Health Disparities Certificate Program
Course Requirements

The Health Disparities Certificate aims to provide an in-depth knowledge of the causes and issues in health disparities as well as strategies for eliminating disparities while improving students’ multicultural competence and leadership skills. The interdisciplinary certificate is offered to individuals working towards or currently in leadership positions in health services, policy, promotion, or provision. This program provides an opportunity for preparedness and enhancement of the capacity to address and influence health disparities in students’ individual communities and service organizations.

The program requires the completion of **12 graduate credits**. Students must take four 3-credit graduate courses offered within two of the following Schools of Public Health, Social Welfare or Education. One course on health disparities is required, HHPM 620; the other three courses can be selected from three separate areas: multicultural practice in psychology or social work, community partnerships, and public health leadership. An individual student may substitute one or two of the courses listed below (except the one required course, HHPM 620) by specific authorization from the student’s assigned Certificate advisor.

For a full list of course offerings, please visit [https://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/h_hpm.htm](https://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/h_hpm.htm)

**Required Course:**

**HHPM 620 Health Disparities among Vulnerable Populations (School of Public Health)**

**Course description:**

The goal of this course is to understand what contributes to health disparities in the United States. The course will discuss underlying assumptions of group definitions, why particular groups may experience disparities and individual versus ecological approaches to health in our current health system. This course will also cover theoretical frameworks for understanding and addressing health disparities in health promotion. The course is geared for students to critically think about and discuss health disparities and use the knowledge gained through the class in their work as public health professionals and researchers. Readings will be multidisciplinary; from the fields of public health, psychology, political science, disability studies, and gender studies.

This course has been recently updated and will incorporate current events into a study of health inequities. We will examine and study the literature for interpreting inequities such as stigma, social identity, individualism in science, how data is interpreted to support racist and sexist views, Weathering Hypothesis and social determinants of health. Students will be able to delve deeper into topics of their own. In the past, students have explored racism in education, LGBTQ+ issues in health care, mental health disparities and treatment of people with disabilities.

**Please note:** Some of these courses have prerequisites, which will be waived for students completing the Health Disparities Certificate, as endorsed by the respective Deans of the Schools of Public Health and Social Welfare.

**Select one of the following courses on multicultural practice:**

**RSSW 746 Cultural Diversity in Social Work Practice** *(School of Social Welfare)*

**Prerequisites:** SSW 621, 631, and 651 are prerequisites for this course. Students who have not taken these courses must have the instructor’s permission to enroll in this course.

**Course description:**
Social work practice with clients of diverse cultural backgrounds. Includes similarities and differences in practice among clients from selected cultures and sensitivity to the experiences of discrimination, alienation, oppression, and exclusion.

**ECPY 627 Multicultural Perspectives: Counseling Theory and Practice (School of Education)**

*Prerequisites:* ECPY 601, 602, 604, 608, 612 and 630 are prerequisites for this course. Students who have not taken these courses must have the instructor's permission to enroll in this course.

*Course description:*

Provides more advanced study of specialized counseling approaches and techniques, including application of counseling techniques with diverse populations.

**ECPY 750 Multicultural Counseling (School of Education)**

*Prerequisites:* Doctoral student in counseling psychology or consent of instructor.

*Course description:*

This doctoral seminar is designed to explore selected theory and research in the area of multicultural counseling. Topics emphasized include research on the influences of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and social class on the counseling relationship.

**Select one of the following courses on community partnerships:**

**RSSW 792 Community Building* (School of Social Welfare)**

*Prerequisites:* SSW 621, 631, and 651 are prerequisites for this course. Students who have not taken these courses must have the instructor's permission to enroll in this course.

*Course description:*

This course introduces community definitions and theories; examines the characteristics and functions of communities; identifies community-based services and resources; examines the role of community systems in change and development; and focuses on community building as an effective social work intervention model. Action and experiential learning are emphasized. The social worker is viewed as a professional facilitator and advocate assisting in developing community leadership, participation, enhancement, and empowerment.

**HHPM 535 Community Based Public Health (School of Public Health)**

*Course description:*

The goal of this course is to learn a community-based perspective of public health and health promotion, stressing an understanding of social determinants of health. The course will include readings about the importance of working with diverse communities, concepts and best strategies for assessing community assets and needs, as well as approaches for community based public health interventions and strategies for collaborating with community members to improve the health of the community. Some topics that will be covered include; coalition building, community assessment approaches, community health workers, social capital, empowerment, and participatory health promotion approaches. The course is geared for students who are interested in working at community-based organizations, government agencies, advocacy organizations, and in community based research.

**Select one of the following courses on public health leadership:**

**HHPM 571 Public Health Leadership (School of Public Health)**

*Course description:*

This course is designed to provide students an opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective public health leadership. The student will gain an understanding of the attributes and skills/behaviors associated with successful public health leaders and the abilities to lead communities
toward improved health status. Students will gain an understanding of various leadership styles and an appreciation for a diversity of leadership styles within an organization/work group/community. Each student will develop a strategic plan for personal and professional leadership growth and development.

**RSSH 793 Leadership in Human Service Organizations (School of Social Welfare)**

**Prerequisites:** SSW 621, 631, and 651 are prerequisites for this course. Students who have not taken these courses must have the instructor’s permission to enroll in this course.

**Course description:**
This course is an introduction to the theories and models of leadership that are used in human service environments. The primary objective of the course is to explore leadership as a subject central to human services administration. Special emphasis will be placed on the leadership for the delivery of social services.

**Additionally, the following courses have been developed specifically for potential use in the Health Disparities Certificate. Please contact the instructors to learn when the course may next be offered, and please contact Dr. Allison Appleton for a determination on which Certificate domain(s) the course(s) you are interested in may count toward.**

**LCS 518 US Latino/a Health, Inequality and Wellness – Dr. Alejandra Bronfman**

**Course description:**
This course will explore health disparities in US Latino populations, with particular focus on New York State and/or the northeastern US, encompassed within a transnational conceptualization of the problem. US Latinos are the fastest growing minority population. According to the New York State Health Equity Report, Hispanics/Latinos continue to experience increased risks for certain chronic conditions, lack access to quality health care, and experience poorer health outcomes than their Non-Hispanic/Latino White counterparts, yet research on health and inequality is sparse. The course will critically assess sociocultural and political foundations of health disparity and wellness and consider ongoing strategies designed to address health disparities. Students will design a research project that engages health disparities of Latino/as in local, transnational contexts.

**PAD 653/453, HHPM 651 Public Health Politics and Policy: Global and Domestic Perspectives – Dr. Ashley Fox**

**Course description:**
This online course explores how policy is used as a tool to further public health goals and examines how political processes shape health policy and health outcomes both domestically and globally. Additionally, it examines major political factors that shape health policy decision-making and the effect that policy decisions have on either increasing or decreasing inequalities in health among social groups. The course is designed to introduce students of policy and politics to concepts and debates specific to the field of public health. Likewise, the course will introduce public health students to public policy concepts and approaches. The course will draw on readings and examples both from high-income and low- and middle-income countries and will explore similarities as well as differences in theories of the policy process pertaining to each. Specific questions include: What are the major health challenges facing developed and developing countries today? Why are some health conditions more likely to get on the public agenda than others? What types of policy responses are available to reduce health inequalities and why do some health policies actually exacerbate inequalities? Why is it so hard to incorporate clinical and economic
When should public health campaigns employ fear and scare tactics versus positive social messaging?

**HPM 627 Program Development in Health Promotion - Dr. Christine T. Bozlak**

Prerequisites: HPM 525 is a prerequisite for this course. Students who have not taken HPM 525 must have the instructor’s permission to enroll in this course.

Course description:
This course provides an introduction to the application of theory and evidence to the development of health promotion interventions. Students will be introduced to the major steps of program planning and will apply these steps to design their own health promotion intervention. The course takes an ecological approach to health promotion, and also gives students the opportunity to critically evaluate a variety of health promotion interventions targeting change at the individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy levels, and to examine how behavioral science theories have been applied to the design of these interventions.

**HPM 592 Health Communication & Health Disparities – Dr. Jennifer Manganello**

Course description:
Health disparities are constructed according to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geographic region, age, sexual orientation, and disability. This course is designed to provide an overview of the major issues and topics related to communication and health disparities, as well as communication interventions to reduce health disparities. The course will introduce theories concerning health communication and identify how communication patterns (such as those related to interpersonal and organizational communication) can lead to or help reduce health disparities. The course will also look at media influences including advertising, as well as explore the ways that technology (such as the internet) can create or lessen health disparities. Cultural competency and health literacy will be addressed as well.

**RSSW 781/HHPM 660 Poverty, Behavioral Health, and Health Policy – Dr. Julia Hastings**

Course description:
Poverty, Behavioral Health, and Health Policy is designed to provide students with an understanding of how social factors contribute to racial/ethnic, socioeconomic and gender disparities in health, mental health, and care across the life course in a variety of related agency settings. We will examine how dynamic relationships such as interpersonal forms of discrimination and social ties may contribute to disparities in health and mental health. We will also examine the ways in which neighborhood and community context, as well as inequalities in socioeconomic status materially shape health and access to social services. Individual characteristics such as acculturation and client preferences may also contribute to disparities and will be explored.

**COM 610 Communication Technology, New Media, and Health – Dr. Archana Krishnan**

Course description:
This course examines theory and research on communication technology and new media and their influence on health outcomes. As healthcare costs have increased exponentially and the culture of medicine has shifted to an individual-centric care model, technology can be viewed as a tool of change. Digital ubiquity also has repercussions for addressing health disparities as communication technologies can diminish traditional barriers to accessing and utilizing healthcare. Students will examine current perspectives on technology-based health initiatives with a focus on addressing health disparities. They will be assessed on critical thinking, research methodology, and writing skills through weekly reading assignments and a research proposal.