The Health of Populations (HSERV 482 / GH 490)  
Course Syllabus – Spring 2010

Course Websites:  
https://catalysttools.washington.edu/workspace/jonhuang/11914/  
http://courses.washington.edu/hserv482/

Days:  
Monday and Friday
Time:  
10:30 – 11:50 AM
Place:  
Magnuson Health Sciences Center T-439

Instructor:  
Stephen Bezruchka, MD, MPH
Email:  
sabez@uw.edu
Phone / Mailbox:  
206-932-4928 / UW Box 357660
Office Hours:  
By appointment

TA:  
Jonathan Huang, MPHc
Email:  
jonhuang@uw.edu
Office Hours:  
H-688: Monday, 12:00 – 2:00 PM; Thursday, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes a population healthy or unhealthy? Why is the USA less healthy than all the other rich countries, despite being one of the healthiest fifty years ago? We explore these questions by getting students to think for themselves and attempting to make these ideas better known amongst the public through various dissemination exercises.

There are no prerequisites. The course is graded for three credits. Work includes a single-page reading response each week; a single-page analysis of a documentary, and two dissemination exercises. There is no final exam.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

• Define concepts of population health and distinguish them from the health of individuals
• List societal determinants of health
• Describe biological and sociological mechanisms through which the determinants of population health operate
• Analyze the role of medical care in producing population health
• Discuss current concepts of globalization and their impact on global health
• Disseminate concepts learned in the course to others

COURSE MATERIALS

Textbook


DVD Rental Fee

• There is a course rental fee of $10 to borrow a copy of the Unnatural Causes DVD used for the dissemination exercise. The DVD must be returned at the end of the course. Students who do not return it will not receive a grade.

Course Web Sites

• http://catalysttools.washington.edu/workspace/jonhuang/11914/  
  o Weekly responses are uploaded here; the space also provides a student
message board, instructions for the assignments, web links, and important files (e.g. syllabus and schedule)

- [http://courses.washington.edu/hserv482/](http://courses.washington.edu/hserv482/)
  - Slides for the lecture sessions for the previous year will be available here. Some content may be different this year.

**Extensive Bibliography**

- The extended syllabus for the graduate course GH 514 with innumerable readings is available at [http://courses.washington.edu/gh514/](http://courses.washington.edu/gh514/). Many readings there are relevant to topics in this course.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The grading for the course is based on the following criteria (instructions for completing these assignments can be found at [http://catalysttools.washington.edu/workspace/jonhuang/11914/](http://catalysttools.washington.edu/workspace/jonhuang/11914)):

- **10 one-page weekly reading responses [40% of course grade]**
  - Responses must be e-submitted to course dropbox by 10:30 AM on the due date
  - "First response (Population Health “Web Ramble”) is due Friday, April 2
  - Each assignment thereafter is due by 10:30 AM every Monday; 1% is deducted for each day late (each assignment is worth 4%)

- **One-page response to “The Great Leveller” DVD [10% of course grade]**
  - A summary and analysis of the 55-minute documentary is due by April 23.

- **Dissemination Exercise #1 [25% of course grade]**
  - Facilitate a viewing and discussion of a segment of Unnatural Causes to a group outside of class. A short, one-paragraph proposal is due April 12; the exercise must be conducted and written up (5 page maximum) by April 30.

- **Dissemination Exercise #2 [25% of course grade]**
  - Conduct a dissemination exercise of your own choosing alone or in small groups. Some ideas are provided on the course site and groups can be coordinated through the class message board. A short, one-paragraph proposal is due May 14; a write-up (5 page maximum) and evidence of your exercise are due on June 4. Volunteers to present their work will be solicited.

All assignments should be submitted to their appropriate dropbox on the course site. Grading will be based on clarity and originality of thinking, degree of engagement with new ideas, and effort demonstrated in dissemination projects.

**COURSE/INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION**

Each student is asked to complete a special form evaluating the quality of the course and instructor near the end of the quarter. These evaluations are invaluable to instructors in improving and supporting their courses.

**DISABILITY POLICY**

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructor and teaching assistant so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for class.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date (Day)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>March 29 (M)</td>
<td>Orientation to Population Health</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>April 2 (F)</td>
<td>Determinants of Health in Rich Countries</td>
<td>“Web Ramble” Due</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>April 5 (M)</td>
<td>Population Health From The Paleolithic On</td>
<td>Response 1 Due</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>April 9 (F)</td>
<td>Health, Happiness, Inequality, and Hierarchy</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>April 12 (M)</td>
<td>Early Life Lasts a Lifetime</td>
<td>Response 2 Due</td>
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<td>Dissemination 1 Proposal Due</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>April 16 (F)</td>
<td>Medical Care and Its Impact on Health</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>April 19 (M)</td>
<td>Physical Environment and Population Health</td>
<td>Response 3 Due</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>April 23 (F)</td>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>“Great Leveller” Due</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>April 26 (M)</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Response 4 Due</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>April 30 (F)</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Dissemination 1 Due</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>May 3 (M)</td>
<td>Values and Beliefs About Inequality and How They Are Shaped</td>
<td>Response 5 Due</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>May 7 (F)</td>
<td>Population Medicine: Where To Go From Here</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>May 10 (M)</td>
<td>Biology of Population Health</td>
<td>Response 6 Due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>May 14 (F)</td>
<td>Population Health Perspective on Mental Illness</td>
<td>Dissemination 2 Proposal Due</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>May 17 (M)</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union Countries</td>
<td>Response 7 Due</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>May 21 (F)</td>
<td>India and China</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>May 24 (M)</td>
<td>Health and Development in Poorer Countries</td>
<td>Response 8 Due</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>May 28 (F)</td>
<td>Africa</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>June 4 (F)</td>
<td>Population Medicine II: Sharing Dissemination Experiences</td>
<td>Response 9 Due</td>
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<td>Dissemination 2 Due</td>
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Course Readings

The Spirit Level by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (citation earlier) is the primary text for the first half of the course and additionally is a great reference. It can be purchased through the University Bookstore or online retailers. All other readings are available online through one of three methods:

- GH 514 electronic reserves (UW NetID Login required):
  - The folder (“Session”) in which the papers is located in will be indicated as: [GH 514 – Session XX]

- UW Libraries’ electronic journal resources (UW NetID Login required):
  - Go to the journal listed in the citation and search for the author or title
  - Alternatively, you can search for the article directly through PubMed:

- External URL:
  - The URL is provided. No login is required.

Please post to the “Problems Accessing Readings” Section of the Student Message Board if you continue to have trouble accessing any of the readings.

Class Reading List

Although there are many suggested readings listed for each class session, please remember that you are only required to submit a response to one of the readings from either the Monday or Friday class that week (due the following Monday). The exceptions to this are the “Web Ramble” Response due the first Friday and the last Response due the Friday after Memorial Day (See the Course Outline). You are of course encouraged to read more than one selection. If you wish to discuss more than one reading in your response you may, keeping in mind the one page limit. In the following reading list, weeks are separated by a long line for clarity.

Class 1: March 29 – Orientation to Population Health


Class 2: April 2 – Determinants of Health in Rich Countries


Class 3: April 5 – Population Health From the Paleolithic On

Class 4: April 9 – Health, Happiness, Inequality, and Hierarchy


Class 5: April 12 – Early Life Lasts a Lifetime


Class 6: April 16 – Medical Care and its Impact on Health


Class 7: April 19 – Physical Environment and Population Health

Session 13


Class 8: April 23 – Western Europe


Class 9: April 26 – Japan


**Class 10: April 30 – Canada**


**Class 11: May 3 – Values and Beliefs about Inequality and How They Are Shaped**


• STRASBURGER, V. C. (2009). "Children, adolescents and the media: what we know, what we don’t know and what we need to find out (quickly!)." *Archives of Disease in Childhood* 94(9): 655-657. [GH 514 – Session 06]


• DEMAUSE, N. and S. Rendall (2007). The Poor Will Always Be With Us--Just Not on the


**Class 12: May 7 – Population Medicine: Where to Go From Here**

- DREGER. A. So you're a scholar who wants to make things happen. [Available at: http://www.bioethicsforum.org/dreger-activism-and-academia.asp] [GH 514 – Session 19]
- "Money as Debt" Video. [Available at: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2550156453790090544&ei=qHKhS6-AJYiQqQ0hudiZDA&q=money+as+debt+full#]

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Class 13: May 10 – Biology of Population Health


Class 14: May 14 – Population Health Perspective on Mental Illness


Class 15: May 17 – Former Soviet Union Countries


**Class 16: May 21 – India and China**


**Class 17: May 24 – Health and Development in Poorer Countries**

Class 18: May 28 - Africa


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Holiday: May 31 – Memorial Day – No Class

Class 19: June 4 – Population Medicine II: Sharing Dissemination Experiences

- Readings will depend on the students that volunteer to share their disseminations projects.