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American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

**School of Health Sciences
PBHE699
Public Health Capstone
3 Credit Hours
Length of Course: 16 Weeks
Prerequisite(s): Completion of all Public Health course work**

Instructor Information

Please refer to the Syllabus tab for your instructor's contact information and biography.

Course Description (Catalog)

This course will involve a major research paper or thesis option that demonstrates understanding of the program objectives. The research paper and thesis will demonstrate understanding of social science research methodology. A Research Manual with explicit guidance for the research paper and thesis option will be available. The student shall select their research paper or thesis option professor from designated APUS faculty. This course may not be taken until all other courses are COMPLETED and student has a 3.0 GPA.

Course Scope

This course is required for graduate students majoring in Public Health. This course will involve a major research paper that demonstrates understanding of the program objectives. The paper will be 50 to 100 pages and demonstrate understanding of social science research methodology.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, the student is able to:

- (1) Plan and execute a major research project in public health
- (2) Examine and apply specific knowledge in the discipline of public health

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- (3) Select (and utilize) effective (scholarly) online research techniques
- (4) Evaluate major schools of thought and principal published works in public health
- (5) Synthesize the knowledge gained during the master's of public health program
- (6) Utilize skills required of advanced graduate and professional practitioners in public health

Program Objectives (Competencies)

After completing this course, MPH students will meet the following program objectives (Competencies):

1. Assimilate knowledge and practice of community-based learning, research, and service into their professions.
2. Comprehend the interaction of behavioral, social, and physical environments on public health outcomes.
3. Apply evidence-based principles and a scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision making in public health.
4. Synthesize concepts associated with power, politics, and organizational performance in healthcare settings.
5. Summarize issues and concepts related to the impact of environmental health on our global society.
6. Explain how selected and widely employed social and behavioral science theories, models, constructs, and principles can be used to develop or improve programs to address major public health issues.
7. Critically review and apply evidence-based evaluation of published medical and public health literature.
8. Develop a framework, based on a mission, goals, and objectives and/or competencies, to evaluate public health programs for their effectiveness and quality.
9. Synthesize concepts associated with specific research tasks: hypothesis construction, conceptualizing terms, literature review, data collection, critical analysis, and communicate findings.
10. Examine the application of epidemiology to screening, infectious disease prevention, and policy.
11. Assess the moral and ethical precepts that underlie the goals of the public health profession.
12. Generate, analyze, apply, and interpret statistical data as related to public health problems and to further biomedical research.

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Course Delivery Method

This course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due by Sunday evening of the week as noted and include Forum questions (accomplished in groups through a threaded forum), examination, and individual assignments submitted for review by the Faculty Member). Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this 16-week course.

Course Materials

Students are responsible for the information contained in all required texts from their required, core courses in the MPH Public Health degree program.

Academic Writing Requirements:

The School of Health Sciences requires use of APA format and style and all students are encouraged to have a current copy of the *APA Publication Manual*. All written assignments are to be submitted in APA format style unless otherwise noted in the assignment directions.

Evaluation Procedures

Forum

Please join the forums each week. Replies must be posted in the week due and replies after the end of the each week will not be graded. The Forums are for student interaction and input should be submitted before the weekends in order to fully participate in the discussions. Students should demonstrate their own knowledge in the forums and avoid copying and pasting from websites.

Guidelines:

- Post the initial response to each forum by 11:55pm, ET, Wednesday.
- Initial responses should be no less than 450 words.
- Initial responses are to be original in content and demonstrate a thorough analysis of the topic.
- Reply to at least 2 of your classmates in each forum by 11:55pm, ET, Sunday.
- Replies to classmates should be no less than 200 words.
- Responses to classmates are significant to advance the forum.
- All forums can be accessed in the Forums section of the course.

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- Forum rubric is included in the forum section of the course
- Additional guidelines for week one forum introduction are included in the forum tab within the course
- More in-depth specific instructions for each forum can be found in the forum tab within the course.
- Late Forum posts receive a 10% per day late penalty. If your 2 peer responses are posted after the week is ended (after Day 7, Sunday) they receive a zero, in that the discussion is over and you cannot receive credit for participation in a discussion with others after the discussion week has closed.

Students will be responsible for providing a peer response posting for at least two (2) of their peers' postings, unless there are less than 3 students in the course, where only one (1) peer posting will be required. Your peer postings should challenge or expound upon at least one of the points made by your peer, and "I agree" does not constitute as an adequate response. As graduate students, you will be expected to provide comprehensive, relevant and well supported points in your assignments.

We all bring something unique to the classroom, from our understanding, our experiences, and our value systems. We honor and respect each person's diverse beliefs to help us see beyond the classroom to be the most effective individuals we can be. Therefore, we should all be respectful of others while expressing our viewpoints and opinions. Proper netiquette behavior is expected. Any inflammatory, demeaning or disrespectful language in a posting will be immediately removed from the discussion space.

Assignments:

Students will write their research papers following the guidance in the most current APUS *Masters Research Study Capstone Manual*. Currently, the most recent version is located in the resources section of the classroom. Students are responsible for following all of the guidance in the manual for writing their papers and not rely on this syllabus to provide all of the details relevant to the research paper requirement.

The student's work on a master's research study is carried out under the direction of an APUS professor who supervises both intellectual content and format of the study. Students are urged to consult with their professor early in the study process regarding both the subject and the general plan for investigation or creative activities. Designated style manuals in the department where the thesis is being conducted shall be used in all master's research studies. **The regulations included in this manual, however, supersede any style manual instructions.**

- Students should not use master's research studies previously filed nor out-of-date APUS regulations for format examples because changes are made from time to time. Students are

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responsible for following the requirements in effect when their master's research study is filed.

- A formal research proposal shall be prepared in accordance with the standards of the academic discipline. The formal proposal must provide a clear and lucid description of a question or problem and a proposed method of answering the question or solving the problem. Proposal drafting is considered a learning process and helps the students avoid oversights and possible mistakes. Guidance on the format of the proposal and a sample proposal are contained in Appendix 1 of the capstone manual. The proposal should explain the question or problem to be investigated and convince the research paper professor and department that the question or problem merits investigation. It should show that the student has read the relevant and recent literature on the subject and it should contain a list of materials consulted during the preliminary stages of research. In general, the research proposal should include background information related to the research topic, purpose of the research and investigatory procedures to be used. The formal proposal should **not** exceed **five (5) pages** (proposal title page not included). When the proposed research involves the study of human subjects and/or animals an outside review and approval of the proposed research is required.
- Research paper preparation entails a partnership between the student and professor who is responsible for directing the intellectual content and proper formatting of the paper. Research paper length and depth of research shall be in accordance with disciplinary standards, but should normally not be less than 50 double-spaced pages of text (10,000 to 12,500 words). Research paper formatting shall be directed by the professor. **(APA Format Required for this Course)** The research paper title page must be in compliance with the requirements for a thesis/research paper title page as shown in the Capstone Manual. The citation style manual used in the research paper will be the standard prescribed by the APUS department in which the student is completing the class. The student and professor shall coordinate the process for the student to submit and receive feedback on draft paper sections. The student is also encouraged to ask other APUS faculty and professionals and leaders in their field of study to read and provide feedback on draft sections where these faculty members and professionals may have special expertise. For example, the student's graduate research methods instructor may be asked for feedback on the research paper's research design.
- Once a final research paper manuscript is approved by the professor, the professor will then issue a final approval message containing a research paper grade. Research paper manuscripts will be graded based on the standards in the APUS research paper rubric attached in the classroom.

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- The final step in the research paper project is acceptance of the final manuscript by the APUS Online Library. The approved research paper manuscript will be submitted to the APUS Online Library by the department.
- There will also be 8 forum posts due during the 16 weeks. The specific requirements of each forum post are in the classroom forum area. These forum posts are required.
- More in-depth specific instructions for each assignment can be found in the Assignment tab within the course.
- **Assignments submitted late without advance notice will receive a 5% per day late penalty and will not be accepted for grading five (5) days past the due date.**

Course Grading Outline

Grading Instrument		Percentage of Final Grade
Forum (8 @ 100 pts each)	800 pts	25%
Introduction Forum Post	10 pts	
Student biography	50 pts	40%
Submission and Approval of Thesis Topic	100 pts	
Submission and Approval of Thesis Proposal	100 pts	
Submission of 1 st draft for review	100 pts	
Submission of 2 nd draft for review	100 pts	
Submission of 3rd draft for review	100 pts	
Submission and Approval of Final Thesis	100 pts	35%
TOTAL	1,460 pts	100%

Course Outline

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference the University's [grading scale](#).

Week	Topic(s)	Course Objective(s)	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)
1	Capstone Manual	CO-1 CO-3	Begin reviewing program objectives and focus on understanding the major theoretical frameworks and research methods material presented during your MPH program. Read the Capstone Manual 2016 Located in the resources area of the classroom. Concentrate on Chapter 2: Thesis Option and appropriate Appendices.	Submit your student biography in the assignment area. Post Forum 1- Introduction

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			Create a student biography that includes a list of all major papers written during the master's program, and list of all articles/books published. See examples in the Resources area of the classroom.	Forum.
2	Thesis Topic	CO-1 CO-2 CO-3 CO-5	Choose your Capstone Thesis Topic. Please see links in the Capstone Manual on choosing a thesis topic. How to pick a thesis topic? The Conceptual Conversation http://www.gradshare.com/advice.html?id=608	Submit the thesis topic for approval in the assignment area of the classroom.
3	Thesis Proposal	CO-1 CO-2 CO-3 CO-4 CO-5 CO-6	Once topic is approved begin drafting the formal thesis proposal.	Post Forum # 2
4	Thesis Proposal	CO (1 -6)	Submit 1 st draft of your thesis proposal; see Capstone Manual for details and formatting.	Research Proposal (draft) will be submitted for feedback and grading inside the assignment area. Multiple submissions may be necessary.
5	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Final thesis proposal should now be approved. Begin working on the thesis paper. Review Capstone Manual for formatting and requirements.	Post Forum # 3
6	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Continue writing your thesis paper.	Post Forum # 4
7	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Continue writing your thesis paper.	Post Forum # 5

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8	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Your thesis should be partially complete. All background and significance should be written. You should have an idea of your methods section; submit the entire draft for review and feedback.	Submit current 1 st draft of thesis in the assignment area of the classroom.
9	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Make revisions based on feedback and continue working on the thesis paper.	Post Forum # 6
10	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Continue writing your thesis paper.	Post Forum # 7
11	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Submit the entire draft for review and feedback.	Submit current 2 nd draft of thesis in the assignment area of the classroom.
12	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Make revisions based on feedback and continue working on the thesis paper.	Post Forum # 8
13	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Make revisions based on feedback and continue working on the thesis paper.	Post Forum # 9
14	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Submit the thesis for review and feedback.	Submit your 3 rd draft of thesis for review and feedback.
15	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Review feedback and finalize thesis.	
16	Thesis Paper	CO (1 -6)	Revise, review and make sure everything is complete and in the proper format for final grading.	Submit final thesis in proper APA format as outlined in the Capstone Manual.

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Policies

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked question about policies are listed below.

[Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Extension Process and Policy](#)

[Disability Accommodations](#)