

**Community Health
Sam Houston State University
Department of Health and Kinesiology
Health Education 487
Summer I 2008**

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M, T, and W 2- 3p.m. or
by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Community health has evolved over the years and is often considered the intersection of various disciplines and sectors including Public Health, Nursing, Social and Mental Health, Recreational Services, Environmental Health, and Transportation. Within this course, students will acquire an introduction to the following foundational aspects of community (and population) health:

- The multiple goals and sectors of community health
- Community or population health education
- Reproductive, infant and child health
- Adolescent, adult and senior age health issues
- Community mental and social health
- Community recreation and fitness
- Alcohol/drug abuse and rehabilitation
- Environmental health protection
- Global health strategies, resources, and organizations

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation

Regular attendance for this class is essential. A significant amount of your grade will be based on class participation (“participation” occurs in many forms). You will be expected to learn from each other through class discussions, your questions, and opinions. It is also very important that you arrive on time. Unexpected situations arise for all of us, however, if you expect to be late regularly or miss more than 1 class, please notify me so we can make an accommodation if possible. Students are responsible for getting notes/handouts from any missed classes. Also, I understand that in today’s world cellular phones are a fact of life. However, as a courtesy to the instructor and your classmates, please ensure that all electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, pagers, etc.) are turned off or set to vibrate during the class period.

2. In-Class Activities

Each student will be expected to engage in a series of in-class activities throughout the semester. The activities will vary and will incorporate issues and concepts addressed in class. Each activity will be explained in class. If absent, it is your responsibility to acquire a description of the assignment (you are not permitted to make-up the assignment unless excused).

3. Service Learning Project

Students are responsible for completing a semester long service learning project. Students will select a community health organization (see www.volunteermatch.org) in the greater Houston area. Students must initially acquire my approval before contacting their respective organizations. In order to acquire an in-depth understanding of an organization, it is necessary to study from *within*. As such, students must acquire access to their respective organization (approval from the Director – see attached letter). Students must recognize their “outside” status – it is critical that your participation in this project is beyond “earning a grade” or “completing an assignment.” Therefore, I strongly recommend that all students select an organization that they are personally and professionally interested in and committed to.

Specifically, students are responsible for exploring the following:

- Mission of the organization
- History of the organization
- Population(s) served
- Current state of the organization
- Future goals of the organization
- Funding of the organization
- Challenges facing the organization
- Leadership – background information pertaining to the Director (i.e., education, daily activities & responsibilities, personal and professional reasons for working in such an organization, salary, etc.)
- Responsibilities of other employees and volunteers
- * This list is NOT comprehensive...students are responsible for generating questions specific to their respective organizations.

To study an organization from *within*, one may incorporate various qualitative data collection methods including in-depth interviewing, participant observation, and document analysis. Therefore, students will want to select an organization that they are not only committed to, but also have access to (proximity). Ideally, students should commit time to the organization (beyond merely “collecting data” for this assignment). Many of the organizations listed are non-profit and can benefit greatly from your skills and time.

NOTE:

- * Only one student can work with an organization – organizations are on a first-come-first-serve basis and must be approved by the instructor (prior to making contact).
- * Students will also provide the Director of the organization with an informational letter explaining the purpose of the “assignment” (see attachment – also in course documents).

Final report

Students will summarize their “findings” in a final paper. The specific format of this paper is the student’s choice. While it is impossible to provide a specific page length, I suspect that such a paper could not be written in less than 6-10 pages.

4. Presentation

I have found that service learning can provide a powerful learning experience for students (and teachers). Too often, however, the learning is not shared with others. Therefore, each student is responsible for providing a poster presentation of her/his organization (and findings). The purpose of the poster is to provide the class with a brief overview of the organization, its mission, history and goals, as well as the specific information (data) learned from *within* the organization. Specifics and examples will be discussed in class. NOTE: It is important to remember issues of confidentiality.

5. Final Examination

Students will take a cumulative final examination. The final exam is short answer essay and will incorporate all readings, lecture material, discussions, films, and guest speakers.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS

- Papers are due at the beginning of class and will be penalized for being late. All papers handed in late or incomplete will receive a grade that is reduced by 5 points (per day).
- All assignments must be handed in personally. If you are unable to attend class when an assignment is due, it is *your responsibility* to contact the course instructor to make alternate arrangements.
- “Technological excuses” (e.g. computer crashed, printer broke, etc.) WILL NOT be accepted. Make appropriate arrangements to ensure that all assignments are handed in on time.
- Before handing in a paper, be sure to keep a printed copy. All papers must be handed in on paper. E-mail attachments and faxes will not be accepted.
- Points may be deducted for writing (i.e., grammatical errors, organization, flow) – if writing assistance is needed, please contact the Writing Center on campus.
- You may hand in rough drafts up to one week prior to the due date if you would like feedback.

Grading

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>
In-class activities	100 points
Service Learning Project	200 points
Presentation	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Class Attendance/Participation	100 points
Total	600 points

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:

Any student with a disability should inform the course instructor if instructional accommodations or academic adjustments will be needed. For information about the ADA and academic accommodations or adjustments, contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services.

Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to do original work and to appropriately cite all references (both in text and reference list). If you do not know how or what to cite, or are in any way confused about citing a reference please see the course instructor. *Plagiarism and academic dishonesty is a serious matter.* If evidence of academic dishonesty is found, individuals will be dealt with severely.