

**The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Public Health Sciences
Health Services Administration & Policy**

COURSE INFORMATION

PUBH 5307: Health Services Admin & Policy
CRN: 21484
Term: Spring 2026
Delivery Method: In-person
Meeting Day and Time: Monday – 17:30 to 20:20
Location: HSSN 135

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Alfonso Rojas-Alvarez, Assistant Professor

Written Communication: **Email:** UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

Office Location: College of Health Sciences, 408

Office Hours: Please email for days and times for virtual or F2F office hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course includes discussion of essential public health services, health care systems, and relevant legislation and policies related to public health. It also outlines the public health policy process, from proposal to enactment, at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as examines organizational skills and basic principles, theories, and practices of administering public health programs in voluntary and governmental agencies.

This course is designed in an in-person format. Students are expected to engage with reading and viewing materials provided on Blackboard prior to each class session to facilitate informed and active participation. The course includes a variety of assessments to gauge understanding and progress, through a class project that will be the basis of evaluation. Additionally, students will develop their presentation skills through an oral presentation. This diverse range of activities aims to enhance learning and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Title: Essentials of Health Policy and Law – Fifth Edition

Authors: Sara E. Wilensky, JD, PhD; Joel B. Teitelbaum, JD, LLM

ISBN:9781284247459

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignments for this course are assessed according to the following guidelines:

GRADING SCALE

- A (> 90%-exceptional graduate-level performance)
- B (80-89%-average graduate-level performance)
- C (70-79%-below average graduate-level performance)
- D (60-69%-unacceptable graduate-level performance)
- F (< 60%-very unacceptable graduate-level performance)

GRADING COMPONENTS

- Discussion Board and Class Participation: 30%
- Mid-Term Paper – Public Comment: 25%
- Final Paper: 30%
- Presentation: 15%

Type	Expectations	Due Date
Class project mid-term assignment (25% of Grade)	<i>Public Health Comment</i> <i>Content/structure:</i> Topics and structure provided in class/on BB <i>Format:</i> Times New Roman, 12-point font, normal page margins <i>Length:</i> 2-3 pages, excluding title page, tables, figures, other visuals, and references	March 15; 11:59 PM
Final class project policy brief & presentation (45% of Grade)	<i>Policy Analysis Paper from Public Health Comment</i> <i>Content/structure:</i> Topics and structure provided in class/on BB <i>Format:</i> Times New Roman, 12-point font, normal page margins <i>Length:</i> 5 pages, excluding title page, table of contents, tables, figures, other visuals, and references Oral Presentation During Live Lecture 15-minute presentation & 5 minutes for Q&A (20 minutes in total) using PowerPoint or equivalent software	April 23; 11:59 PM (Presentation slides) May 7 th ; 11:59 PM (Final paper)
Discussion Board (30% of Grade)	<i>Content/Structure:</i> Every week, students will be asked to add 1 comment or question and 1 response to another student to each weekly discussion board. <i>Length:</i> Minimum 100-150 words.	Unless otherwise specified, discussion board comments or questions are always due on THURSDAYS at 11:59 PM and responses to another student are due on SUNDAYS at 11:59 PM.

**Specific grading criteria for mid-term and final projects will be shared on BB*

GUIDANCE FOR DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS

- 1) During online sections, students will be asked to add 1 comment or question and 1 response to another student to each weekly discussion board.

- 2) **Unless otherwise specified, discussion board comments or questions are always due on THURSDAYS at 11:59 PM and responses to another student are due on SUNDAYS at 11:59 PM. Late discussion board posts will be subject to point reduction.**
- 3) Comments, questions, and responses need to demonstrate some level of engagement with the class materials. For instance, it is not sufficient to just agree/disagree with another student, but in addition, a reasoning behind the agreement/disagreement would be required. Similarly, if you are asking a question, please explain what led you to ask this question. Otherwise, there are no specific length requirements for a post, as long as they meet these requirements. Failing to meet these requirements will result in a lower score for your discussion board posts.

DEADLINES AND POLICY FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Due dates for assignments and papers are specified in the course calendar and on BB. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable and may be subject to point reduction. **Should you require an extension for an assignment for a legitimate reason, please contact me ahead of time to ask for an extension.**

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Some course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Technology Support](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

COURSE COMMUNICATION: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt. When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name.

As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It's possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider your audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.

- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance on the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to creating a community of learners. Participation is determined by completion of the following activities:

Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of lecture content and assignment requirements.
Participating in engaging discussion with your peers on the discussion boards and/or during live lectures.
Completion of mid-term paper, final paper, oral presentation, and other written assignments.

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY

According to UTEP Catalog, “At the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. A grade of “W” will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See Policies and Regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. Therefore, if I find that, due to non-performance in the course, you are at risk of failing, I will drop you from the course. I will provide 24 hours advance notice via email.

OR

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registration and Records Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

DEADLINES, LATE WORK, AND ABSENCE POLICY

Assignments

- Writing assignments will be due on Sundays at midnight (11:59 PM) via Blackboard. No late work will be accepted if the reason is not considered excusable.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed

a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF SUBMITTING WORK IN CASE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a backup. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through Blackboard, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your backup document as a last resort.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI prohibited

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is ***not allowed*** for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#).

AI allowed only with prior permission from instructor

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or [DALL-E](#), is ***only allowed with approval from the instructor BEFORE being used***. Without permission, you will be expected to think creatively and critically to complete assignments without assistance from these tools.

If given permission to use any of these tools, students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). “Text of your query.”
Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>

A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

AI allowed with proper acknowledgement

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is **only allowed with proper attribution given for its use.**

Students must properly cite and give full credit to the program used upon submission of every relevant assignment. For example, text generated using ChatGPT must be cited:

Chat-GPT(version). Date of query (year/month/day). “Text of your query.”
Generated using OpenAI. <https://chat.openai.com/>

A short paragraph describing how the tool(s) was/were used for the assignment must be included.

Using AI for brainstorming

Some AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, can be beneficial during the early brainstorming stages of an activity, and you are welcome to explore them for that purpose. However, keep in mind that AI-generated ideas are not your own and may hinder your ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. It is also important to remember that these technologies often “hallucinate” or produce materials and information that are inaccurate or incomplete—even providing false citations for use.

That said, you are not allowed to submit any AI-generated work in this course as your own. If you use any information or materials created by AI technology, you are required to cite it like you would any other source. Consider how this will affect your credibility as a writer and scholar before doing so. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#).

Free use of AI without acknowledgement


Use of AI technologies or automated tools, including generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is permitted in this class. Students must include a short paragraph, with each relevant assignment, explaining how the tool was used.





PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

EDGE ADVANTAGES

This course is designed to equip students with essential Edge Advantages that contribute to their professional and personal development. Through the completion of course requirements and assignments, such as team projects, presentations, and essays, students will develop the following Edge Advantages:

	Problem-Solving	Assignments will challenge students to identify and address complex issues using innovative and analytical approaches.
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	Communication	Class discussions and written assignments will improve students' skills in articulating ideas clearly and persuasively in both oral and written forms.
	Social Responsibility	Through community engagement opportunities and course content that encourages ethical considerations, students will foster a sense of responsibility towards their community and society at large.
	Confidence	By actively participating and successfully completing assignments, students will build self-assurance in their abilities to tackle academic and real-world challenges.
	Critical Thinking	The course's emphasis on analysis and synthesis of information will strengthen students' abilities to think critically and make informed decisions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Learning Objectives:

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

- 1.1 Describe the core functions of public health.
 - 1.2 Describe the 10 essential public health services and their financing.
 - 1.3 Describe public health policy development core functions.
 - 1.4 Public health history, philosophy, and values
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- 2.1 Describe public health emergency preparedness program capabilities.
 - 2.2 Discuss application of the Incident Command System and organization during an infectious disease emergency response.
 - 2.3 Apply principles of risk communication to inform the community.
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- 3.1 Describe and differentiate public and private public health funding sources.
 - 3.2 Describe major federal agencies that fund public health.
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- 4.1 Discuss management practices in the administration of state/federal public health funded essential programs/services.
 - 4.2 Discuss leadership and management in public health practice.
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- 5.1 Describe the Rational Policy model process; identify and discuss a local ordinance, state and federal current laws that impact the health of the local community.
 - 5.2 Apply Rational Policy Model in the development of a draft public health related policy.
 - 5.3 Discuss the local health department's procedures for public health advocacy.
 - 5.4 Analyze and discuss a current local ordinance/public health policy.
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- 6.1 Be familiar with local Community Health Assessment & Improvement Planning (CHA/CHIP).

7.1 Discuss scope of work necessary to address a prevention service gap identified in the CHA/CHIP.

8.1 Describe the role and responsibilities of local public health surveillance, disease reporting, and law enforcement authority programs.

9.1 Be familiar with national public health accreditation.

9.2 Discuss Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Domains and Standards of public health practice.

10.1 Review and discuss the local health department’s application of quality improvement practices (charter, goals, and objectives).

10.2 Discuss benefits of root cause analysis in quality improvement.

11.1 Assess the effectiveness of local public health risk management communication with the public and main stakeholders during an emergency response.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

- 1) Written assignments.
- 2) Textbook/other reading assignments.
- 3) Oral presentations.
- 4) Mid-term and final paper.
- 5) Discussions requiring active participation during lectures and on discussion boards.

The learning goals and assessment strategies meet the following MPH foundational competencies:

MPH Foundational Competencies		
	Learning Objectives	Assessment Strategies
Public Health & Health Care Systems		
Public health history, philosophy, and values	1.1, 1.4	1, 2, 5
Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Planning & Management to Promote Health		
Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2	
Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities’ health	2.1, 2.2, 2.3	1, 2, 3, 5
Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs	4.1, 4.2	1, 3, 4, 5
Policy in Public Health		
Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence	3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Propose strategies to identify relevant communities and individuals and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes	5.2, 5.3, 5.4	1, 3, 5
Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity	10.1, 11.1	4, 5
Systems Thinking		

Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than standard narrative	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
MPH Hispanic and Border Health Concentration Competencies		
	Learning Objectives	Assessment Strategies
1. State and discuss the current major communicable, non-communicable, and environmental public health threats in Hispanic and border communities.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3	1, 2, 4, 5
2. State the basic principles of prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable disease; discuss how these principles can be modified to accommodate cultural values and practices in Hispanic and border communities.	4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4	1, 3, 4
3. Identify and access public health data on communicable and non-communicable disease in Hispanic and border communities (including vital stats and disease registries; health and nutrition surveillance data; census data; national surveys).	10.1, 10.2, 11.1	1, 3, 4, 5
4. Identify, access and summarize the content of one or more current initiatives relevant to border health (e.g., Healthy Border 2020; US/Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership; Paso Del Norte Regional Strategic Health Framework).	3.1, 3.2, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1	1, 2, 3, 5
5. Identify health disparities, and approaches to achieving health equity.	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1-5.4, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

This course includes assessments related to the following learning outcomes (check all that apply):

Learning Outcomes		Yes	No
1.	Students will be able to plan health promotion strategies, interventions, and programs.	X	
2.	Students will be able to implement health promotion strategies, interventions, and programs.		X
3.	Students will be able to conduct evaluation and research related to health promotion.	X	

Tentative Class Schedule and Activities
Course Schedule

Date	Topic/Projects	Assignments	Due date
Week 1 Jan 26	Welcome & Introductions Overview of Syllabus, Course Topics & Format Research Design	1. Read syllabus and review BB folders and assignments	1. Prior to class
Week 2 February 2	What Is Public Health? Understanding the Role of and Conceptualizing Health Policy and Law Public health history, philosophy, and values Core Functions of Public Health & 10 Essential Services	1. Textbook Ch. 1,5 & materials on BB 2. Initial topic choice for class project 3. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. Feb 8, 11:59 PM 3. Feb 5 (comment) & Feb 8 (response)
Week 3* Feb 9	Policy and Policymaking Law and the Legal System Overview of the Health Care System	1. Textbook Ch. 2,3,4 & materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. Feb 12 (comment) & Feb 15 (response)
Week 4 Feb 16	Individual Rights in Health Care & Public Health	1. Textbook Ch. 6 & materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation 3. Public Comment dissemination matrix	1. Prior to class 2. Feb 19 (comment) & Feb 22 (response)
Week 5 Feb 23	Structural and Social Drivers of Health and the Role of Law in Optimizing Health	1. Textbook Ch. 7 & materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. Feb 26 (comment) & Mar 1 (response)
Week 6 Mar 2	Understanding Health Insurance Government Health Insurance Programs: Medicaid, CHIP, and Medicare	1. Textbook Ch. 8, 10 & materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. Mar 5 (comment) & Mar 8 (response)
Week 7 Mar 9	Health Economics in a Health Policy Context	1. Textbook Ch. 9 & materials on BB 2. Public Comment due 3. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. Mar 15, 11:59 PM 3. Mar 13 (comment) & Mar 15 (response)
<i>Spring Break (Mar 16-20) – Enjoy your break!</i>			
Week 9* March 23	Global Health	1. Materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class

			2. Mar 26 (comment) & Mar 29 (response)
Week 10 March 30	Health Reform in the United States US Health Care System in a Global Context	1. Textbook Ch. 11 and materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. Apr 2 (comment) & Apr 5 (response)
Week 11 April 6	Healthcare Quality Policy and Law Public Health Emergency Preparedness	1. Textbook Ch. 12,13 and materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. April 9 (comment) & April 12 (response)
Week 12 April 13	Health Advocacy	1. Textbook Ch. 15 & materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. April 16 (comment) & April 19 (response)
Week 13 April 20	Health Policy and Administration Recent Developments and Updates	1. Materials on BB 2. Discussion board participation	1. Prior to class 2. April 23 (comment) & April 26 (response)
Week 14 April 27	Oral presentations for policy analysis & in-class discussion & feedback	1. Presentation Slides	1. April 23, 11:59 PM
Week 15 May 4	Oral presentations for policy analysis & in-class discussion & feedback	1. Final paper	1. Thursday, May 7th, 11:59 PM

Please note, this calendar is tentative and subject to potential changes/additions.

COURSE RESOURCES: Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources or visit https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html.

