I. Course Description

The seminar is designed to help students develop the skills necessary to complete their Master's Project. The goal is to have students finished and ready to present a high quality project in May, 2014. However, by demonstrating you have acquired the skills covered, it is possible to be very successful in the course even without being done the project in the Spring semester. It is also possible to do poorly in the course (if you do not complete the assignments at the level expected), yet present your project in the Spring. This is a skills building course – your grade is based on your performance on the assignments.

II. Course Prerequisites

Students should take the course in the academic year that they intend to graduate; for most full-time students, this is the second year in the program. Permission to take the course at other times is at the discretion of the instructor (written permission required).

III. Course Goals and Objectives

The central goal of the course is to produce high quality projects that are complete in time for graduation in the Spring.
To help meet these goals, the objectives of the course emphasize the skills necessary to:

- Identify an important issue in health services and/or public health
- Develop a systematic methodology to address issue
- Organize research ideas/arguments/findings
- Be a critical thinker
- Present research in writing and orally
- Work under a deadline
- Conduct a comprehensive literature review
- Critically review others’ research
- Use proper citation/referencing in formal papers; avoid scientific dishonesty
- Write with numbers, figures and tables
- Act professionally & collegially in a challenging environment characterized by mutual respect

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

Seminar/discussion

V. Course Text and Readings

The required readings for this course are the “Master’s Project Guide” (available in class and on course website), class notes and material provided during class (will be posted on website). There is a Moodle site associated with this course – use the Moodle site!

Recommended resources include:


The Center for Writing, University of Minnesota, http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.htm

University of Minnesota Libraries: www.lib.umn.edu (check out workshops on search engines, Refworks etc).

VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

Fall Term*

| Week 1 (Sept 4): | Introductions; course goals; roles and responsibilities; review of types of project; choosing a research topic |
| Week 2 (Sept 18): | Developing a research topic; beginning the literature search |
| Week 3 (Oct 2): | Developing the proposal; guidelines for presentations |
Week 4 (Oct 23): Presentation of research topics
Week 5 (Oct 30): Presentation of research topics
Week 6 (Nov 6): Developing an outline/structure
Week 7 (Nov 13): Individual Meetings
Week 8 (Dec 4): Final presentations from class of 2012/2013

*Note a special IRB session will also be scheduled at a time convenient for students who need IRB approval.

Spring Term (TBA): Hold open Wednesday 3.35-5.30

Week 1 (Jan 22): Narrowing the literature search; effective searches and organization; Academic Honesty and Plagiarism
Week 2 (Feb 5): Questionnaire development/Survey Design/Focus Groups/Key Informant Interviewing
Week 3 (Feb 19): Tracking Progress; Solving Problems (Individual Meetings)
Week 4 (Mar 5): Writing Skills; Revising
Week 5 (Mar 26): Structuring the Methods Section; Preparing posters
Week 6 (Apr 9): Structuring the Results and Discussion Sections; Revising
Week 7 (Apr 23): Presenting and interpreting numbers; effectively presenting information with tables and figures; Preparing for Presentations
Week 8 (May 7): Preparing for Presentations; Catch-up; Review; Questions and Answers

VII. Evaluation and Grading There are separate grades for the Fall and Spring Semesters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments for Fall Semester</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-paragraph topic statement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept. 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 page description of topic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Research Questions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Oct. 23 &amp; 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Meeting and Progress Report</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nov 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 page outline/draft</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### Assignments for Spring Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism Assignment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15 Page Draft</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Feb 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised Timeline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Report</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 Page Draft</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>March 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Day Presentation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>April 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 Page Draft</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>April 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 14,15,16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due-dates may change depending on the progress of the class – any changes will be announced in class and posted on the website. **A student has two weeks from the date that assignments are due to hand in an assignment to be graded or to submit a revision to be re-graded. After that date, one mark will be taken off for each day the assignment is late.**

Presentations and individual meetings/progress reports will not be re-graded and cannot be handed in late.

### Grade Ranges

- A = 95-100 points
- A- = 90-94 points
- B+ = 87-89 points
- B = 83-86 points
- B- = 80-82 points
- C+ = 77-79 points
- C = 73-76 points
- C- = 70-72 points
- D: 60 – 69
- F: < 60

### Course Evaluation

Beginning in fall 2008, the SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval: [www.sph.umn.edu/courseval](http://www.sph.umn.edu/courseval). The system will send email notifications to students when they can access and complete their course evaluations. Students who complete their course evaluations promptly will be able to access their final grades just as soon as the faculty member renders the grade in SPHGrades: [www.sph.umn.edu/grades](http://www.sph.umn.edu/grades). All students will have access to their final grades through OneStop two weeks after the last day of the semester regardless of whether they completed their course evaluation or not. Student feedback on course content and faculty teaching skills are an important means for improving our work. Please take the time to complete a course evaluation for each of the courses for which you are registered.

### Incomplete Contracts

A grade of incomplete "I" shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented illness or hospitalization, death in family, etc.), the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an "I" requires that a contract be initiated and completed by the student before the last official day of class, and signed by both the student and instructor. If an incomplete is deemed appropriate by the instructor, the student in consultation with the instructor, will specify the time and manner in which the student will complete course requirements. Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year (or earlier if designated by the student’s
For more information and to initiate an incomplete contract, students should go to SPHGrades at: www.sph.umn.edu/grades.

**University of Minnesota Uniform Grading and Transcript Policy** - A link to the policy can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

**VIII. Other Course Information and Policies**

**Grade Option Change** (if applicable)
For full-semester courses, students may change their grade option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester courses) can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

**Course Withdrawal**
Students should refer to the Refund and Drop/Add Deadlines for the particular term at onestop.umn.edu for information and deadlines for withdrawing from a course. As a courtesy, students should notify their instructor and, if applicable, advisor of their intent to withdraw.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course after the noted final deadline for a particular term must contact the School of Public Health Office of Admissions and Student Resources at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

**Student Conduct Code**
The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

**Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom**
Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html.

**Scholastic Dishonesty**
You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html.
The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: [http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html](http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html). If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class—e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

**Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences**

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html).

**Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials**

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html).

**Sexual Harassment**

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf).

**Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action**

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf).

**Disability Accommodations**

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the DS website, [https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/](https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/).

**Mental Health and Stress Management**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: [http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu](http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu).
Academic Freedom and Responsibility: for courses that do not involve students in research

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost. [Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]

* Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".

The Division of Health Policy and Management - Prohibition against Plagiarism

There is a general assumption that students engaged in graduate level work understand the concept of plagiarism and the prohibitions against it. In general, it is considered unacceptable behavior to use the intellectual work of others without giving the source proper credit for the ideas. It is even less acceptable to use another person’s direct words and appear to claim them as your own.

This type of unacceptable behavior can take several forms:

1. Taking the work of others directly and claiming it as your own. This would involve directly quoting someone else’s work and providing neither references to acknowledge the source nor quotation marks.
   This and subsequent categories include using material from non-print sources such as the web.
2. Taking the work of others directly and failing to show that it is a direct quote through the use of quotation marks. In this case, you might provide a reference but use someone else’s words without using quotation marks.
3. Using someone else’s ideas (although not their specific words) and failing to reference the source. This might include paraphrasing someone else’s writing.
4. Having someone else write a work for you and claiming it as your own.

Part of the problem with plagiarism may stem from a failure to appreciate what level of work is expected of a graduate student. It is not sufficient to simply recite the work of others, even of your professors. You are expected to know that material and then to use it to synthesize new ideas, weaving ideas together to produce a rational and coherent argument. It is permissible and encouraged to use citations, but simply reciting the work of others is not sufficient. It is never acceptable to claim the work of others as your own.

Selective use of quotations may help to bolster an argument but excessive quoting suggests a failure to master the material. Your work should reflect an understanding of the topic.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, you should talk with your faculty advisor or you might want to look at the following web site:
http://www.dartmouth.edu/%7Esources/about/what.html

For Additional Information:

University of Minnesota Center for Writing is an excellent resource for all types of writing support, including definitions and examples of plagiarism. See: http://writing.umn.edu/tww/index.htm and click on Preventing Plagiarism.

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