Population Health
Course Syllabus

Course Information

- Course: 90833 – Population Health
- Offering: Mini III (6 units)
- Location: HBH 1007
- Time: Thursday 6:00 p.m. – 8:50 p.m.
- Dates: January 19, 2016 – March 9, 2016
- Instructor: Hank Safferstein, Ph.D., J.D., M.B.A.
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  Executive in Residence, Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse
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  Email: hsafferstein@gmail.com
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  Phone: 412.770.1644
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- Office hours: TBA

Prerequisites

None

Description

It is a societal imperative that we improve the quality of health for all Americans while reducing the cost. In so doing, we must move from a reactionary, disease driven, hospital-dominated model to one that creates the appropriate level of incentives and health delivery infrastructure so that patients embrace strategies to prevent disease and promote healthy living and behavior. What is Population Health and what role do individuals, executive branch agencies, and non-profits play in the protection and promotion of positive health outcomes? How are health outcomes assessed?

In this introductory course, we will examine the way health care delivery systems, public health agencies, community-based organizations, and many other entities work together to develop interventions to improve the health outcomes in the local, national, and global communities they serve. We will first learn to examine health issues from a population health perspective.
**Course Materials**
- Other materials will be available on Blackboard as PDF files

**Evaluation Method**
Student performance will be evaluated as follows:

- **Class participation:** 20%
  - Students will be expected to participate and in some cases lead portions of class discussions. Willingness to participate, participation and communication style and content will be assessed on an ongoing basis.
- **Journal:** 35%
  - Students are required to keep a weekly journal related to population health issues. Examples of relevant entries include: discussion of the Affordable Care Act, global health implications relating to current infectious diseases, pending or adjudicated cases, and pending or passed legislation directly impacting population health.
  - The journal should include a copy of the article, as well as a short discussion or summary of the article (approximately 1 page in length). The entry must be drafted in Word. Each entry must demonstrate the student’s understanding of the population health implications involved.
  - Two students will be called upon each week to lead a class discussion of one of their entries. Students will be randomly selected.
  - Journal entries will be uploaded to Blackboard each week, prior to the Thursday class, as well as printed and brought to class each week.
- **Quizzes:** 20%
  - Four quizzes will be given, each worth 5%
  - Each quiz will consist of 10 to 20 multiple choice questions
  - Each quiz will assess your knowledge of the readings assigned and discussed during the previous class.
- **Final Examination or Group Presentation:** 25%
  - The final exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and a hypothetical case study short essay.
  - At Instructor’s discretion, group presentations will be given

**Learning/Course Objectives**
1. Understand the challenges of creating a culture of wellness and the important role this plays in sustaining population health initiatives
2. Appreciate the promise of improving population health
3. Identify the various components that make up the current spectrum of care in the United States
4. Familiarize ourselves with the various policy initiatives at the Federal and State level directed at health promotion and wellness
5. What are the legal implications of health reform
6. Explain the political landscape for shaping the dialogue
7. Explore how can we evolve our current education system to support the tenants of population health
8. Understand the role of behavior change and behavioral economics to improve the health of populations
9. Describe the various health advocacy and assistance programs available to patients and how these are delivered
10. Understand the key health drivers, cost and care implications of moving from acute to chronic care models
11. Explain the concepts of quality and safety in the context of population health
12. Appreciate the powerful role of health information technology in shaping the population health experience
13. Learn about key metrics for decision support in making healthcare decisions
14. Explore several successful models of population health in action
15. Appreciate the role of marketing and communication in successfully implementing population health initiatives

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Class participation is absolutely critical. The learning process requires more than an Instructor speaking to you for 2 hours every week. I expect thorough preparation for class discussion and detailed entries in your journals. Most of all, I will do my best to make this class enjoyable and to provide you with the background and tools you will need to play several possible roles in the field of population health.

**Grading Scale**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99.0-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94.0-98.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91.0-93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88.0-90.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.0-87.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81.0-83.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78.0-80.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74.0-77.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>71.0-73.9%</td>
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A grade of A+ is reserved for truly exceptional performance.

**Course/Topical Outline**

- Will follow on Blackboard

**Plagiarism and Cheating Notice**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic misrepresentation are taken extremely seriously. Misrepresentation of another’s work as one’s own is widely recognized as among the most serious violations. The violation is clearly flagrant when it occurs as plagiarism on a required paper or assignment or as cheating on an examination, regardless of whether it is a take-home or in-class examination. The punishment for such offenses can involve expulsion from the program. There are many other ways in which a violation can occur.

*Academic Dishonesty:* Students are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards inside and outside the classroom. Cheating on exams and term papers (i.e., plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration) is obviously discouraged and will be treated appropriately. The usual penalty for violations is a failing grade for the particular assignment in question; however, in some instances, such actions may result in a failing grade for this course.