

MS Community Health Course Descriptions

Public Health Core

HLTH 600 –Social/Behavioral Determinants of Health (3 credits)

This course provides students with an introduction to health education with a focus on theory. Students will examine the behavioral, social, psychological, cultural, economic, and demographic risk and protective factors related to individual and population health and health disparities, especially those affecting rural populations. Students will learn to evaluate and communicate the relative importance of these factors in making health program decisions. Fall.

HLTH 605 - Biostatistics (3 credits)

This course provides a general overview of statistical methods commonly used in the analysis of health-related data. Topics include descriptive statistics, probability, statistical inference and use of statistical software. Fall.

HLTH 610 - Epidemiology (3 credits)

This course provides students with an introduction to epidemiology as the foundation of public health practice. Topics include disease transmission and progression, measures of morbidity and mortality, surveillance, screening, outbreak investigation, etc. Particular attention will be paid to the application of epidemiologic methods in rural communities. Fall.

HLTH 650 – Environmental & Occupational Health (3 credits)

This course is an introduction to the environmental (physical, chemical, biological) factors influencing health of communities in urban and rural areas as well as in the workplace. Topics focus on municipal water supply and disposal, ambient and indoor air quality, solid and hazardous wastes, food protection, vector control, pesticides, occupational health and safety, risk assessment, risk communication. Spring.

HLTH 655 – Health Policy & Administration (3 credits)

Using a multidisciplinary approach, this course examines organizational and public policy issues that influence the operation and outcomes of public health and health care services. Emphasis will be placed on influencing, formulating, and advocating for social and organizational policies that are culturally relevant and evidence-based. Students will learn the unique needs of public health and healthcare systems operating in rural areas. Spring.

Rural Health Focus

HLTH 620 – Current Topics in Rural Health (3 credits)

The course will examine current topics in rural health, including challenges unique to the delivery of health education services to underserved, rural populations around the globe. Focus will be on lessons learned from community strategies aimed at developing solutions to the problems of access and equity in these locations. Fall.

HLTH 625 – Research & Assessment (3 credits)

In this course, students will examine public health research methods, with a focus on measurement and needs assessment. Students will learn to design, implement and critique studies and to develop, use and assess measures. Spring.

HLTH 630 – Health Disparities (3 credits)

This course will provide students with an overview of how health status varies by SES, race, ethnicity, sexual identity, gender, age, and geographical location. In doing so, focus will be on the determinants of health disparities and public health efforts to improve status of people suffering from them, particularly for those living in rural areas. Fall.

HLTH 640 – Program Planning (3 credits)

Students will learn to plan for the design, development, and implementation of strategies to improve the health of individuals in rural and diverse communities. Topics include use of theory and needs assessment data in planning program strategies, methods and implementation. Prerequisites: 3.0 in HLTH 600 and HLTH 610. Spring.

HLTH 645 – Program Evaluation (3 credits)

In this course, students will learn to evaluate community-based programs and interventions. Topics include formative and summative evaluation, selecting appropriate outcome measures, designing process and outcome/impact evaluations and data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. Prerequisites: 3.0 in HLTH 605, HLTH 610 and HLTH 625. Fall.

HLTH 690/691 – Internship I/II (3/3 credits)

Under the guidance of the Internship Coordinator, students are placed in a public health organization or agency relevant to their specific needs and interests. Experiences may focus on research, planning, implementation, evaluation, or policy/administrative activities. Prerequisites: Completion of 24 hours with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the M.S. program. Fall, Spring.

Culminating Experience

HLTH 698 – Professional Project I (3 credits)

In this course, students will prepare a public health initiative/program proposal. Prerequisites: HLTH 600, 625, & 640 and completion of 24 credit hours with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the M.S. program. Fall.

HLTH 699 – Professional Project II (3 credits)

In this course, students will implement and evaluate the proposal they developed in HLTH 698. Students will prepare to present (orally and in writing) the results of the program or research project to the M.S. faculty committee. Prerequisites: Completion of HLTH 698 & HLTH 645 with a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the M.S. program. Spring.