

MPH@GW Course Catalogue

The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health's online Master of Public Health program enables students to learn how to improve public health on local, national and global levels. Medicine, business and education are weaved into the curriculum to develop professionals with the unique skill set to address complex health challenges around the world.

The MPH@GW curriculum allows students to personalize their degree through elective offerings while emphasizing public health principles. The program requires 45 credits of coursework, including core public health courses, program-specific content, and experiences and electives.

Core Public Health Courses

BIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

PubH 6001, 2 credits

The goals of this course are to (1) provide an overview of current knowledge about the biologic mechanisms of diseases that are major causes of death and disability in developed and developing countries; (2) understand the relationships of genetic, environmental and behavioral determinants of health and disease within an ecologic context; and (3) provide opportunities to analyze, discuss and communicate principles of disease across the public health spectrum.

BIostatistical Applications for Public Health

PubH 6002, 3 credits

The course centers around the application of biostatistical principles to critical analysis of retrospective studies,

prospective studies and controlled clinical trials. Students learn selection, basic calculations and interpretation of statistical methods for detection of significant associations and differences.

Principles and Practice of Epidemiology

PubH 6003, 3 credits

This course will introduce the general principles, methods and applications of epidemiology – the basic science of public health. Topics covered in the course include: approach and evolution of epidemiology; history of epidemiology; outbreak investigation; measures and comparisons of disease occurrence in populations; major sources of health data in the United States and globally; analysis and interpretation of disease patterns; hypothesis development and testing; study design, including a discussion of all of the major epidemiologic designs; concepts of disease causation, screening, public health surveillance and critical evaluation and synthesis of research.

Environmental and Occupational Health in a Sustainable World

PubH 6004, 2 credits

This introductory course examines the connection between population health and exposures to chemical, physical and biological agents in the environment. Through the use of problem-solving frameworks, students will become familiar with key data and information sources, methodologies, and policy approaches that address the public health impacts of environmental and occupational health hazards. The course will integrate key concepts of environmental health with principles of sustainability to illustrate how

public policies and practices on the local, national and global levels affect population health.

POLICY AND MANAGEMENT APPROACHES TO PUBLIC HEALTH

PubH 6006, 3 credits

This course provides an introduction to principles, concepts and skills related to public health management and policy. The course focuses on management and policy approaches to public health at three different levels: the system, the organization and the group/individual levels. A third of the course will concentrate on system issues surrounding the organization; financing and delivery of health services in the United States, along with policy frameworks; and the legal basis for health policy interventions. A third of the course will examine policy and management at the organization level. The last third of the course will be dedicated to the group and individual.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL APPROACHES TO HEALTH

PubH 6007, 2 credits

This course examines the complex relationships between social context, behavior and health at both the individual and community levels. It identifies key social and behavioral aspects of health in the United States and throughout the world and presents theories that facilitate interventions aimed at improving health and well-being.

PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

PubH 6014, 2 credits

This course provides the opportunity for MPH students to apply the knowledge and skills acquired through

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their programs of study. A planned, supervised and evaluated hands-on experience that is relevant to the student's program is an essential component of a public health professional degree program. These opportunities can take place in a variety of agencies or organizations. Each program customizes Practicum Experience requirements to meet students' needs.

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

PubH 6015, 2 credits

The culminating experience requires a student to synthesize and integrate knowledge acquired in the program and apply it to a situation that approximates some aspect of professional practice. It is through this course that faculty evaluate the extent to which the student has mastered the body of knowledge and can demonstrate proficiency in the required competencies. Each program adapts the Culminating Experience requirements to meet the students' needs.

Prerequisite: Students are required to complete their core courses and complete, or currently be registered for, Practicum Experience (PubH 6014) prior to enrolling in the Culminating Experience course.

Program-Specific Courses

In addition to core courses, you will complete program-specific courses that focus on individual public health areas.

INTRODUCTION TO THE U.S. HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

PubH 6050, 2 credits

Students will be given an introduction to the systems that define and shape delivery of health services in the United States. Case studies and presentations

on major issues will develop an appreciation for dilemmas confronting policymakers, providers and patients. These challenges include balancing cost, quality and access. Students will investigate topics such as access and disparity, health care professions, facilities, and government health care programs. Policy changes that have had a major impact on American health care in the past century will be discussed and researched.

GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAM EVALUATION

PubH 6437, 3 credits

Students will gain skills in the fundamentals of program evaluation and monitoring methods. Students will also understand the evaluation aspects of major international health programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative. Country-specific case studies will be used as synthesizing tools to review major concepts and assess student knowledge of key concepts.

COMPARATIVE GLOBAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

PubH 6442, 2 credits

This course examines what national health systems are, how they differ and how they are performing. Health systems will be analyzed through four different lenses: Health Care Organization, Health Workforce Development, Health Care Financing and Health Policy Development. The course compares health systems and health reforms in seven regions of the world and draws lessons on how health system performance might be improved.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS

PubH 6500, 3 credits

In this course, students will develop skills to effectively plan, implement and manage programs that address public health problems for defined populations in a variety of settings.

INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

PubH 6503, 3 credits

Students will examine communication theories and methods used in promoting health and preventing disease. This course develops a theoretical background in communication and behavior science and practical communication development methods.

PRACTICAL DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

PubH 6052, 2 credits

This course will introduce students to the practical aspects of data set creation, data management, rudimentary statistical analysis, and tabular and graphical presentation of results. Through hands-on experience, students will learn how to perform tasks such as: creating codebooks, entering and cleaning data, and deriving new variables from existing ones. Material will be grounded in examples drawn from commonly encountered situations in prevention and community health, such as needs assessments and various forms of program evaluation.

Elective Courses

You may concentrate your electives in a particular area of public health that interests you, or select courses from a range of public health areas to design a personalized, holistic MPH education. You must complete all core and program-specific coursework prior to beginning elective coursework.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

PubH 6054, 2 credits

The course provides public health practitioners with tools and strategies for understanding, respecting and collaborating with community groups and organizations to promote healthy behaviors. Students will focus on the development of practical skills to harness resources available in a community. Students work in teams of two or three to complete assignments.

Recommended previous coursework:

Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health, Management and Policy Approaches to Public Health, Behavioral Approaches to Public Health, and Program Planning and Implementation.

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

PubH 6056, 1 credit

This course provides students with the opportunity to learn leadership lessons from a diverse group of leaders who are successful executives and entrepreneurs from corporate, government and nonprofit sectors. It will present the chance to discuss leadership styles, provide exposure to leadership theory, assist in the development of networking skills and prepare students for engagement with those in their personal network. The Leadership Seminar deliberately provides a unique setting for students to consider themselves as leaders in their personal lives and their careers.

RESEARCHING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

PubH 6058, 2 credits

This course will examine the intersection of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and public health, given the demonstrated impact that violence has on the health of the survivor,

her current and future children, and communities. Through readings, lectures and assignments, students will become acquainted with the set of methods for conducting research on VAWG. The class will build on methods learned in other public health courses and will cover ethics, qualitative and quantitative research design, and evaluation interventions specific to VAWG, culminating in the development of a full research proposal.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM PLANNING

PubH 6099, 2 credits

This course has been designed to give students a practical overview of key sexual and reproductive health challenges in low- and middle-income countries. Students will develop insight into how to design programs to address challenges such as family planning, abortion, maternal health and gender-based violence. The course is structured in three sections. Section 1 provides an overview of sexual and reproductive health conditions relevant for low- and middle-income countries. Section 2 discusses strategies appropriate to sexual and reproductive challenges. The final section covers monitoring and evaluation approaches to assess program effectiveness in this field. Students will complete assignments culminating into a project proposal designed to address a specific sexual and reproductive health problem in a country of their choosing.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

PubH 6128, 2 Credits

This course examines critical global environmental and occupational health topics – emphasizing the factors that contribute significantly to the global burden of disease. The primary focus of the course is on low- and middle-income countries. The course is participatory and

incorporates principles from behavioral sciences, development economics, risk assessment and epidemiology. The course tries to underscore potential solutions to environmental health problems, highlighting metrics used to measure impacts, as well as areas for future research.

GLOBAL WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROGRAMS

PubH 6132, 2 credits

This course is designed to introduce students to both development and disaster settings of low-income countries where contaminated water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene (WASH) are the cause of serious health problems. In this course, important concepts in WASH will be covered so that students can understand what is needed to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a WASH program or a WASH component of multi-sectoral programs. It emphasizes the need to develop effective, appropriate, accessible and affordable WASH interventions to reduce the global burden of disease.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

PubH 6133, 3 credits

This course introduces students to the social dimensions of climate change. The course will offer students an opportunity to become well versed in climate drivers and mitigation. We will explore how psychological, social and institutional factors function in all these domains. Synchronous sessions will be spent engaging in planned group exercises and group presentations. Additionally, we will dig deeply into the readings, so students should come to class well prepared to explore their understanding of each assigned reading.

RESEARCHING CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUMAN HEALTH

PubH 6135, 3 credits

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This course draws on the wealth of evidence compiled by the National Climate Assessment (NCA) to examine the ways that climate change is affecting human health. NCA themes are used to guide each week's topics, which include: widespread impact, the ecological context, oceans of change, infrastructure and exposure assessment. Risk assessment and environmental engineering serve as the disciplinary bases from which health evidence is examined. By reading and discussing research studies, students will emerge from the course knowledgeable about current climate change and more proficient in interpreting study findings.

INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

PubH 6136, 3 credits

This course explores the epidemiologic methods for the study of environmental and occupational health problems. Students will cover epidemiologic exposure assessment methods relevant to cohort, case-control, cross-sectional and cluster investigation studies. Other topics covered include survey and questionnaire design and the evaluation of biases and confounding.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND LAW

PubH 6335, 3 credits

Designed for students in health professions and law, this course examines how law can both promote public health and conflict with the constitutionally protected rights of individuals. It introduces the legal concepts that underlie the public health system and inform public health policy-making in the United States. Topics to be covered include the role of law in public health care and policy, governmental powers vs. civil liberties, and the regulation of public health. Also examined are major areas of public health activity such as health promotion, immunization, screening and

treatment, and the future of public health.

LAW, MEDICINE AND ETHICS

PubH 6368, 2 credits

This course explores legal, ethical and policy issues that arise in the biomedical arena. We address controversial and challenging questions concerning the definitions of life and death, the nature of personal identity, the requirements of justice, and the boundaries of liberty. We will draw on legal, medical and ethical/philosophical literature in examining these issues.

Prerequisite: PUBH 6335 or instructor permission.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, POLICY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

PubH 6390, 3 credits

This course will introduce students to fundamental concepts and issues related to prescription drugs, policy and public health. The course will review key policies and public health programs related to each stage of a prescription drug's life cycle, including congressional funding, public and private approaches to increase access to prescription drugs, and exceptions to international laws. Throughout this course, students will be asked to reflect on evidence-based approaches that address the public health challenges of prescription drugs. The assignments in the course are "real world" assignments that allow students to express their ideas and thoughts in forums beyond the classroom setting.

GLOBAL HEALTH FRAMEWORKS

PubH 6400, 2 credits

This course provides an overview of current issues in global public health, with particular emphasis on low- and middle-income countries. The course is designed to be both a first course for students entering the field of global health, as well as an update on current

policy issues for advanced students. While taking this course, you may identify topics in which you want to gain more knowledge and skills in courses such as health sector reform and organization and management of health systems, community health and primary health care, humanitarian assistance and refugee health, international nutrition, disease prevention and control, and social and behavioral interventions.

GLOBAL HEALTH DIPLOMACY

PubH 6450, 2 credits

This course introduces students to the concept of global health diplomacy, starting with historical case studies of how diplomacy has been used to advance health agendas and, conversely, how health issues have been used to improve diplomatic relations between countries. We introduce students to formal and informal health diplomacy and multi-stakeholder health diplomacy. Students will examine studies on how different countries have devised health diplomacy strategies. This course will challenge students to interpret health-related agreements, negotiate a position and assess the policy context while trying to advance a health agenda.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION IN MIDDLE- TO LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES

PubH 6452, 2 credits

This course will illustrate the ways in which social and behavior change communication (SBCC) influences behavior change in resource-constrained settings. The overall objective of this course is to demonstrate the ways in which behavior change and socio-cultural theories underpin the development of SBCC programs in politically, culturally and socially diverse settings. The course will make clear the importance of generating and applying high-quality evidence. "Real-world" SBCC

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interventions will be used to illustrate the challenges faced when implementing programs in settings that require the coordination of international donors, host country governments and implementing organizations.

PUBLIC HEALTH IN COMPLEX EMERGENCIES

PubH 6480, 2 credits

This course gives both historical and contemporary analyses of public health in humanitarian emergencies. It discusses the evolution of emergency relief in terms of its governance, its technical priorities and its effectiveness. It combines instruction on the technical aspects of public health interventions with in-depth consideration of why and how public health interventions should be implemented. The course discusses the roles of diverse humanitarian donors, representatives of the UN, nongovernmental organizations, technical agencies and the beneficiaries themselves. It reviews the actions of each, discusses their operational advantages and reviews their performance in select situations.

PREVENTING HEALTH DISPARITIES

PubH 6514, 2 credits

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of how social, political and economic factors contribute to disparities (e.g., racial, gender, geographical) in health care and how to use evidence-based approaches to address health disparities. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to understand and measure methods to address health care disparities. This course will review theoretical frameworks and methodological tools for students to conduct research and develop interventions. The main objectives for this course include gaining the skills to evaluate, discuss and develop the programs and policies designed to

address disparities in health care.

QUALITATIVE METHODS AND HEALTH PROMOTION

PubH 6530, 2 credits

This course provides an introduction to qualitative data collection and analysis for public health practice and research. The course presents the philosophy, goals and basic methods of qualitative research as applied in various public health disciplines. Data collection techniques explored will include in-depth interviewing, mapping, participant observation, focus groups and other systematic methods of qualitative data collection. After completing the course, students will be able to prepare an interview guide, conduct an in-depth interview and write up the results from a qualitative project. Students will also become familiar with working collaboratively with a multidisciplinary team.

SOCIAL MARKETING: THEORY AND PRACTICE

PubH 6571, 2 credits

This course focuses on the use of marketing principles and techniques to develop population-based health promotion and disease prevention programs. The emphasis is on learning how to incorporate marketing techniques to address the diverse range of issues and problems that are encountered in the modern-day practice of public health. Students in this skills-based course will study and work in teams to apply a range of marketing strategies to real-world situations.

MARKETING AND RESEARCH FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

PubH 6572, 3 credits

This course focuses on the use of marketing research techniques to better understand customers of public health programs, and thereby to improve

program design, implementation and effectiveness. A range of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be studied for their relevance to program planning, development, continuous improvement and outcome evaluation.

COST EFFECTIVENESS IN HEALTH PROMOTIONS PROGRAMS

PubH 6508, 3 credits

The course provides an introduction to the theoretical basis and practical skills needed to estimate the effectiveness, population impact and cost of health promotion interventions. Case studies and presentations allow students to apply these skills and to critically evaluate the assumptions and methods used to incorporate economic evaluation into public health. The course will address the need to place economic evaluation into the broader context of the implementation, equity and political considerations driving prioritization of public health promotion investments.

FUNDAMENTALS OF NUTRITION SCIENCE

PubH 6619, 3 Credits

This course provides the fundamental scientific principles of human nutrition. Students will describe food sources, recommended intake levels, biochemical roles, mode of digestion, absorption and metabolism, and special considerations for each macronutrient and micronutrient. Students will conduct nutrition assessment and study designs in nutrition science research. Students will also investigate the role of nutrition in chronic disease, and current topics in nutrition science will also be discussed in detail.

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