HPM 625
INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND AGING

Fall 2010, Wednesday 1-3:50
School of Public Health Room C1

Course Syllabus

Instructor

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159 School of Public Health  Office hours: Thursday 12-2 (beginning 9/16)

Course Description

This course will provide an overview of issues related to public health and aging. We will begin with an overview of the demography and epidemiology of aging, and discuss how aging is viewed in society today, including myths of aging and stereotypes of aging, and briefly review theories of aging. The course will continue to cover the concept of successful aging, the implications of chronic illness and disability for public health, health promotion for older adults, and other topics central to public health in an aging society.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the basic demographic trends in the aging population, and describe the major health problems and issues for older populations and explain their implications for public health practice.
2. Identify the components of usual versus successful aging, and identify the main behavioral, social and environmental factors that influence successful aging.
3. Explain the role of chronic diseases and disability in the lives of older adults, and describe their implications for public health.
5. Compare public health, aging network, and health care services for older adults and describe available resources for older adults.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of dementia and its implications for families and society.
7. Identify the key components of end of life care.
8. Describe how issues related to older adults are addressed in the media.
9. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of a special health issue for older adults.
Blackboard

This course has an associated Blackboard page, which can be accessed through MyUAlbany or at https://blls.its.albany.edu/webct/logon/831572142001. All handouts, assignments, Powerpoint slides and readings will be available on the Blackboard site. In addition, Blackboard will be used for informal online discussions associated with the “Aging Issues Around Us” discussion assignment (see description below). Any announcements that I want you to be aware of between class sessions will also be posted on the Blackboard site.

Readings

Except for session 1, there are readings assigned for every class session. All readings should be completed before the class session for which they are assigned. See the reading list for further details.

Evaluation

Class participation (15%) – This includes attending class, arriving on time at the beginning of class and after breaks, completing all assigned readings before class, and contributing thoughtfully to class discussions and small group activities.

Aging Issues Around Us Discussion Assignment (20%) – To raise awareness of the relevance of aging issues to daily life, and to connect what we are learning to other aspects of our lives, each student will identify, and present to the class for discussion, three different examples from “the outside world” that are relevant to topics in this class. These examples can be from the media (news articles, advertisements, TV, etc.), other courses, internships, and other activities in your daily lives. Each student will briefly present one of the three examples at the beginning of a class session. The other two examples are to be shared with the class in an online Blackboard discussion. In addition, every student is expected to contribute substantively to at least five online discussions started by others. Each discussion “presentation” will be worth 5% of your grade, and your participation in others’ discussions will be worth the remaining 5%.

Homework Assignment #1 (15%) – What does it mean to age successfully? The purpose of this assignment is to develop your own understanding of the concept of aging successfully. This brief essay will be based solely on one’s own thoughts and brief informal interviews with other people. This assignment is due by the start of class on September 29.

Semester Project (40%) and Project Proposal (10%) – Each student will develop a semester project that meets their professional goals and interest in public health and aging. A brief proposal for the project must be turned in no later than the start of class on October 6. Additional details about this project and the project proposal will be handed out separately. The completed project is due by noon on December 10. Each student will briefly share their projects with the rest of the class in a 10 minute presentation at the end of the semester.
General Course Policies

If you need to miss class, please inform the instructor ahead of time. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed in class and to make arrangements for any assignments due. **More than 3 missed classes during the semester will automatically result in loss of half of the total class participation points for the semester**, in addition to any points lost as a result of late assignments not arranged with the instructor (see below).

**Assignments submitted any time after the specified due date and time will result in 5 points deducted from the assignment/paper grade for each day it is late, unless previous arrangements are made with the instructor.** (I.e. any assignment submitted within 24 hours of its due date/time will receive -5 points, between 24 and 48 hours, -10 points, etc.). If an extenuating circumstance arises and you think you might not be able to meet a deadline, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor ahead of time to discuss possible alternatives.

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to adhere to the guidelines of academic honesty as outlined in the UAlbany booklet “Community Rights and Responsibilities”. Collaboration on assignments intended to be completed independently and plagiarism will ordinarily result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or course. Because plagiarism is a serious issue, and sometimes occurs unintentionally due to lack of knowledge about the correct way to cite others’ work, you are expected to be familiar with the material in the tutorial on plagiarism provided by the University library (http://library.albany.edu/usered/ncplaga/index.html).
### Introduction to Public Health and Aging

#### Class Schedule

| Session 1 | Sept 1 | Introduction and Overview  
| Demography and Epidemiology of Aging  
| Images and Stereotypes of Aging |
| Sept 8 | No class |
| Session 2 | Sept 15 | What Happens as We Get Older?  
| Theories of Aging  
| The Biology of Aging |
| Session 3 | Sept 22 | The Burden of Chronic Illnesses  
| Chronic Illness Self-management |
| Session 4 | Sept 29 | Disability  
| Public Health, Aging Services and Health Services |
| Session 5 | Oct 6 | Successful Aging |
| Session 6 | Oct 13 | Health Behaviors and  
| Health Promotion Interventions among Older Adults  
| Physical Activity |
| Session 7 | Oct 20 | Nutrition and Obesity |
| Session 8 | Oct 27 | Falls Prevention |
| Session 9 | Nov 3 | Alzheimer’s Disease and Caregiving |
| Session 10 | Nov 10 | End of Life Care |
| Session 11 | Nov 17 | Vision Loss (with Dr. John Crews from CDC) |
| Nov 24 | No class – Thanksgiving break |
| Session 12 | Dec 1 | Student Presentations of Final Projects |
| **Session 13** | **TBD** | Semester wrap-up: movie night and potluck |