Framework</i>	your weekly topic and make sure this includes at least <b>one</b> at the policy level. <b>Reference assignment details.</b> [Comp K12]
4	Sept. 9	Discuss how social, political and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to population health and health inequities  [Comp K10]	Blitstein, R. Racism's Hidden Toll. <i>Miller-McCune</i> , July-August 2009.  Braveman, P, Egerter, S & Williams, DR. (2011). The Social Determinants of Health: Coming of Age. <i>Annual Review of Public Health</i> 32:381-98.  Betancourt et al., (2003) Shi & Stevens (2005)	<b>*Reflective comments due on discussion board</b> on week 4 readings (respond to two peers by Sunday) [Comp 6]  <b>(note study guide for week 5 quiz is in week 5 folder)</b>
5	Sept. 16 IP	Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health  [Comp K9]	Burke, JG, Mahoney, P, Gielen A, McDonnell, KA & O'Campo, P. (2009). Defining Appropriate Stages of Change for Intimate Partner Violence Survivors. <i>Violence and Victims</i> 24(1):36-51.  Glanz. K & Bishop, DB. (2010). The Role of Behavioral Science Theory in Development and Implementation of Public Health Interventions. <i>Annual Review in Public Health</i> 31:399-418.  <i>Teams assigned. (and built into CANVAS)</i>	<b>In-class quiz on structural/systemic/community/social factors related to disease and health inequities</b>  <b>Social determinants of health (1 page)</b> Identify three key social determinants and how they apply to your class

				topic. <b>Reference assignment details.</b>  [Comp K10]
<b>6</b>	<b>Sept 23</b>	Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect community health  [Comp 7]	<p>CDC .(2010). Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (Change); Building a Foundation of Knowledge to Prioritize Community Needs <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/stitpublichealth/cha/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/stitpublichealth/cha/index.html</a></p> <p>Rosenbaum, S. (2013). Principles to Consider for the Implementation of Community Health Needs Assessment Process</p> <p>Gandelman, A. et al. (2006) Assessing Community Needs and Agency Capacity – An Integral Part of Implementing Effective Evidence-Based Interventions</p> <p>Perez, C. (2019). <u>Invisible Women; Data Bias in a World Designed for Men</u>. Excerpt pp 151-156</p> <p><i>In class: “Remote Area Medical”</i> 2pm Rurality – J. Thompson 3:15pm International community assessment – Y. Park</p>	<b>Behavioral and psychological factors (1 page)</b> Identify behavioral and psychological factors related to your weekly topic (ref theories) <b>Reference assignment details.</b> [Comp K9]  <b>Team Topics Due</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Sept 30</b>	Methods 1 – Select quantitative and qualitative data methods appropriate for a given public	1:20pm Overview of systems level thinking - J. Thompson Systems thinking and Social networking analysis	<b>Needs Assessment Reference assignment details. (1 page)</b>

		health context  [Comp 2]	CTSI-CPRET  Peters, D. H. (2014). The application of systems thinking in health: why use systems thinking? <i>Health Res Policy Syst</i> , 12, 51. doi:10.1186/1478-4505-12-51	[Comp 7]  <b>*Reflective comments due</b> on discussion board on “Remote Area Medical” from week 6. (respond to two peers by Sunday)
8	Oct. 7	Methods 2 – Analyze qualitative data using appropriate strategies Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy and practice  [Comp 2, 3, 4]	Ulin et al, 2005 pp 22-30  Corburn, J. (2002). Combining community-based research and local knowledge to confront asthma and subsistence-fishing hazards...  Yonas, Burke et al. (2009)	
9	Oct. 14	<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>Student ‘Self Care Day’ – but really, take care every day!</b>	
10	Oct. 21 IP	Methods 3 - Analyze qualitative data using appropriate strategies Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy and practice  [Comp 3, 4]	Zinger, JA. (2004). Sight for Sore Eyes. <i>Natural History</i> , 113(10): 34-39.  Burke et al., 2005  <i>Exercise: qualitative analysis</i>	<b>*Reflective comments due on discussion board</b> on readings from this week. (respond to two peers by Sunday)
11	Oct 28	Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships to influence public health outcomes	Lantz, PM, Viruell-Fuentes, E, Israel, BA, Softley, D & Guzman, R. (2001). Can communities and academia work together on public health research? Evaluation results from a community-	<b>Methods (2pp)</b> • Outline the method or methods you would

		<p>Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design and implementation of public health policies and programs</p> <p>[Comp 8, 13]</p>	<p>based participatory research partnership in Detroit. <i>Journal of Urban Health</i>, 78(3): 495-507.</p> <p>Gazmararian, JA et al. (2010). Maternal Knowledge and Attitudes Toward Influenza Vaccination: A Focus Group Study in Metropolitan Atlanta. <i>Clinical Pediatrics</i> 49:1018-1025.</p> <p>Seabrook, J. Don't Shoot. <i>The New Yorker</i>. June 22, 2009, pp. 32+.</p> <p><b><i>Shifting from research to program planning</i></b></p>	<p>use for your project – include recruitment, sampling, data collection strategy and analysis plan. Refer to additional assignment guidelines. (1p)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLUS qualitative analysis sample (1p)</li> </ul> <p>[Comp 2, 3,4]</p>
12	Nov. 4 IP	<p>SMART objectives – use for planning and evaluation of process and outcomes</p>	<p>Baker AD, Gilley J, James J &amp; Kimani M. “High Five to Healthy Living”: A Health Intervention Program for Youth at an Inner City Community Center. <i>J Community Health</i>, accessed on-line 12/21/11</p> <p><i>In class exercise writing SMART objectives (Lead)</i></p> <p>MAPP <i>Precede-Proceed</i></p>	<p><b>In-class quiz on stakeholders and cultural values</b></p> <p>[Comp 8, 13]</p> <p><b>*Reflective comments due on discussion board – readings from week 10.</b> (respond to two peers by Sunday)</p>
13	Nov. 11	<p>Select methods to evaluate public health programs</p> <p>[Comp 11]</p>	<p>Glanz, K &amp; Bishop, DB. (2010). The Role of Behavioral Science Theory in Development and Implementation of Public Health Interventions. <i>Annual Review of Public Health</i> 31:399-418.</p> <p>Richard, L, Gauvin, L &amp; Raine, K. (2011). Ecological Models Revisited: Their Uses and</p>	

			<p>Evolution in Health Promotion Over Two Decades. <i>Annual Review of Public Health</i> 32:307-326.</p> <p><i>Build evaluation into plans!</i></p>	
<b>14</b>	<b>Nov. 18</b>	Evaluation (revisited) and Advocacy	<p>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2014). The Relative Contribution of Multiple Determinants to Health Outcomes. Researchers continue to study the many interconnected factors that affect people's health.</p> <p>Revisit Rosenbaum, S. (2013). Principles to Consider for the Implementation of Community Health Needs Assessment Process.</p> <p><i>1:30 Rahul Amruthapuri – Swasthaya Swaraj, a community health intervention</i></p>	<p><b>SMART objectives/Evaluation Plan (2 pages)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify at least two SMART process and two outcome (impact) objectives for each main component of a planned intervention.</li> <li>• Describe the components of your evaluation</li> </ul> <p><b>Reference assignment details.</b>  <b><i>Final exam study guide will be posted this week, exam will be posted by Sunday 3pm.</i></b>  [Comp 11]</p>
<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>Nov. 25</b>	<b>Gratitude</b>	<b><i>Have an outstanding Thanksgiving break!</i></b>	<b><i>NONE!</i></b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Dec. 2</b>	<b>Final exam - due by 2pm "Poster" presentations</b>	<b>Details on presentations will be in CANVAS</b>	<b>Final Exam is due by 2pm - comprehensive for the term Team presentations</b>