Syllabus
CPH 650: Applied Public Health Theory
Fall 2014

Time: Monday, 1:00-3:50pm
Location: Drachman A112
Instructor: Brent A. Langellier, PhD
Email: blangell@email.arizona.edu
Office: Drachman A266
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3pm

Catalog Description: Examine, critically evaluate, and apply prominent and emerging theories in health promotion and health behavior. Preparation of a grant that draws upon theory and is tailored to a specific health problem and agency is a requirement for the course.

Course Description: This course addresses conceptual and methodological issues in development and application of theory to guide public health research and practice. We will begin by overviewing common theories used in health behavior and health promotion, discussing the utility of theories, and examining the process of theory construction. We will then examine and critique theoretical and conceptual approaches commonly employed in public health and relevant social science disciplines. My goal in this course is to help provide students with foundational knowledge and skills relevant to theory-based research and practice that will be useful for advancing through their respective programs (i.e., doctoral dissertation and master’s thesis/report). Please note that my intent is to teach this course as a seminar rather than in a lecture-based format. While I will present relatively short (typically 30-45 minute) lectures on weekly content, we will spend the bulk of in-class time discussing weekly readings and in workshops related to course assignments. It is therefore very important that students carefully read all posted readings by the date listed on the syllabus and come prepared to participate.

Course Prerequisites: CPH 531, CPH 532A, or consent of instructor

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the process through which health and social theories are constructed
2. Examine and critique use of theory in public health research and intervention development
3. Develop foundational knowledge in health behavior and health promotion
**MPH/SECTION Competencies Covered:**

**Core MPH Competencies**

1. Identify and examine the role of cultural, social, ethnic, religious, spiritual, and behavioral factors in determining disease prevention and health promotion behavior, and health services organization and delivery (D3)
2. Determining health related consequences of social structure (D4)
3. Defining, assessing, and understanding the health status of population, determinants of health and illness, factors contributing to health promotion and disease prevention, and factors influencing the use of health services (E1)

**Health Behavior Health Promotion MPH Competencies**

1. Identify basic theories, concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in health behavior health promotion research and practice
2. Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations

**Recommended Texts/Readings:** All content will be provided via the D2L website for this course; there is no book or course reader available for purchase.

**Course Requirements:** Attend and participate in all class sections. Complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus or as directed by the instructor.

**Grading/Student Evaluations:** This course is graded on the traditional scale: A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, E=50-59%. Grades will be based on the following:

- Class participation (15%)
- Discussion leader (15%)
- Assignment 1 (20%)
- Assignment 2 (20%)
- Assignment 3 (30%)

**Class Attendance/Participation:** I expect students to attend all class sessions, to have read all assigned readings by the date listed on the syllabus, and to come to class ready to discuss the readings. All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean’s designee) will be honored.

**Assignment Descriptions:** Detailed descriptions of assignments are at the end of the syllabus. Due dates are in the schedule.

**Assignment Format:** The format for all assignments is as follows: typed, double spaced, one inch margins, 11-12 point font, Microsoft Word file type. All referenced work must be appropriately cited using a recognized citation format (i.e., APA, MLA, JAMA). I recommend investing the time to use citation software (e.g., Mendeley, EndNote) at the beginning of the course, since assignments are intended to build upon one another and thus the same citations may be used in multiple assignments.
Turning in Assignments: Please email all assignments to me at the above email address. All assignments are due by 5pm on the Wednesday of the week listed on the syllabus. For all assignments, please use the following naming convention: LastName_Assignment# (e.g., ‘Langellier_Assignment1’).

Late Assignments: All assignments are due by 5pm on the Wednesday of the week listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized by 10% per day late, starting at 5:01pm on Wednesday. There are no makeup assignments in this class. If you fail to turn in the required rough draft of Assignment 3 by the due date, the late assignment penalty will be applied to your overall grade for the assignment.

Discussion Leader (15% of total grade): Each student will act as discussion leader for either one (masters students) or two (doctoral students) of the weekly sessions. As discussion leader, you will facilitate our weekly discussions regarding the weekly topic and readings. To aid in this, please submit a list of 3-4 questions per reading via email to the instructor and your fellow students by 5pm on the Friday before class. These questions will serve as the basis for our discussions, so please be sure to cover major topics and issues from each reading.

Class Participation (15% of total grade): Participation is mandatory. Please come to class having completed the readings, thought about the weekly discussion questions, and be and prepared to discuss. Please note that your grade is based on active participation in lectures and, particularly, discussion.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1—August 25—Introduction to Theory


Week 2—September 1
Labor Day—no class

Week 3—September 8—Constructs


**Week 4—September 15—Operationalization of Constructs**


**Week 5—September 22—Relationships among Constructs**

**Due date: Assignment 1—Construct definition and operationalization**


**Week 6—September 29—Causality in Social Research**


**Week 7—October 6—Social Ecological Models of Health**


**Week 8—October 13—Life Course Perspectives**

*Out of class activity: mandatory office hours to discuss Assignment 2*


Week 9—October 20—Stratification and Intergenerational Effects

Due date: Assignment 2—Relationships between constructs


Week 10—October 27—Structure vs. Agency


Optional


Week 11—November 3—Health Disparities I: Overview & Fundamental Causes


**Week 12—November 10—Health Disparities II: Exploring Racial/Ethnic Disparities**


**Week 13—November 1**

*Due Date: Assignment 3—Rough Draft*

APHA annual meeting—no class

**Week 14—November 24— Neighborhood Effects**

*Out of class activity: mandatory office hours to discuss Assignment 3*


**Week 15—December 1— TBD (Emerging Theories or Special Topics)**

Weekly topic to be determined at halfway point of semester based on student projects and interest. 

Example readings might include:


**Week 16—December 8—Final Presentations**

*Due date: Assignment 3--Analysis of Theory or Conceptual Framework*
Required Statements:

Communications: You are responsible for reading emails sent to your UA account from your professor and the announcements that are placed on the course web site. Information about readings, news events, your grades, assignments and other course related topics will be communicated to you with these electronic methods. The official policy can be found at: http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/emailpolicy.htm

Disability Accommodation: If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Resources (621-3268; drc.arizona.edu) and notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. The official policy can be found at: http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014%2D15/policies/disability.htm

Academic Integrity: All UA students are responsible for upholding the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity, available through the office of the Dean of Students and online: The official policy found at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity

Classroom Behavior: (Statement of expected behavior and respectful exchange of ideas) The Dean of Students has set up expected standards for student behaviors and has defined and identified what is disruptive and threatening behavior. This information is available at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/disruptiveandthreateningstudentguidelines

Students are expected to be familiar with the UA Policy on Disruptive and Threatening Student Behavior in an Instructional Setting found at: http://policy.arizona.edu/disruptive-behavior-instructional and the Policy on Threatening Behavior by Students found at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/sites/deanofstudents.arizona.edu/files/Disruptive_threat_bklt_2012.pdf

Grievance Policy: Should a student feel he or she has been treated unfairly, there are a number of resources available. With few exceptions, students should first attempt to resolve difficulties informally by bringing those concerns directly to the person responsible for the action, or with the student's graduate advisor, Assistant Dean for Student and Alumni Affairs, department head, or the immediate supervisor of the person responsible for the action. If the problem cannot be resolved informally, the student may file a formal grievance using the Graduate College Grievance Policy found at: http://grad.arizona.edu/academics/policies/academic-policies/grievance-policy

Grade Appeal Policy: http://catalog.arizona.edu/2014-15/policies/gradappeal.htm

UA Smoking and Tobacco Policy:
The University's "Smoking and Tobacco Policy" is designed to promote the health and wellness of all members of the University community, including visitors to campus, and it will prohibit the use of tobacco- and nicotine-containing products on property owned or controlled by the UA. This includes the main campus, the Arizona Health Sciences Center, the Phoenix Biomedical Campus, UA South, all satellite campuses, University vehicles, and any property leased by the UA. Smoking cessation aids, such as nicotine gum, patches, and nasal sprays, will be permitted, but all other forms of tobacco or nicotine - including pipes, cigars, cigarettes and e-cigarettes, all types of smokeless tobacco, and water pipes - will
be prohibited. The latest version of the policy is available at:
http://policy.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Tobacco-Free.pdf

**Syllabus Changes:** Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate.
Purpose: For this assignment, you will identify a construct of interest to you and evaluate how it has been used in the public health literature, including its definition, operationalization, measurement, and integration within the public health research.

Assignment: Write a 6-10 page paper that addresses the following:

1. Identify a construct used in the public health literature. The construct can be a determinant of health (e.g., socioeconomic status), a health behavior (e.g., physical activity), or a health outcome (e.g., depression).
2. Briefly describe the public health relevance of the construct and overview a few relationships between this and other constructs that have been investigated in the public health literature.
3. Summarize and evaluate 2-3 definitions of the construct used in the public health literature. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these definitions?
4. Identify and examine the 2-3 most prominent methods used to measure your construct. At least TWO of the methods you examine should consist of sets of questions/modules administered via questionnaires. The third method could include other measurement methods (e.g., anthropometrics, accelerometer). For each method, briefly discuss the ‘operational definition’ of the construct (note that these definitions may or may not be present in the literature you review). Are the operationalization and measurement methods consistent with the definitions you found in the literature? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each measure? Has the construct been measured by assessing two or more sub-constructs? Should it have been?
Assignment 2: Relationships Between Constructs

Purpose: For this assignment, you will review and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the public health literature that has examined the relationship between two distinct constructs. Although it is not required, one of the constructs in this assignment should be the construct used in Assignment 1.

Assignment: Write an 8-10 page paper that addresses the following:

1. Identify and briefly define the two constructs (this is not a repeat of Assignment 1—be brief).
2. Discuss the hypothesized relationship between your two constructs, as described in the literature you are reviewing. Is the hypothesized relationship causal? Are there any mediating or moderating variables that might affect the relationship between your two constructs, or confounders that could potentially explain the relationship?
3. Review and evaluate 3-5 studies that have investigated the relationship between these constructs. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these studies (e.g., potential confounders, measurement issues, etc.)? How strong is the evidence for causality? To establish a causal relationship, what else could be done?
Assignment 3: Analysis of Theory or Conceptual Framework

Purpose: In this assignment, you will identify a research question that has been investigated in the public health literature and evaluate 2-3 health and social theories or conceptual frameworks that have been applied to this question. Based on your findings, you will then propose a novel conceptual framework that addresses the weaknesses in the literature that you have identified.

Assignment: Write a 10-15 page paper that addresses the following:

1. Define a research question that seeks to explain the relationship between multiple constructs. Of these constructs, at least one should be a health outcome or behavior and at least one should be a more upstream determinant of health. Based on the research question, develop 2-3 testable hypotheses.
2. Identify 2-3 health and/or social theories that have been used to investigate your research question and hypotheses.
3. Based on a review of 4-5 studies, examine how the theories/frameworks you identified have been applied within public health research. What methods have been used? Has the research you reviewed done the theories justice? What is the evidence for or against your hypotheses?
4. Discuss the strengths and limitations of using the theories you reviewed in addressing this research question.
5. Based on your findings, develop your own conceptual framework for addressing the research question (this should probably be a modification of one or more of the theories/frameworks you reviewed—do not try to reinvent the wheel!). What constructs have been added or deleted from your framework? Why? Justify your framework and discuss why it could be used to address existing limitations of the literature.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A ROUGH DRAFT OF THIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE PRIOR TO SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL DRAFT.