

## **Bridging the Distance Between Us: A Practical, Multidisciplinary Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health (IDH 3034, U21)**

**Faculty:** Melissa Ward-Peterson, PhD, MPH, Department of Epidemiology

Email: [mward@fiu.edu](mailto:mward@fiu.edu) (generally, please plan for a 24-hour response time, excluding weekends)

Phone: 305-348-2075

Office: AHC5-483

**Class Meeting Time & Location:** Fridays, 3-5:30pm, SASC 202

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

### **Course Description:**

This two-semester course is designed for students with a general interest in social justice, as well as those pursuing careers in public health, public policy, public service, medicine, nursing, and other health professions. The course will begin by examining the foundations of public health, including policy, epidemiology, and a brief introduction to biostatistics. Attention will then shift to discussions of the various influences on public health, including social determinants (such as race and socioeconomic status) and the environment, with a particular focus on health disparities. Next, the class will examine the ways in which public health and health disparities are experienced, and how those experiences are expressed through literature, film, and music. The course will conclude by exploring ways to make public health happen, including sessions on research ethics, health communication strategies, advocacy, program implementation, and sustainability. Topical lectures on issues such as women's health, adolescent health, chronic and infectious diseases, global health, and disaster preparedness will be integrated throughout the course, and students will be required to complete a service learning project in the local community.

At the end of the course, students will be able to...

- Describe the foundational elements of public health
- Discuss the multidimensional social determinants of health
- Identify major local, national, and international challenges related to health disparities
- Describe the interdisciplinary stakeholders involved in the social determinants of health
- Apply team collaboration skills to address a health disparities problem

- Implement a local public health project to address health disparities from the perspective of a public health discipline

**Required Text:**

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot (ISBN-10: 1400052181)

(Students will also have required readings that will be posted online for each session.)

**Optional Text:**

Introduction to Public Health (5<sup>th</sup> Edition) by Mary-Jane Schneider (ISBN-10: 1284089231)

**Grading & Assignments:**

(Please note: assignment details subject to change.)

Class Participation..... 150 points; 30% of final grade

Students will learn the most in this course by integrating the concepts taught in each session with their own personal experiences, as well as by listening to the stories and perspectives of their classmates. Therefore, participating in class discussions and small group activities is critical to earning a high grade in this course. The exact format of these small group activities will vary from session to session and may include debating about class topics or answering questions about the readings. A total of 10 participation points will be available per session (excluding the session during Finals Week).

Public Health Issue Brief..... 100 points; 10% of final grade

Each student will select a health issue that has impacted them or their family greatly, or is otherwise of particular interest to the student. In a 3-5 minute oral presentation to their classmates, the student will discuss the key local and state-level health policy bodies who have the ability to influence change related to the health issue, as well as a brief epidemiologic overview of the health issue (for example, prevalence and population most impacted). A grading rubric will be posted online two weeks prior to the oral presentations.

Public Health Issue Pitch..... 100 points; 20% of final grade

Each student will select a local public health issue related to health disparities that they would like to pitch to the class as the topic which the entire class will work on for the service learning projects. In a 5-10 minute presentation, the student will discuss the key local and state-level health policymakers who have the ability to influence change

related to the health issue, as well as a brief epidemiologic overview of the health issue (for example, prevalence and population most impacted). The student will also include an overview of local organizations working on the issue, as well as preliminary ideas for projects to address the health disparity. After all student pitches have been made, students will then vote on the local public health issue to be addressed by the class through the service learning projects.

Students interested in the same topics may choose to work in groups for this assignment; if students choose to work in groups, these groups must be designated and reported to the course faculty member NO LATER than two weeks prior to the issue pitch due date. All members of a group will receive the same overall grade for the presentation. A grading rubric will be posted online two weeks prior to the issue pitch session.

This assignment satisfies the "Interdisciplinarity and Connectivity" Learning Outcome of the Honors College Portfolio (<http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/portfolio/>).

Final Group Presentation..... 100 points; 20% of final grade

After the class has voted on and selected the health disparities issue for the service learning projects, students will divide into groups to address the issue from different perspectives (for example, health advocacy or health communication). In the final presentation, each group will present an implementation plan for their service learning project, to be completed during the spring semester. In addition to the grade received for the group presentation, students will be evaluated by their peers on their contributions to their team. Grading rubrics will be posted online two weeks prior to the due date.

This assignment satisfies the "Leadership and Community Engagement" Learning Outcome of the Honors College Portfolio (<http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/portfolio/>).

Essay: The Personal Impact of Public Health..... 100 points; 20% of final grade

Each student will compose a 4-6 page essay reflecting on the personal impact a public health issue has had on their life or their family. The essay must include a brief background of the issue, including relevant epidemiologic information, such as prevalence and population(s) most impacted, as well as an overview of relevant local and state policymakers who may influence change related to the issue. The essay should also include an overview of the key stakeholders who must be included in future efforts to effect change. A grading rubric will be posted online two weeks prior to the due date.

Each essay must be composed in 12-point Times New Roman font; pages must be double-spaced and utilize 1-inch margins. Students must cite references using the APA citation style. Essays must be submitted through TurnItIn; submissions must receive a similarity score of less than 25%. Any plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in FIU Academic Misconduct disciplinary procedures (see below).

**Grade Scale:**

- A** 93-100
- A-** 90-92
- B+** 87-89
- B** 83-86
- B-** 80-82
- C+** 77-79
- C** 70-76
- D** 65-70
- F** <65

Percentages will be rounded up if the value is .5 or greater. For example, an 82.5% will be rounded up to an 83%. An 82.4% will be rounded down to an 82%.

**Policy for Late Assignments:**

For each day that an assignment is late, 10 points will be automatically deducted from your grade.

**Attendance:**

Students will learn the most through regular class attendance; therefore, student attendance is strongly encouraged. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. A third unexcused absence results in a letter grade deduction of the final grade (a student with three unexcused absences with an "A" will have the final grade as a "B"). Four unexcused absences or more is an automatic "F" for the class. To receive excused absences, students will be asked to provide documentation (for example, a doctor's note for a sick day).

**Expectations for Academic Conduct:**

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the

quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

### **Honors College Requirements**

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity.

### **Honors Citizenship Requirements**

Beginning in Fall 2014, Honors College students are required to accumulate at least 20 citizenship points each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate 10 citizenship points. See: <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/citizenship/>

### **Student Portfolios**

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. See: <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/portfolio/>

### **Honors Education in the ARTS (HEARTS)**

The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to "explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. See: <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/hearts/>

### **Honors College Academic Misconduct Statement**

In The Honors College, the term "honor" refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form,

including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

### **Procedures and Penalties**

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Honors College website (<http://honors.fiu.edu/honors-policies/>), and the Academic Misconduct Procedures, available at <http://integrity.fiu.edu/misconducts.html>.

Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity – <http://integrity.fiu.edu/>

FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy- <http://honors.fiu.edu/honors-policies/>

### **Religious Observances**

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

### **Policy for Assigning an “I” Incomplete Grade**

An incomplete grade is a temporary symbol given for work not completed because of serious interruption not caused by the student’s own negligence. Please see FIU’s Policy for Assigning an Incomplete Grade.

### **Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges**

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#), if you have not done so already.

### **Global Learning Outcomes (All sections):**

Global Awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.

Global Perspectives: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will be able to analyze multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority—economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

Global Engagement: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

Course Learning Outcome: Students will be able to develop solutions to local global, international, and/or intercultural problem related to aesthetics, values, and authority.

### **Course Schedule: Fall Semester**

Required readings must be read before attending class. Optional readings are included for students who are interested in additional information on the session topic, but they are not required; a student's grade will not be impacted if they choose not to complete the optional readings. (Please note: topics and assigned readings subject to change.)

<b>Friday, August 24, 2018</b>
Session Topic: Course Overview and Introduction
<b>Friday, August 31, 2018</b>
Session Topic: Health Policy at Local and State Levels
Required Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kaiser Family Foundation. The Florida Health Care Landscape. Available <a href="#">here</a>.</li><li>• Organizational Charts for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Florida Dept. of Health, available <a href="#">here</a>.</li><li>○ Miami-Dade County Dept. of Health, available <a href="#">here</a>.</li><li>○ Broward County Dept. of Health, available <a href="#">here</a>.</li><li>○ The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks: Prologue-Chapter 1</li></ul></li></ul>
Optional Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to Public Health, Chapter 3, pgs. 25-32.</li></ul>

**Friday, September 7, 2018**

Session Topic: An Introduction to Epidemiology

Required Readings:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Principles of Epidemiology in Public Health Practice, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: An Introduction to Applied Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
  - Lesson 1, Section 1: Definition of Epidemiology. Available [here](#).
  - Lesson 1, Section 3: Uses. Available [here](#).
  - Lesson 1, Section 4: Core Epidemiologic Functions. Available [here](#).
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
  - Chapters 2-3

Optional Reading:

- Introduction to Public Health, Chapter 4

**Friday, September 14, 2018**

Session Topics: The Social Determinants of Health & Social Epidemiology

Required Reading:

- Social Determinants of Health: The Solid Facts, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Edited by Richard Wilkinson & Michael Marmot. WHO. Available [here](#).
- Honjo K. Social Epidemiology: Definition, History, and Research Examples. 2004. *Environmental Health & Preventive Medicine*, 9:193-199. Available [here](#)
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks: Chapter 4

Optional Reading:

- Introduction to Public Health, Chapter 14

**Friday, September 21, 2018**

Session Topics: Class Presentations (Public Health Issue Brief) & Ethical Considerations for Public Health

DUE: Public Health Issue Brief Presentation

Required Readings:

- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 5-7

**Friday, September 28, 2018**

Session Topics: An Introduction to Biostatistics & Public Health Data

Required Reading:

- Basic Concepts for Biostatistics. Sullivan L, Boston University School of Public Health. Available [here](#).
- Health Data Tools & Statistics. Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce. Available [here](#). (Skim/review briefly; no need to read in depth.)
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks: Chapters 8-11

Optional Reading:

- Introduction to Public Health, Chapters 7 & 8

**Friday, October 5, 2018**

Session Topics: Community Organizations in Public Health & Community-Based Participatory Research

Required Reading:

- The Importance of Community-Based Research. Unite For Sight. Available [here](#).
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 12-15

Optional Reading:

- Holkup P, et al. 2004. Community-based Participatory Research: An Approach to Intervention Research With a Native American Community. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 27(3): 162-175. Available [here](#).

**Friday, October 12, 2018**

Session Topic: Environmental & Occupational Health

Required Reading:

- Environmental Health. Healthy People 2020. Available [here](#).
- Occupational Health. World Health Organization. Available [here](#).
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 16-18

Optional Reading:

- Introduction to Public Health, Chapter 20

**Friday, October 19, 2018**

Session Topic: Public Health Issue Pitches & Voting

DUE: Public Health Issue Pitch

**Friday, October 26, 2018**

Session Topic: The Role of Religion in Public Health

Required Readings:

- Galea S. On Religion and Public Health. Dean's Note: Boston University School of Public Health. Available [here](#).
- Barmania S. The Influence of Religion on Public Health Policy. BMC Blog Network. Available [here](#).
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 19-22

Optional Reading:

- Introduction to Public Health, Chapter 2, pgs. 15-21

**Friday, November 2, 2018**

Session Topic: Communication in Public Health

Required Reading:

- Bernhardt J. Communication at the Core of Effective Public Health. American Journal of Public Health, 2004;94(12):2051-2053. Available [here](#).
- Rimal R & Lapinski M. Why Health Communication is Important in Public Health. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 2009;87:247. Available [here](#).
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 23-24

Optional Reading:

- Health Communication and Health Information Technology. Healthy People 2020. Available [here](#).

**Friday, November 9, 2018**

Session Topic: Understanding Public Health Through Film

Film to be watched in class:

TBD.

Required Reading:

- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 25-29

**Friday, November 16, 2018**

Session Topic: Advocacy in Public Health

DUE: Essay

Required Readings:

- Bassett M. Public Health Advocacy. American Journal of Public Health, 2003;93(8):1204. Available [here](#).
- McGrory K. Miami doctor presses lawmakers for needle exchange program, but faces long odds. The Miami Herald. April 5, 2015. Available [here](#).
- Driscoll A. Fighting HIV in Miami, one dirty needle at a time. The Miami Herald. July 29, 2016. Available [here](#).
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 30-32

**Friday, November 23, 2018**

NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Required Readings:

- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapters 33-36

**Friday, November 30, 2018**

Session Topic: The Role of the Family in Public Health

Required Reading:

- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Chapter 37-Afterword

**FINALS WEEK: December 3-8, 2018**

Session Topic: Group Presentations

DUE: Final Group Project Presentation