Course Title: Principles & Methods of Epidemiology

Course Number: PHCO 0502

Course Prerequisite(s): None

Course Location: The Hill Center, Room 116 (HLL-116), Busch Campus

Course Date & Time: Wednesdays, 6:40-8:40pm

Course Instructor: Marija Borjan, PhD, MPH

Office Hours: By Appointment Only
Alex: Tuesdays, 2-4pm, SPH Rm 334

Course Assistant: Jie Li, MPH – Dept. of Biostatistics & Epidemiology
ljru@cinj.rutgers.edu
Alex Pugliese – Dept. of Biostatistics & Epidemiology
app136@sph.rutgers.edu

Course Website: canvas.rutgers.edu

Required Course Text: Friis & Sellers, Epidemiology for Public Health Practice, 5th Edition

Additional/Supplemental Readings/Resources: Readings and videos posted to Canvas.

Course Description: This course introduces students to the study of disease and ill health through their patterns of occurrence in human populations. The approaches of epidemiology in estimating the burden of disease, in making inferences about cause of disease, and in evaluating primary, secondary and tertiary prevention strategies are presented.

Competencies Addressed: The competencies addressed in this course include:

A. Explain public health history, philosophy and values;
B. List major causes and trends of morbidity and mortality in the US or other community relevant to the school or program;
C. Discuss the science of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention in population health, including health promotion, screening, etc.;
D. Explain the critical importance of evidence in advancing public health knowledge;
E. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice;
F. Identify key sources of data for epidemiologic purposes, such as vital statistics and disease registries; and
G. Recognize specific features of different study designs and identify their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Course Objectives: By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

a. Explain the basic concepts of descriptive and analytical epidemiology.
b. Discuss uses and applications of epidemiology.
c. Define the influence of population dynamics on community health.
d. Identify an epidemiologic study design by its description.
e. List the main characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of epidemiologic studies.
f. Apply the criteria used to assess a causal association.
g. Calculate appropriate epidemiologic measures based upon the study design.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

- **Final course grades will be based on the following:**
  - Attendance & Participation 10%
  - Web Quizzes 20%
  - Midterm Examination 25%
  - Presentation 20%
  - Final Examination 25%

- **Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to attend class in person on Wednesdays from 6:40-8:40pm, as well as complete up to 30 minutes of additional web-based activities such as videos or graded discussions. Active participation in both lecture and web-based activities is required. Unless otherwise noted, the following 3-point rubric will be used to assess graded discussions:
  - Provocative (3/3) – Response goes beyond simply answering the prompt, attempts to stimulate further thought and discussion, is relevant to epidemiology and concepts learned in class, and is respectful of others’ posts.
  - Substantial (2/3) – Response adequately answers the prompt but does not stimulate further analysis/discussion of the subject, is somewhat relevant to epidemiology and concepts learned in class and is respectful of others’ posts.
  - Superficial (1/3) – Response provides obvious information without further analysis of the concept, lacks depth of knowledge or reasoning, or has very little relevance to epidemiology and concepts learned in class.
  - None (0/3) – Response is not complete or is not respectful of others’ posts

- **Quizzes** will be given approximately weekly throughout the semester on Canvas. Quizzes are open-book/note and untimed but must be completed by the designated due date/time. Except where noted otherwise, quizzes will be made available on Canvas after class each Wednesday and will be due before class the following week. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Late submission will result in the following deductions:
  - 25% automatic deduction if submitted within 24 hours following the due date/time.
  - 50% automatic deduction if submitted within 48 hours following the due date/time.
  - Homework will not be accepted after 48 hours following the due date/time.

- **Presentation topic ideas** will be due prior to the midterm. A sign-up sheet will be distributed for groups to indicate their topic and sign-up for a presentations date. Groups will be expected to prepare a brief (10 – 12 minute) presentation. Details will be provided on Canvas and in class.

- **Midterm and Final Examinations** will be given in class and require only a pen or pencil and simple calculator. Cell phones, smart phones, tablets, laptops, or other electronic devices will NOT be permitted.
Course competencies are tied to objectives and assessments as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Course Objectives(s)</th>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>Assessment(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Quiz 1; Midterm; Final</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>c, g</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>Quizzes 3 &amp; 4; Project 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>b, g</td>
<td>2, 11</td>
<td>Quiz 2; Midterm; Quiz 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>a, b, f</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>Quiz 6; Midterm; Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>b, e, f, g</td>
<td>13, 14</td>
<td>Quizzes 10 &amp; 11; Project 1; Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>a, c, g</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Quiz 5; Project 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>d, e, g</td>
<td>5, 6, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td>Quizzes 5 – 9; Project 2; Final</td>
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</tbody>
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The following school-wide grade scale will be used to determine final course grades. Please note that grades will not be “rounded” or “curved”:

**Grading Policy:**

- 94 – 100  A
- 90 – <94  A-
- 87 – <90  B+
- 84 – <87  B
- 80 – <84  B-
- 77 – <80  C+
- 70 – <77  C
- <70  F

**Course Schedule:** Below is a preliminary course schedule. This schedule may be subject to change during the semester. Updates to this schedule and additional activities, readings, assignments, and discussions will be communicated via Canvas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Text Chapters</th>
<th>Quiz DUE by 6:00pm</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td>What is Epidemiology?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Intro to Epi</td>
<td>Ch. 1, 2</td>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>Morbidity &amp; Mortality Descriptive Epi</td>
<td>Ch. 3, 4</td>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>Sources of Data</td>
<td>Ch. 5</td>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Study Designs</td>
<td>Ch. 6-8</td>
<td>Quiz 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Data Interpretation Issues</td>
<td>Ch. 10</td>
<td>Quiz 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>Screening for Diseases in the Community Presentation topics due</td>
<td>Ch. 11</td>
<td>Quiz 6</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>Mid-Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>Infectious Disease Epi</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
<td>Quiz 7</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>Cancer Epi</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>Epi Aspects of Work in the Environment Social, Behavioral, and Psychosocial Epi Presentations due on Canvas</td>
<td>Ch. 13, 15</td>
<td>Quiz 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>No Wednesday classes (Friday classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>Student presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>Student presentations Last class</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dec. 18</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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Learning Management System: Canvas will be used extensively throughout the semester for course syllabus, assignments, announcements, communication and/or other course-related activities. It is the student's responsibility to familiarize themselves with Canvas and check it regularly. If you have difficulties accessing Canvas, please inform the instructor and Canvas Support (help@canvas.rutgers.edu). Canvas is accessible at canvas.rutgers.edu.

School of Public Health Honor Code: The School of Public Health Honor Code is found in the School Catalog (sph.rutgers.edu/academics/catalog.html). Each student bears a fundamental responsibility for maintaining academic integrity and intellectual honesty in his or her graduate work. For example, all students are expected to observe the generally accepted principles of scholarly work, to submit their own rather than another's work, to refrain from falsifying data, and to refrain from receiving and/or giving aid on examinations or other assigned work requiring independent effort. In submitting written material, the writer takes full responsibility for the work as a whole and implies that, except as properly noted by use of quotation marks, footnotes, etc., both the ideas and the works used are his or her own. In addition to maintaining personal academic integrity, each student is expected to contribute to the academic integrity of the School community by not facilitating inappropriate use of her/his own work by others and by reporting acts of academic dishonesty by others to an appropriate school authority. It should be clearly understood that plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can lead to sanctions up to and including separation from the Rutgers School of Public Health.

Students with Disabilities: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student must apply for Services by first completing a Registration Form with the Rutgers Office of Disability Services (ODS) at ods.rutgers.edu. The student will also be required to participate in an ODS intake interview and provide documentation. If reasonable accommodations are granted, ODS will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations which should be shared with your instructors as early in your courses as possible.

Commitment to Safe Learning Environment: The Rutgers School of Public Health is committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the School as a whole. Free expression in an academic community is essential to the mission of providing the highest caliber of education possible. The School encourages civil discourse, reasoned thought, sustained discussion, and constructive engagement. Provocative ideas respectfully presented are an expected result. An enlightened academic community, however, connects freedom with responsibility. The School encourages all students to disclose any situations where you may feel unsafe, discriminated against, or harassed. Harassment or discrimination of any kind will be not tolerated and violations may lead to disciplinary actions.

Reporting Discrimination or Harassment: If you experience any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. You may report such incidents to the RBHS Title IX Office or to the School of Public Health’s Office of Student Affairs. Rutgers University has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. If you experience any other form of discrimination or harassment, including racial, ethnic, religious, political, or academic, please report any such incidents to the School’s Office of Student Affairs. The School strongly encourages all students to report any incidents of discrimination or harassment to the School. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the School and potentially the University. For example, if you tell a faculty or staff member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty or staff member must share that information with the RBHS Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more
information about your options at Rutgers, please visit Rutgers Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance.

Graduate Student Computer Policy: Students are required to possess a personal laptop, no older than approximately two years, that must meet minimum requirements which may be found online at: sph.rutgers.edu/student-life/computer-support.html

Policy Concerning Use of Recording Devices and Other Electronic Communications Systems: When personally owned communication/recording devices are used by students to record lectures and/or classroom lessons, such use must be authorized by the faculty member or instructor who must give either oral or written permission prior to the start of the semester and identify restrictions, if any, on the use of mobile communications or recording devices.

Policy Concerning Use of Turnitin: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com (directly or via learning management system, i.e. Canvas) for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Students who do not agree should contact the course instructor immediately.

Withdrawal/Refund Schedule: Students who stop attending their course(s) without submitting a completed Add/Drop Course form will receive a failing grade. Furthermore, students dropping to zero credits for the semester are considered withdrawn and must submit a completed Leave of Absence form from the School of Public Health’s Office of Student Affairs. The School of Public Health refunds tuition only. Administrative and technology fees are non-refundable. You may find the Withdrawal/Refund Schedule on the School of Public Health website at: sph.rutgers.edu/academics/academic-calendar.html