Choosing Your Social & Behavioral Sciences Courses

MPH Core Requirement Area Session
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MPH Social & Behavioral Sciences Core: Participating Departments

Health, Behavior and Society
International Health
Mental Health
Population, Family and Reproductive Health

Bloomberg School of Public Health
Why is there an MPH Social & Behavioral Sciences Requirement?

- Behavioral and psychosocial processes have broad significance and are fundamental to a comprehensive understanding of disease etiology as well as to promotion of health and well-being.

- The leading preventable causes of disease and death are behaviors such as smoking, alcohol and drug use, unhealthy diets, and unsafe sexual practices. As Rita Colwell, Director of the National Science Foundation said “there can be no question that the social sciences are an integral part of … the frontiers of discovery.”

- The social and behavioral sciences can help identify precursors (e.g., personality factors, coping styles, socialization processes, work and family stress, peer and community influences) to poor health practices that lead to their modification and prevention.
Social Context of Health Behavior

- These individual behaviors occur within a broader social context. A “new public health” is needed to understand this context.

- Many of these behavioral factors are driven by broad social structural influences such as socioeconomic inequality, racial/ethnic discrimination, and stigmatization.
MPH Competencies in the Social & Behavioral Sciences

1. Describe the psychological and sociological conceptualizations of health, health behavior, and illness

2. Describe and compare theories and principles of behavior change. Analyze their applicability to diverse populations and different types of health behavior problems, including interactions among biology, behavior, and environment

3. Describe the concepts of stress, coping and social support, their inter-relationships and assess their impact on health, health behavior, and illness
4. **Analyze and predict** the influence of major social structural divisions such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity on health, health behavior, and treatment of illness.

5. **Formulate** behavioral, communication, educational, advocacy, health promotion, and community-based participatory strategies for improving the health of communities and individuals, and preventing disease and injury.
6. Evaluate processes and outcomes of social and behavioral interventions on the health of communities, families, and individuals

7. Demonstrate a cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity for the implementation and evaluation of health behavior change programs
Social & Behavioral Sciences
Options (3-4 units, choose one)

Department of Health, Behavior and Society

- Psychosocial Factors in Health and Illness (410.613)
- Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health (410.616)
- Integrating Social & Behavioral Theory into Public Health Part I: Foundations (410.618)
- Program Planning for Health Behavior Change (410.620)
- Introduction to Persuasive Communications: Theories & Practice (410.650)
- Health Literacy: Challenges and Strategies for Effective Communication (410.651)
Social & Behavioral Sciences Options (cont.)

**Department of International Health**
- Social and Behavioral Foundations of Primary Health Care (221.688)
- Health Behavior Change at the Individual, Household & Community Levels (224.689)

**Department of Mental Health**
- Social, Psychological, and Developmental Processes in the Etiology of Mental Disorders (330.661)

**Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health**
- Life Course Perspectives on Health (380.604)
Social & Behavioral Sciences, 10 Options
(Complete one of the following)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Online</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>410.616</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social &amp; Beh Aspects of Public Health</td>
<td>Summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>380.604</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Life Course Perspectives on Health</td>
<td>1st term</td>
<td>1st term</td>
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<tr>
<td>410.620</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Program Planning for Hlth Behavior Change</td>
<td>2nd term</td>
<td>4th term</td>
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<tr>
<td>221.688</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Social &amp; Behavioral Foundations of Primary Health Care</td>
<td>Summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>224.689</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hlth Beh Change at the Indiv, Household &amp; Community Level</td>
<td>2nd term</td>
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<tr>
<td>410.650</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Introd to Persuasive Communication</td>
<td>2nd term</td>
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<tr>
<td>410.613</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Psychosocial Factors in Health &amp; Illness</td>
<td>3rd term</td>
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<tr>
<td>410.651</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Health Literacy: Challenges &amp; Strategies for Effective Communication</td>
<td>3rd term</td>
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<tr>
<td>330.661</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social, Psych, and Dev Processes</td>
<td>3rd term</td>
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## Course Format & Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>410.616</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, seminars</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>410.618</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, seminars</td>
<td>Written mid-term and final exams, small-group projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410.620</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, seminars</td>
<td>Class participation, needs assessment and a program plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380.604</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, seminars</td>
<td>Class participation, written assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410.650</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, discussions, exercises</td>
<td>Exam, final project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221.688</td>
<td>Online lectures, readings, bulletin board discussions, live talks</td>
<td>Homework, term paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>224.689</td>
<td>Readings, lectures, discussions, case studies, &amp; exercises</td>
<td>Five 2-page discussion papers, final written assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>410.651</td>
<td>Case studies, hands-on experiences</td>
<td>Assessment and revision of a health education pamphlet, development of a short, behaviorally focused message to be communicated in a comic strip, working in a small group, create a health education material suitable for a low literate audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330.661</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, seminars</td>
<td>Class participation, oral presentation, research paper, final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410.613</td>
<td>Lectures, readings, seminars</td>
<td>Paper</td>
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How will I choose the best option for me?

- Broad introduction to Social & Behavioral Sciences?
- Social and psychological factors affecting health?
- Health literacy and communication strategies?
- Implementing health behavior change programs?
- Life-course approach to health and illness?
- Other?
Social & Behavioral Aspects of Public Health (410.616) – Dr. David Jernigan, Summer Institute

- **Broad introduction** to key social and behavioral concepts that apply to public health
- Focuses on how processes within psycho-social-cultural structures of society affect different spheres of public health, including type and distribution of illness and disease, modes of intervention used to prevent illness, disease, and organization of health services at the national, international, and community levels
- No prerequisites
- Evaluation via final exam
Integrating Social & Behavioral Theory into Public Health: Part I: Foundations (410.618) – Dr. Lawrence Wissow, 1st term

- Provides students with the basic theoretical and conceptual knowledge needed to understand health behavior and evaluate interventions at multiple, levels
- Using an ecologic framework, integrates theoretical perspectives from anthropology, geography, sociology, and psychology
- Evaluation via written mid-term and final exams, small-group projects
Program Planning for Health Behavior Change (410.620) - Dr. Andrea Gielen, 2^{nd} term and 4^{th} term

- Students get exposure to health promotion program planning frameworks, behavior change theories, examples of health promotion programs in clinical, school, and community settings (domestic)

- Students complete a needs assessment/program plan for a health behavior change program

- No prerequisites
Course focuses on understanding “health” rather than “disease” with a focus on the population level, rather than on individuals.

Builds the social and behavioral sciences into a multiple determinants framework that is applied to understanding disparities in health by SES, gender, age, ethnicity, etc. Also integrates biological, environmental, and genetic aspects.

Takes a lifespan perspective, tracking how determinants of health change across the lifespan and how health at one stage of life is related to health at other stages.
Social & Behavioral Foundations of Primary Health Care (221.688) – Dr. William Brieger, Summer term

- Provides participants with the knowledge and skills needed to diagnose (understand) community, individual, and organizational behaviors and change processes in developing countries and in cross-cultural settings as a foundation for planning culturally appropriate primary health care (PHC) in the context of the ecological model of health.

- Targeted at people who have worked in developing countries and with culturally diverse populations, and who want to find a link between theory and practice.

- Some previous introductory level social science courses would be helpful but not required.

- Offered online twice a year. Participants need to have taken Introduction to Online Learning.
Psychosocial Factors in Health & Illness (410.613) - Dr. Carl Latkin, 3rd term

- Introduces students to alternative biomedical models of health
- Focuses on health psychology and health behavior change; also covers methods of measuring social and physical environments, and on mental health and substance abuse
- No special background needed; some students have backgrounds in social sciences and for others it is their first course in this area
Health Behavioral Change at the Individual, Household & Community Level (224.689) - Dr. Peter Winch, 2nd term

- Applies concepts and theories drawn from medical anthropology, psychology, and sociology to programmatic examples from Latin America, Africa, and Asia concerning care-seeking treatment of sick children, insecticide-treated mosquito nets, sexual risk behaviors, intimate partner violence, and other behavior change challenges in public health.

- Intended for students wanting to learn how to implement behavior change interventions in diverse cultural settings.

- Uses many case studies.
Introduction to Persuasive Communications: Theories and Practice (410.650) - Dr. Rajiv Rimal, 2\textsuperscript{nd} term

- Exposes students to prevailing theories of persuasion, particularly attitude and behavior change, and the role that communication strategies play in health behavior change; also focuses on applying behavior change theories in designing, implementing, and evaluating health interventions
- Will study how theories are selected, used, and tested in persuading people to engage in specific behaviors
- Prior knowledge about theory is not required, but an interest in social psychology will be helpful
Health Literacy: Challenges and Strategies for Effective Communication (410.651) - Dr. Debra Roter, 3rd term

- Discusses approaches to the assessment of key health literacy skills linked to health outcomes
- Explores techniques and approaches for the assessment and creation of print material especially appropriate for low literate audiences
- Evaluation focuses on assessment and revision of a health education pamphlet, development of a short, behaviorally focused message to be communicated in a comic strip, and working in a small group to create health education material suitable for a low literate audience
- No prerequisites
Social, Psychological, and Developmental Processes in the Etiology of Mental Disorders (330.661) - Dr. Catherine Bradshaw, 3rd term

- Exposes students to major childhood and adult mental disorders and the leading theoretical models (including risk and protective factors) associated with them
- Addresses modes of intervention feasible for prevention and treatment
- Goal is to inspire students to base their own [research, clinical] work on theories
- Course is appropriate for a range of students
Human and Family Development Across the Lifespan (NR100.589) (2 cr)

This course provides an overview of major concepts, theories, and research related to human development from childhood through late adulthood and family development across the lifespan.

School of Nursing students only

Contact jhuson@son.jhmi.edu/410-955-7548 for further information
If you have questions about the MPH Social & Behavioral Sciences requirement

Contact us at:

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THANK YOU!