PHPM 561 – Introduction to Health Care Quality and Safety

Course Description

Rising costs, accessibility, overuse, underuse, fraud, and medical errors are well-recognized problems in our current health care system and have been the subject of much public and legislative attention in recent years. The still contentious Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) is showing promise in reducing the numbers of uninsured, improving the quality of care, and controlling health care costs. And, the health care community is increasingly focused on improving health care quality and reducing costs. All health professionals – including clinical staff and public health professionals with their training in epidemiology, biostatistics, and population health – have important roles to play in these efforts. Health care administrators, attorneys, and many others are important participants.

Education theory indicates that practical experience is essential to learning. Research has indicated that adult learners like to understand the practical application of knowledge, skills and abilities. They have a need to see how the new knowledge can be incorporated into their existing knowledge and like to have “real world” experiences utilizing this knowledge. This course provides an overview of health care quality and safety. Students will learn quality improvement concepts and techniques and will practice the techniques in teams to plan interventions to improve safety in health care. Assigned readings, video talks and lectures, online discussions, individual writing assignments, small group activities, and team projects applying the theories learned will enrich learning.

Course Prerequisites:

None

Learning Objectives

- After taking this class, students will be able to:
  - Identify the social determinants of health and their relationship to quality.
  - Describe the impact of poor quality health care on the public’s health.
  - Describe the health care quality and safety movement and its impact on health care delivery and the public’s health.
  - Describe the importance of the health professional’s role in quality improvement.
  - Identify common health care-related quality and safety problems and their effects.
  - Use common quality improvement methods and tools to analyze and improve health care quality and safety problems.
MPH Competencies Covered

This course covers the following MEZCOPH MPH program competencies:

Analytical Skills
- Defines a problem
- Determines appropriate uses and limitations of data
- Evaluates the integrity and comparability of data and identifies gaps in data sources
- Makes relevant inferences from data

Communication Skills
- Communicates effectively both in writing and orally (unless a handicap precludes one of these forms of communication)
- Soliciting input from individuals and organizations
- Leading and participating in groups to address specific issues, including ability to work in teams, span organizational boundaries, and cross systems
- Demonstrating cultural competency in all of the above and community development

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills
- Assess and interpret information to develop relevant policy options
- States policy options and writes clear and concise policy statements
- Translates policy into organizational plans, structures, and programs

Cultural Skills
- Interacting competently, respectfully, and professionally with persons from diverse backgrounds

Financial Planning and Management Skills
- Developing strategies for determining priorities
- Applying basic human relations skills to the management of organizations and the resolution of conflicts
- Understanding the theory of organizational structure and its relation to professional practice

Public Health Policy and Management Competencies Covered:
- Apply the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation in organizational and community initiatives.
- Apply "systems thinking" for resolving organizational problems.
- Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.
- Demonstrate leadership skills for building partnerships.
Required Texts/Readings

- Additional readings as assigned and specified in this syllabus and on D2L.
- Selected learning modules at Institute for Health Improvement (IHI) Open School (http://www.ihi.org/offerings/IHIOpenSchool/Courses)

Course Notes

You are expected to take your own notes if needed as you read or view the required materials, distill major themes, learn terms and definitions, and identify relationships between topics, themes, and concepts.

Course Requirements

- **Introduction** – Quality improvement and this course are iterative processes – i.e., there is purposeful repetition with the goal of constantly refining knowledge and outcomes. You will find that the reading assignments can be heavy and that the readings may overlap, using different terms to describe what seem like very similar concepts and processes. We are expecting you to read for understanding, not memorization, and to demonstrate that understanding in your postings, your weekly reflections and the accomplishment of your team project. Repetition, team-based learning, active learning, and reflection are powerful learning methods. We are confident that if you participate fully, you will leave with valuable knowledge, ideas, tools, and experience!

- **Overview** – This is a structured, self-directed course with readings, activities, discussions, and assignments. You are expected to complete all assigned readings and other course materials, keep notes as required, participate in discussions, as well as complete all assignments and projects. An overview of each module’s activities will be posted for you to review. The overview will contain that module’s learning objectives, topics, readings, and assignments. Any non-text readings will be posted (or links will be provided). Due dates for assignments will be posted online. Changes and other information about the class will be emailed to your University of Arizona e-mail address and/or posted on Announcements.

- **Late Assignments** – Assignments delivered after their due dates will be considered late and subject to a 10% deduction for every 24-hour period past due. (Exceptions may be made for sufficiently compelling extenuating circumstances.)
• **Teamwork** – Some assignments and your semester-long team project will require that you work together as a team. At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned to small (4-5 people) teams based on education, background, and experience – with the goal of creating diverse teams. Students will work on the same team throughout the semester. The instructors will consider options if a team’s membership falls to fewer than four members – e.g., no change, transfers to other teams, or merging two teams. Contact information for your teammates and classmates will be available on D2L. We have found that successful teams plan real-time meetings by phone or online meeting apps at least once a week, and we strongly encourage you to schedule regular meetings with your team starting early in the semester rather than attempting to complete team assignments asynchronously.

• **Team project** - Each team will develop an improvement plan for a healthcare quality and safety concern and write a paper describing the project. The paper will describe the QI tools used and process used to develop a sequenced implementation plan containing appropriate interventions and monitoring tools. We allow a little time at the end of the semester for teams to complete their projects. However, starting early will ensure that there is time for all team members to contribute as well as enable feedback from course instructors. Please plan to work on your team project throughout the course and to ask questions of each other and instructors as you develop and refine it.

• **Discussions** – In addition to the above, students will have weekly assignments on the online discussion board. All students are expected to complete and post their assignments by the deadlines. Your postings should be responsive to the questions posed and demonstrate that you have read, understand, and can meaningfully apply and extrapolate from the knowledge you’ve gained. You are encouraged to share relevant readings that were not assigned as well as relevant knowledge and experience. Unless otherwise noted, you are required to reply to at least one other individual or team. All original posts and replies from teams must identify the team number. See Appendix E. Instructors may post questions or comments that you will need to respond to over the course of a discussion.

• **Individual Reflections** – At the end of each week (two times during each module), first revisit the Overview and review the learning objectives covered under the topics and provide brief feedback on whether you think they were met. Then, briefly reflect on your experience during past week. For example, ask yourself if there was anything that you found particularly meaningful and why... Or, if any important underlying beliefs or values were affirmed or violated, and why... Or, if some part of what you read, saw, heard, or experienced was especially relatable to your work and/or life experiences and why... Or, if you will do anything differently in the future due to what you read, saw, heard, or experienced... Or, if you plan to apply something you’ve learned now or in the
very near future, and how... Post your weekly reflections in the Assignments folder. They may be in written, audio, or video format. Work from written notes when recording audio or video reflections. Limit recordings to no more than two minutes, and re-record (just as you would edit a written document) to ensure a professional recording.

Course Evaluation and Grading

In this course, you are expected to participate and interact with your classmates and a significant portion of your final grade will be based on that participation – team project, discussion postings, and peer evaluation. In addition to your own original postings, you will be asked to comment on your classmates’ postings. Your postings may be brief, but need to substantively contribute to the topic under discussion and reflect the quality of discourse characteristic of a professional level seminar. All of your postings should be well informed, respectful, and original.

• A well-informed posting requires that you have: (1) completed all readings and viewed all media; (2) conducted all necessary independent research; (3) carefully reviewed and considered the discussion questions/issues before making your original posting; and (4) carefully read other students’ postings before making comments.

• A well informed posting responds to the question(s) asked; demonstrates understanding of the questions(s), materials, concepts, tools, and previous postings; discusses relevant issues; asks intelligent questions; and introduces cited information from credible new sources. Wikipedia and similar sources will not be counted as references. Use peer-reviewed journals; books; national newspapers or magazines; data and information from national, state or local public health agencies; national non-governmental public health agencies and foundations; etc.

• Respectful means that you avoid rude, condescending, disparaging, or obscene communication.

• Original means that you are: (1) expressing your own ideas in your own words, (2) appropriately crediting original sources when you are not, and (3) adhering to the University Code of Academic Integrity.

The following rubric will be used for grading postings. We will not be providing grading rubrics with your grades. If you have a question or concern about a grade, please ask us.

• Content – Postings are 150-500 words each unless otherwise specified. All content contributes to an original idea, comment, or critique in your own words. It demonstrates your understanding of the assignment, is responsive to question/issues, relevant to topic and topic development, and asks interesting questions. Points may be taken off for the overuse of quotations. We want to see your own thoughts and ideas.

• Ideas/Organization – Thoughts, ideas and recommendations are clear, interesting, and persuasive; and help advance the conversation. Ideas are supported by available information and scientific evidence from the primary literature. Content is organized in a manner that allows the reader to easily follow and understand the conversation.

• Format and Conventions – Each post adheres to writing conventions and is free of errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing. All quoted and paraphrased material is cited. Citations and reference lists use proper ICMJE/JAMA format. All original posts and replies from teams must identify the team number.
• Replies – At least one reply is posted to another individual or team, unless otherwise posted. Comments or replies to other postings must be substantive. Remarks like "I really liked chapter 4" or "I agree with what Dana wrote" are not sufficient and will likely receive a zero grade. Similarly, poor grammar, spelling errors, lack of etiquette, insensitivity, rudeness, etc., will adversely affect your grade.

Numerical grading per module
• Maximum 12 points per topic discussion entry (See Appendix D)
• Maximum 12 points per team discussion or document (Appendix D)
• Maximum 12 points per reflection

Excellent (4 pts)  Good (3 pts)  Fair (2 pts)  Poor (1 pt)  None (0 pts)

Grading Scale
Percent  Grade
90+       A
80-89     B
70-79     C
60-69     D
<60       E

Grading Categories
Individual Performance  Percentage Total Grade
• Individual discussions  30%
• Individual reflections  10%
• Individual participation 10%

Team Performance  Percentage Total Grade
• Team Discussions  10%
• Team Project  25%
• Midterm Peer Evaluation  5%
• Final Peer Evaluation  10%
TOTAL 100%

Instructors’ Feedback: It is not possible for instructors to respond to every posting in a discussion. Instructors will review all postings and comment where appropriate. Comments may reflect a response to the overall discussion or highlight for a very interesting idea for the class. Sometimes, we will may ask you to clarify or provide more supporting information. So, please review our instructors’ postings and as many of your classmates’ postings as you can. You will learn from both! Instructors will communicate with students individually via e-mail and/or
telephone as needed. Grades will be posted with 1-2 weeks of the assignment completion date. If you fail to receive a grade by that time, please contact your instructor.

Note that the online course management system has a feature that can give us statistics on your online activity, including which parts of the class you visited and for how long.

**Peer Evaluation:** You will be asked to evaluate your teammates mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Your mid-semester review will include comments, but the final peer evaluation will not. Please see Appendix B for details. Be sure to read the posted handout, *Making Feedback Helpful*, before writing any comments. Not completing peer reviews will adversely affect your grade.

**Academic Policies**

**Grievance Policy:**
College of Public Health students who believe they have been subjected to unfair treatment in the administration of academic policies may seek resolution of their complaints through the Graduate College found at: [https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/grievance-policy](https://grad.arizona.edu/policies/academic-policies/grievance-policy)

**Grade Appeal Policy:** [http://catalog.arizona.edu/2012-13/policies/gradappeal.htm](http://catalog.arizona.edu/2012-13/policies/gradappeal.htm)

**Academic Integrity**
Students are expected to abide by the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity found at: [http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/sites/deanofstudents.arizona.edu/files/code_of_academic_integrity.pdf](http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/sites/deanofstudents.arizona.edu/files/code_of_academic_integrity.pdf).

**Class Attendance/Participation:**
It is expected that students will check the class website every day for announcements and updates related to the class.

**Classroom Behavior (Statement of expected behavior and respectful exchange of ideas)**
Students are expected to be familiar with the UA Policy on Disruptive Behavior in an Instructional Setting found at: [http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/disruptive-behavior-instructional-setting](http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/disruptive-behavior-instructional-setting) and the Policy on Threatening Behavior by Students found at: [http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students](http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students)
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

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All assignments will be evaluated through Turn It In, which will capture the degree to which content in an assignment has been copied and from what sources. We are able to see what is original content and what is not. If an assignment is plagiarized, the student will either receive an automatic zero, or will be reported to the Dean of Students, depending on severity. What counts as plagiarism?
  o Copying and pasting information from a web site or another source, and then revising it so that it sounds like your original idea.
  o Doing an assignment/essay/take home test with a friend and then handing in separate assignments that contain the same ideas, language, phrases, etc.
  o Quoting a passage without quotation marks or citations, so that it looks like your own.
  o Paraphrasing a passage without citing it, so that it looks like your own.
  o Hiring another person to do your work for you, or purchasing a paper through any of the on- or off-line sources.
For more information, visit http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism

Disability Accommodation:
Students who are registered with the Disability Resource Center must submit appropriate documentation to the instructor if they are requesting reasonable accommodations: https://drc.arizona.edu/students

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.
Assignments are due at 11:59 PM Phoenix, AZ, time on assigned due dates. Other sources of information include weekly course overviews, which will contain important instructions and links to websites, announcements, and emails.
Appendix B

Peer Evaluation

Read the posted handout, Making Feedback Helpful, before beginning. Follow its guidance! Although we will share comments and ratings with each team member without divulging the name of each rater, any comments about teammates deemed to be derogatory, insensitive, demeaning, inflammatory, etc., will not be shared with your teammates and may affect your final grade.

See the Excel workbook in D2L labeled “Peer Evaluation” in the Course Resources folder in Content. You’ll find instructions in the first tab, the mid-semester practice peer review form in the second tab, and the final peer evaluation form in the third tab. Upload completed files to the appropriate folders in D2L Assignments. Do not share the any parts of the completed forms with your classmates.

The mid-semester peer review will count as 5% of your final semester grade, and the final peer evaluation will count 10% of your final grade. In other words, your team mates will assign 15% of your semester grade. If they award you full points, you will receive the full 15%; anything less than full points will reduce the semester grade accordingly. Note that to receive these points, you must submit evaluations of your team mates, and they must be exactly as described in instructions in the Excel workbook. If you do not submit evaluations, you will receive 0%.

We encourage you to use weekly meetings to develop your team’s process early on to facilitate effective teamwork when significant deliverables must be met. In the past, those meetings and feedback from the mid-semester practice peer review allowed students and teams to work out problems interfering with team performance before they negatively affect final peer evaluations.

Below is a typical example of a completed mid-semester peer review (using fake names). Look carefully at the comments. Do you think they fit the guidance in Making Feedback Helpful? Were the comments clearly labeled as the reviewer’s opinion? Did the reviewer use “I” statements, starting sentences with phrases, e.g., “I was impressed with..., I was grateful for..., I agreed with..., I liked when..., I thought that..., I disagreed with..., I was surprised by..., I was pleased with..., I was upset by, I didn’t like when, etc.” Did the reviewer avoid making evaluations and judgments? We believe you can do a better job than this reviewer when making your comments:
**EXAMPLE: Mid-Semester Peer Review**

Your Name: Jane Smith  
Your Team: The QI Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members' Names (List Alphabetically by Last Name)</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Respect for Others' Ideas</th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doe, John</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>John contributes to our work, but he sometimes hasn't had the chance to read the material first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martinez, Lupe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Lupe is always prepared, and she starts every project. Perhaps she could give others a chance to jump in, but I really appreciate her attention to our deadlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Susan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Susan seems prepared, but she defers to others and allows the rest of us to do most of the work. It would help if she contributed more instead of just saying she agrees with one of us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeng, Harry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Harry seems to have read the material and has researched the topic, but he argues with two of the other team members too much. I think he thinks his ideas are the only ones that count, but others have good ideas, too. It would help if he would keep an open mind.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Appendix C

A partial listing of web resources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Web Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Health policy**      | Health Affairs: [www.healthaffairs.org](http://www.healthaffairs.org)  
                        | American Public Health Association: [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)  
                        | The Urban Institute: [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)  
                        | Families USA: [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org)  
                        | Center for Health Care Strategies: [www.chcs.org](http://www.chcs.org)  
                        | National Academy for State Health Policy: [www.nashp.org](http://www.nashp.org)  
                        | Kaiser Family Foundation: [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)  
                        | Rand Corporation: [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)  
                        | Mathematica Policy Research: [www.mathematica-mpr.com](http://www.mathematica-mpr.com) |
| **Financing health services** | Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services: [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov)  
                             | Center on Budget & Policy Priorities: [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org)  
                             | Kaiser Family Foundation: [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org) |
| **Mental health**     | National Institute of Mental Health: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)  
                        | Bazelon Center for MH Law: [www.bazelon.org](http://www.bazelon.org) |
| **Public health**     | Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): [http://www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
                        | American Public Health Association: [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org)  
                        | Arizona Department of Health Services: [http://www.azdhs.gov](http://www.azdhs.gov)  
                        | Scientific American: [http://www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com) |
| **Quality of health care** | Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Open School: [http://www.ihi.org/education/ihiopenschool/courses/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ihi.org/education/ihiopenschool/courses/Pages/default.aspx)  
                  | Institute of Medicine: [https://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/](https://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/)  
                  | National Committee for Quality Assurance: [www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org)  
                  | Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Orgs: [www.jcaho.org](http://www.jcaho.org)  
                  | ASQ: [https://asq.org](https://asq.org) |
                        | National Public Radio: [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)  
                        | The Washington Post: [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)  
                        | The Los Angeles Times: [www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com) |
Appendix D

Discussions & Team Project Policies

In this course, the discussion board and the team project provide important opportunities for you to share your experiences and knowledge, and demonstrate mastery of the course materials. We expect that you will engage with the topics raised and with each other – asking relevant questions; bringing forward new insights and information; and challenging assumptions, theories, and strategies. It is expected that your comments will be supported by facts, logic, evidence, and experience and that relevant supporting documents will be cited.

Grading
You can earn up to 12 points for completing the learning activities in each module by: (1) completing your original entry(ies), (2) making any required commentary on other classmates’ entries, and (3) replying to comments on your original entry(ies). Please make sure that all entries are completed by the specified deadlines.

Be sure to carefully review the instructions and due dates for all required activities. Due dates for the Discussion Board assignments and the team project are noted in this syllabus on the Calendar (Appendix A). Your response must add something new to the discussion and help move it forward. Remember, it is not sufficient to say "I agree with Jane..." and then simply repeat what Jane wrote in her post.

Possible Areas for Point Deductions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Areas for Point Deductions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posts do not contribute an original idea/comment/critique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original idea/comment/critique is vaguely expressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive spelling/grammar/punctuation errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor spelling/grammar/punctuation errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posting is less than 100 words or greater than 500, unless otherwise specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only one post when multiple posts are required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more posts are plagiarized. See UA Code of Academic Integrity. <a href="http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity">http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Guidance
Please participate in online discussions as you would in face-to-face discussions, in a professional and courteous manner.
In an online class, your written words and submitted material are the primary way we know you. To be understood by the professors and fellow students, you must write well. For example:

- Remember that online communication lacks the non-verbal cues that provide much of the nuance and meaning in face-to-face conversations.
- Choose your words carefully, phrase your sentences clearly, and keep your sentences and paragraphs brief and well organized.
- State the main topic of your posting in the Subject line.
- Avoid errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Use spellcheck and grammar check in Microsoft Word; similar apps are available for free online. Common errors include:
  - Run-on sentences.
  - Failing to spell out an acronym at its first use.
  - Capitalization errors.
  - Text-messaging lingo and abbreviations.
- Proofread what you post! You may want to use a word processor to draft what you intend to say, check your spelling and grammar, and then paste your text into the Message section of your posting.
- Some assignments will offer an option of submitting a short video or audio recording rather than a written post. To achieve full points:
  - Draft a written response to guide your recording.
  - Plan to re-record for best results. Just as you normally write a first draft and edit it at least once, expect to re-record to create a better recording.
  - For video, be aware of visual and audio distractions. For example, select a quiet area, check what is behind you, and avoid moving the camera.
Appendix E

Rules of Netiquette

While Appendix D touches on netiquette, many excellent sources for the rules of netiquette are available on the world wide web. Please review at least one of the suggested websites below:

1. 9 Netiquette Guidelines Online Students Need to Know
   HTTP://WWW.RASMUSSEN.EDU/STUDENT-LIFE/BLOGS/COLLEGE-LIFE/NETIQUETTE-GUIDELINES-EVERY-ONLINE-STUDENT-NEEDS-TO-KNOW/

2. 15 Rules of Netiquette for Online Discussion Boards
   http://blogs.onlineeducation.touro.edu/15-rules-netiquette-online-discussion-boards/

3. Netiquette Rules for Online Communication
   http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/frankm/573/netiquette.html