

Introduction to Public Health Sciences (CHL5004H)

Course Outline

What is Public Health? What are the key issues in Public Health in Canada today? What do we know about them and how do we address them?

Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to provide a common grounding for incoming students across programs and degrees that are coming to the Dalla Lana School of Public Health with a wide range of skills, experiences, goals and questions. Before focusing on the specific skills and knowledge base in the student's chosen discipline, there is a need to develop a common understanding of the diversity of public health issues and the approaches to critical thinking in the different divisions.

Upon completion of this course, we hope that students will have more questions than answers and more questions than they started with. As students progress through the program in their chosen discipline, these questions will become more refined and focused, and grounded in the basic Public Health principles. The hope is that this course will offer students a greater understanding of the scope and interconnections of current Public Health issues.

This course will emphasize:

- Public Health values
- Critical thinking skills, in particular the recognition and evaluation of assumptions
- Consideration of health issues for groups of people rather than individuals
- The root causes of and/or determinants of health, disease and disability
- Contextual, social, political and life course influences on illness and wellness as well as on public health practice
- Key approaches, methodologies and problems in the field of Public Health
- focus on one area or approach while maintaining an appreciation for other perspectives and what they offer a given public health problem
- Learn about the DLSPH faculty, programs, and research projects
- Explore career possibilities after DLSPH

Format and Schedule

This is a two-week course (Monday August 29, 2011 to Friday September 9, 2011) consisting of a mixture of plenary lectures, thematic sessions, tutorial exercises and work periods. Assignments for the course are designed to be accomplished within the course's timeframe. A small amount of homework may be required.

Students are expected to attend **all four tutorials**. All students have been assigned to a tutorial group, which will be led by a faculty member (i.e. Faculty Tutor). Assignment lists will be posted on the bulletin board outside of the Graduate Department (6th floor) for the duration of the

course. On the first day of class, there will also be a list posted by the registration desk on the 6th floor, outside of room 610.

Assignments and Grading

This is a credit/no credit course (i.e. ungraded). **All assignments must be completed within the two-week period allotted to the class.** Work periods have been scheduled and homework is kept to a bare minimum.

a) Participation in the tutorials: 10%

b) Media Assignment: 30%

Deadline: Please submit to your Faculty Tutor by **Friday September 9, 2011 at 4pm**

Format:

- Critical analysis of a recent article on a public health issue
- The analysis should be based on the Analysis Framework used in Tutorial 3.
- The paper should be approximately 750 words in length, which includes a very brief summary (i.e. 100 words)

c) Outbreak Exercise: 30%

Deadline: Please submit to your Faculty Tutor by **Friday September 9, 2011 at 4pm**

d) 3 Short Self-Reflection Papers (10% each for a total of 30%)

Deadline: Please submit to your Faculty Tutor on **Thursday September 8, 2011 at 9am, the start of tutorial.**

This assignment is made up of three short reflection papers. Each paper should be no more than 2 pages (350-500 words) on one of the topics discussed on the three days without a tutorial: *Friday September 2, Tuesday September 6, and Wednesday September 7.*

There are a number of options available for the content of your reflection. For example, you can:

- reflect on a particular issue raised in the talks and describe how it applies to public health and more specifically, your program; or
- reflect on the talk that most affected you and why you think it was inspiring; or
- think of a public health issue you have encountered in the past and apply the new perspectives gained in one of the lectures devoted to it; or
- reflect on the talk that raised the most questions/ issues in you in relation to public health and list the questions.

Absences

Students are expected to attend all lectures and tutorials. In the event that you must miss a tutorial, please contact your Faculty Tutor as soon as possible. Students who are enrolled in HAD5010H or please identify yourselves to your Faculty Tutor at the first tutorial.