

Course Title: *Social and Behavioral Health Sciences in Public Health*

Course Number: *PHCO 0505 (3 credits)*

Course Location: *Online*

Course Date & Time: *Asynchronous (May 23-July 6)*

Course Instructors: Rajita Bhavaraju, PhD, CHES
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Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Textbook: None

Required Readings/Resources: Required reading materials will include a combination of chapter texts, articles, websites, and other sources. All posted on Canvas.

Course Description: This course provides students with an overview of the concepts, principles, and methods of health education and behavioral science. Health education is introduced as one of the core public health functions. The course will review behavioral determinants of health and consider these in the context of behavior change theories. In addition, the course aims to provide students with an applied overview of needs assessment as well as program planning and evaluation methods, which are critical to implementing and sustaining effective public health programs.

Course Synopsis and Learning Methods: Class is structured for participatory and independent learning. As an online course, each week's module will comprise several presentations on that module's topics but not summarize the assigned readings. Time will be spent exploring, analyzing, discussing, critiquing, and synthesizing the issues through the online discussions and activities.

Competencies Addressed: The competencies addressed in this course include:

- 1) Describe the role of a health educator and behavioral scientist in addressing public health problems (*Assessed by Module Exam*);
- 2) Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health (*Assessed by Assignment 1*);
- 3) Apply basic theories concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice (*Assessed by Assignment 2 and Module Exam*);
- 4) Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health (*Assessed by Module Exam*);
- 5) Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors (*Assessed by Final*);
- 6) Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs (*Assessed by Final*);

- 7) Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content (Assessed by Final);
- 8) Select methods to evaluate public health programs (*Assessed by Final and Group Health Education Program*);
- 9) Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention (*Assessed by Group Health Education Program*); and
- 10) Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation (*Assessed by Assignment 1 and Health Education Program*).

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

- Articulate the role of health education/health promotion in addressing public health problems;
- Describe the role of health education agencies and critical stakeholders in the public health systems framework;
- Provide examples of the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems;
- Identify and apply basic health behavior theories and models to developing health education programs;
- Undertake methods of needs assessment and understand their importance in various populations;
- Describe methods for effectively planning and implementing health education programs;
- Think strategically about the use of communications to advance a health education program;
- Critically assess written health education materials; and
- Broadly apply methods for evidence-based program evaluation.

Course Requirements and Grading:

	DUE	GRADE VALUE
<u>Active Participation.</u> Our greatest class resources is you! Your thoughts, ideas, questions, and comments will enrich everyone’s learning experience, so please be actively involved in this online class. Be prepared by reading the course text and articles and participate in the online discussions and activities.	Weekly (see deadlines on Canvas)	15 points
<u>Personal Behavior Change Journal.</u> Each student will choose one health behavior that they want to change for themselves. Then each student will apply the knowledge and skills learned in the course to help them change their own behavior. More details will be provided on Canvas. There are 5 journals total + 1 reflective feedback)	Weekly (Due each Thursday, 11:59 PM)	6 points
<u>Assignment 1: Behavioral and Psychological Factors Affecting Health.</u> Each student will choose one leading cause of death (health problem) and a target population (age group) and develop a written document (not a paper) for laypeople explaining the behavioral and psychological factors (PRE factors) affecting that health problem. More details will be provided on Canvas.	June 1 11:59 PM	10 points
<u>Assignment 2: Application of Behavior Change Models.</u> Each student will choose one interpersonal theory and one intrapersonal theory and complete the assignment for each theory selected. More details will be provided on Canvas.	June 15 11:59 PM	10 points

Module Examinations. Two online modules exams will be based on readings and presentation materials. These online module exams will be timed and students must complete each of them independently but can use readings and notes. Students will be able to start the exam when they choose after it opens, but it must be completed by the deadline. Once started, the exam timer also starts.

June 10 and 24
(exams will open
the Sunday
prior)
11:59 PM 20 points

Assignment 3: Health Education Program. Students will choose a health topic and associated health behavior of interest and design a small-scale health education program for a population. More details will be provided on Canvas.

VARIOUS
DATES 24 points

DUE DATES:

- Topic Selection: June 3
- Goals and Objectives: June 17
- Evaluation Plan: June 22
- Program Proposal Presentation: July 5

Extra credit: Details to be posted.

July 5 5 points
11:59 PM

Final Examination: One final exam will be based on readings and presentation materials. The final exam will be open-book and not timed; however, students must complete the final exam independently, without the assistance of other classmates.

July 2 15 points
11:59 PM

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

*Grades will NOT be rounded.

Assignment Standards:

The Module Examinations and Final Examination are to be done INDEPENDENTLY, not with other classmates.

Lateness. Assignments turned in after the official collection period are considered late. Unless the instructor and student come to an arrangement at least one week before class, there is a 15%-point penalty for written work turned in late. Assignments are posted to Canvas by the due date. If you need to turn in something after the date due, please discuss it with the instructor IN ADVANCE when possible, to avoid point penalties.

Grammar/Spelling. If more than eight (8) gross punctuation, grammar or spelling errors occur in the written assignments, they will be returned with no grade. These can be resubmitted within one week with a five (5) point penalty or the student can accept a failing grade. There is a formal policy on plagiarism in the college catalog that will be the policy for the class.

Citations. Preferred citation style for references in written assignments will be American Psychological Association (APA). See Purdue’s Online Writing Lab for a quick APA refresher: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html

Course Materials. Readings, presentations, and assignments will be available on Canvas.

Margins and Page Limits Requirements. Refer to each assignment's instructions for margins and page limit requirements. A deduction of 10% will occur if assignment over the maximum page limit. Instructions will be available on Canvas.

Extra Credit. An extra credit opportunity will be posted on Canvas.

Special Circumstances During COVID-19

The School of Public Health recognizes that students may experience challenges or be negatively impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mental and emotional health toll from systemic racism, altered personal and professional obligations, and other crises existing at the moment in our local, national, and global communities. Students are encouraged to discuss these challenges and circumstances with their instructor, if they feel they may need additional support or temporary accommodations at the beginning or during this course. The course instructor may consider making reasonable temporary adjustments depending on the student's situation. If additional support is needed, students may reach out to the [Office of Student Affairs](#) (studentaffairs@sph.rutgers.edu) or any of the appropriate referral resources listed on the [Student Connect Canvas page](#).

Course Schedule: (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

DATES/ MODULE	COURSE TOPIC	LINK TO COMPETENCIES AND ASSESSMENTS	ASSIGNMENTS/ASSESSMENTS
May 23-29 1	Course Overview and Health Education Roles and Responsibilities in Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the role of a health educator and behavioral scientist in addressing public health problems (<i>Assessed by Module Exam</i>) Explain behavioral and psychological factors that affect a population's health (<i>Assessed by Assignment 1</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal behavior journal Post 1 (5/26) Discussion post (5/29) and reaction (5/31)
	Overview of Approaches to Behavior Change		
May 30- June 5 2	Introduction to Theory and Intrapersonal Level Behavior Change Theories: Health Belief and Transtheoretical Models	Apply basic theories concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice (<i>Assessed by Assignment 2 and Module Exam</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment 1 (6/1) Personal behavior journal Post 2 (6/2) Health Education Program Topic selection (6/3) Discussion post (6/5) and reaction (6/7)
	Interpersonal Level Behavior Change Theories: Social Cognitive Theory and Diffusion of Innovations		
	Community Level Behavior Change Theories: Community Organization and Social Support Networks		
June 6-12 3	PRECEDE/PROCEED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health (<i>Assessed by Module Exam</i>) Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention (<i>Assessed by Group Health Education Program</i>) Select methods to evaluate public health programs (<i>Assessed by Final and Group Health Education Program</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal behavior journal Post 3 (6/9) Module 1-2 Exam (6/10) Discussion post (6/12) and reaction (6/14)
	Needs Assessment		
	Program Planning		
	Program Implementation		
	Program Evaluation		
June 13-19 4	Communication Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate audience-appropriate public health content (<i>Assessed by Assignment 1 and Group Health Education Program</i>) Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors (<i>Assessed by Final</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment 2 (6/15) Health Education Program: Goals and Objectives and format (6/17) Personal behavior journal Post 4 (6/16) Discussion post (6/19) and reaction (6/21)
	Health Literacy		
	Critique of Educational Materials		

<p>June 20-26</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Cultural Awareness and Competence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs (<i>Assessed by Final</i>) • Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content (<i>Assessed by Final</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Education Program: Evaluation Plan (6/22) • Personal behavior journal Post 5 (6/23) • Module 3-4 Exam (6/24) • Discussion posts (6/26) and reaction (6/28)
<p>June 27- July 6</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Health and Risk Communication</p>	<p>Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation (<i>Assessed by Final</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective Journal Feedback: (6/30) • Final Exam (7/2) • Health Education Program: Program Proposal Presentation (7/5) • Extra credit (7/5)

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.

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/school-calendar.html