CPH 609 Evaluating the Public Health Literature

Spring 2016

Time: Thursdays 12:00 – 12:50 pm
Location: Drachman A119
Credit: 1 unit
Course Director: Michael T. Halpern, MD, PhD
A243 Drachman Hall
mthalpern@email.arizona.edu
(520) 626-6258
Office Hours: By appointment
Teaching Assistant: None
Course Prerequisites: None
Required reading: Reading may be downloaded from the course d2L website.
Course Description: Reviewing the public health literature is a learned skill of growing importance as the nation’s health system continues to undergo dramatic reforms. Public health researchers and practitioners can learn a systematic approach to thoughtful, critical review of published public health and medicine research findings – whether these are published in peer reviewed journals, government reports, or information released in more public venues such as newspapers and social media.

This seminar will facilitate evaluating public health literature using a two-fold approach. The first few weeks will cover reviewing and evaluating differing types of public health studies, focusing on understanding the results from and limitation of each study type. The second part of the seminar will assist students in developing critical review skills by writing the different components of a public health study manuscript. By understanding the purpose and function of each part of a study manuscript, students will be better prepared to both develop their own manuscript and review other public health literature.

Learning Objectives: At the end of the course students will be able to:

- Know how to dissect a paper, explore unknown methods, verify the author’s interpretation of cited literature and utilize the references to expand knowledge of a topic.
- Determine whether provided and cited data address the purpose of the paper and support the conclusions drawn.
- Assess whether the author placed the results of the study in the context of what is known on the topic while adequately addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the work.
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of common public health study designs.
- Describe the common statistical approaches used in public health studies.
• Understand the functions and objectives of each component of a published study manuscript and how to prepare each component for a public health study manuscript for publication.

• Find examples of how the public learns about public health research findings

• Understand how to express the results of a public health study in a manner that can be interpreted by members of the public.

• Conduct a critical review of a public health research study, with emphasis on evaluating the strength of evidence and study design; the potential biases and limitations; and implications for future public health practice.

Class format: In-class activities combine brief (5-10 minute) didactic faculty and student lectures with structured discussions (40-45 minutes). Pre-assigned reading is essential to successful in-class participation. Students must be prepared to answer and ask questions, and provide thoughtful commentary on the assigned reading and didactic presentations.

Class discussion is encouraged and expected. Students use critical thinking to debate and defend viewpoints, and to generate ideas. Students will share what they have learned about the discussion topic through their own investigation and experiences. Faculty facilitate discussion to assure respectful dialogue and allow all to contribute.

Evaluating the Public Health Literature CPH 609 Spring 2016
January 14 – May 4, 2016 Drachman Hall A119

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Jan. 14</td>
<td>Course overview, reviewing a manuscript, types of studies</td>
<td>Halpern</td>
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<td>2. Jan. 21</td>
<td>Review of a nutrition study</td>
<td>Jacobs</td>
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<td>3. Jan. 28</td>
<td>Review of a database study</td>
<td>Halpern</td>
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<td>4. Feb. 4</td>
<td>Review of a community-based participatory research study</td>
<td>De Zapien</td>
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<td>5. Feb. 11</td>
<td>Review of a qualitative analysis</td>
<td>Reinschmidt</td>
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<td>6. Feb. 18</td>
<td>Review of a government report</td>
<td>Derksen</td>
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<td>7. Feb. 25</td>
<td>Developing a research question</td>
<td>Halpern</td>
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<td>8. March 3</td>
<td>Developing an introduction</td>
<td>Halpern</td>
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<td>9. March 10</td>
<td>Developing a methods section</td>
<td>Halpern</td>
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<td>Spring recess March 17</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>10. March 24</td>
<td>Developing an abstract</td>
<td>Halpern</td>
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<td>11. March 31</td>
<td>Developing a poster</td>
<td>Paul Akmajian</td>
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<td>12. April 7</td>
<td>Writing a press release</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<td>13. April 14</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
<td>Student led</td>
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Assignments include reviews of selected studies, developing manuscript components, and student-led presentations:

A. **Study reviews**: Students will come to each session prepared to discuss the article. By 11:00 am of each class day, students will have reviewed the article to be discussed and will have submitted to the instructor 1-3 questions on the study and their interpretation of the study’s research question. Submissions can be made in a Dropbox on D2L.

B. **Development of manuscript components**: Students will have completed the readings and prepared the assigned manuscript section prior to class. Students will present their manuscript section in class.

C. **Student-led presentations**: Students will present the study they developed as part of the class. This will include providing background/context for the study, discussing the study research question(s), presenting the proposed methods (including why those methods were chosen), discussing the limitations of the study, and summarizing the expected results and the implications of these results for future public health practice. Presentations will be no more than 6 minutes, with 2 minutes for questions.

**Evaluation Grading**: The seminar is graded A, B, C, D, and E. The grading scale is:
- A = 90 – 100%
- B = 80 – 90%
- C = 70 – 80%
- D = 65 – 69%
- E = 0 – 64%

Study reviews and manuscript components: 14 sessions x 5 pts/session= 70 pts (attendance and participation, completion of assignments on time). Unexcused absences will lead to decreased points and may affect your final grade.

Student-led presentations: 30 pts

**Competencies (DrPH)**:
- (D1) Apply theoretical and evidence-based perspectives from multiple disciplines in the design and implementation of programs, policies, and systems.
- (D2) Interpret quantitative and qualitative data following current scientific standards.
- (D5) Synthesize information from multiple sources for research and practice.

**OTHER INFORMATION**
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/2012%2D13/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

Plagiarism: What counts as plagiarism?
- Copying and pasting information from a web site or another source, and then revising it so that it sounds like your original idea.
- Doing an assignment/essay/take home test with a friend and then handing in separate assignments that contain the same ideas, language, phrases, etc.
- Quoting a passage without quotation marks or citations, so that it looks like your own.
- Paraphrasing a passage without citing it, so that it looks like your own.
- Hiring another person to do your work for you, or purchasing a paper through any of the on- or off-line sources.

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

Telephone and Computer Use: Laptops are allowed. Use is governed by the following University policy http://security.arizona.edu/aup. Turn your cell phones to silent or vibrate in order to not disrupt the class and disturb your fellow students and professor.

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/2012-13/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.