

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
College of Health Science
Health Science Program
CRN 21210 - HSCI 3311 – Introduction to Epidemiology
Spring 2016
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Office hours: Fridays 8:30 – 13:00
Class period: Monday 9:00 – 11:50AM
Location: Health Science/School of Nursing Building 211

PURPOSE:

This syllabus is considered a contract between you and the professor. It is an agreement that includes the "rules" to be observed during the course, both by students and the instructor. Although this syllabus can change, no changes will be made without notice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will provide the students with an understanding of the concept of epidemiology, the application of statistical tools and biomedical information. Students interested or considering being involved public health, public health education, community service, policy-related jobs or pursuing a research-related career should enroll in this course. The teaching method is based on Problem based learning (PBL), which can include, but not be limited to:

1. Introductory lectures
2. Problem solving group work
3. Student discussions, presentations and exercises
4. Movies and other visual media materials

Using this technique will enable the student to apply the gained knowledge to solve common and practical problems. In this regard, the course will emphasize a critical thinking approach to learning. A critical thinking approach takes the view that a student's knowledge is not passively absorbed from an instructor's lectures. In contrast, critical thinking assumes students will create knowledge in their own mind by actively thinking about the material. It is going to be crucial that you prepare for each lesson, reading and reviewing the material before coming to class. Your instructor will use class time to overview the assignment, clarify difficult concepts, expand your knowledge of selected topics, and to **challenge you intellectually**. This means that very possibly more material will be covered in class. Not necessarily your instructor will teach straight out of the book. Instead, the readings will be used as a springboard for classroom activities and discussions. In addition to your readings, in-class lectures will provide additional information that will

be testable. Handouts and other additional reference materials will be posted and made available through Blackboard.

RESTRICTIONS:

In order to register for this course, the student must have completed and passed the following prerequisite courses: HSCI 3308 (Disease Characteristics, Prevention, and Control), MATH 1320 (Mathematics for Social Sciences), and PSYC 1303 (Statistical Methods). For authorization, send an email with your general information to: gabmejia@utep.edu.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

After completing the course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of epidemiology
2. Use the epidemiologic process to address health care problems.
3. Describe the methodological considerations for epidemiologic investigations and population surveillance.
4. Describe epidemiological measures of health status, mortality, morbidity, vital statistics, and health status indicators, including behavior and its application.
5. Be critical on epidemiological information
6. Plan for effective risk reduction communications with the community of interest.
7. Identify limitations of screening programs
8. Understand the importance of epidemiological information in decision making
9. Practice his/her ability to critically review research-based materials related to public health issues.
10. Practice and increase his/hers oral and public presentation abilities necessary in future health care professionals.

COURSE OUTCOMES/COMPETENCIES:

1. Assess needs, assets and capacity for health education (Objectives 1, 2, 3 & 4).
2. Conduct evaluation and research related to health education (Objectives 3, 4, 5, 7 & 9)
3. Serve as health education resource person (Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8).
4. Work individually and within a group-setting to produce an undergraduate-quality level report based on a systematic literature review (Objective 8).
5. Communicate effectively in written and electronic modes of communication (Objectives 8 & 9).

TEXTBOOK:

Introduction to Epidemiology
By Ray M. Merrill & Thomas C. Timmreck
Publisher: Jones & Bartlett, (Latest Edition)

WORKBOOK:

Principles of Epidemiology Workbook
By Ray M. Merrill

Publisher: Jones & Bartlett

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to read all assigned readings, meaning all chapter of the textbook and additional posted materials.

Group work will be an integral part of the course. Groups will be formed during the first week of the course. During this time period students will be given the option of freely assembling and joining one until a set deadline; however, if a student does not join a group by the set date, the instructor will assign the student at random to a group. More details on group work can be found in the **Grading Criteria** section.

Additionally, all students are required to:

- Have access to a computer that connects to the Internet and a working e-mail account (miners.edu account). Other e-mail systems should not be used for this course. If you do not own a computer, you can make use of several computer labs on campus.
- Be able and have the means of accessing the online course by way of Blackboard. The course is only accessible online by logging in to your “My UTEP” portal at <http://my.utep.edu> and accessing the Blackboard tab that will show your entire course list. For information on how to log in you can contact the UTEP Help Desk at (915) 747-5257, or check their information page at <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=63402>.
- Have some abilities in using a mouse and keyboarding, and how to use a Web browser to access the internet, email and Blackboard.
- Be able to perform Internet searches, use e-mail, chat, and discussion boards.
- Be able to study independently, be self-disciplined, and have good study and time management skills.
- Have knowledge of how to use word processing, spreadsheet, visual media software, as well as capability to open pdf-type files. Usually, on-campus computers will provide the necessary software and connectivity. However, if you plan not to work on campus, it is your responsibility to make sure you have the software and connectivity requirements.
- Have the means to store all assignments and if necessary turn them in electronically (disks, flash drives, etc.).

GRADING CRITERIA:

Completion of course will require that the student fulfills the following:

- a) Attendance (see correspondent sections for details).
- b) Completing two main writing assignments and oral presentation on them (see correspondent sections for details):
 1. Systematic Review Article
 2. Secondary analysis of existing data

- c) Online examinations: Three (3): 1 mid-term, second partial & 1 final (optional; comprehensive).
- d) In-class and homework assignments (12)
- e) Extra credit assignment (s) & instructor's prerogative points (IP-points)

Attendance

The student must comply with at a minimum of 80% attendance. In order to be credited with attendance for the day, students must be physically present throughout the duration of each class. Tardiness and/or leaving early have an effect on attendance. Please refer to the attendance criteria on "COURSE POLICIES" section for more details.

Writing assignments:

Writing Assignment #1: Systematic Review

For this project, you and your colleagues will be writing a short *systematic review* article, which will be worth 0-100 points. You will present your results two ways: as a written report and in-class presentation. The deadline to complete the project is before spring break. However, please to Appendix "Writing Assignment #1: Systematic Review" for further instructions. **No presentation is required.**

Writing Assignment #2: Secondary analysis of existing data

For this assignment, you will be downloading an existing individual-level dataset from a trusted organization (such as the U.S. CDC or the WHO), select an epidemiology-related study question that you can explore with the data, conducting basic statistical analysis, and writing up your findings which will be worth 0-100 points. **You will present your results two ways: as a written report and in-class presentation.** The deadline to complete this project is before the last week of class. However, please to Appendix "Writing Assignment #2: Secondary analysis of existing data" for further instructions.

Online examinations

One two-and-a-half hour midterm examination and **one** (1) final comprehensive examination will be given for the Spring-2016 Semester. **All examinations will be in the assigned classroom.** Examinations may consist of combination of multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. The exams can also be conceptual in nature. They are designed to test your ability to think about the material, not your memory. Midterm examination is worth **100 points**. The final comprehensive examination is also worth **100 points** and it will be scheduled during final's week. There is no re-scheduling of the final test.

Examination Schedule		
Examination type	Point value	Date
Midterm examination	100	2/29
Final written examination	100	5/9
Total	200	

In-class & homework assignments

Every group will read and answer/solve the assigned homework chapter questions from the workbook (one set per group). **NO POINTS WILL BE AWARDED FOR THIS ACTIVITY.** However, not turning it in will represent a **10-point deduction** for every group member.

Active participation

Students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. This includes attentive listening. A second component of active participation is asking questions for clarification of confusing information and expressing opinions. You can also make use of email, chat, or online discussion groups for these purposes. **Active participation is the best method for obtaining IP extra-credit points.**

Instructor Prerogative (IP) and Extra-credit Points

A maximum of 25 IP extra points can be awarded based on class preparation, class participation, and professional behavior (e.g., attitude, teamwork, class presence, etc.) throughout the semester **at the instructor's discretion.** Additionally, students can be awarded additional extra points for turning in correct and complete assignments. The amount of extra points to be awarded will be notified by the instructor once the assignment is given.

Final grading

The final score is based on the accumulation of points throughout the course; the total that can be earned taking on account two examinations, group project, and quizzes in this course is **550 points**, plus extra credit and instructor prerogative points.

Type	Point value
Midterm examination	0 -100
Systematic Review Paper -Writing Assignment	0 - 100
Systematic Review Paper – Oral presentation	0 - 50
Secondary analysis of existing data – Writing assignment	0 - 100
Secondary analysis of existing data – Oral presentation	0 -50
In-class & homework	-120 - 0
Final examination	0 - 100
Instructor prerogative points (non-mandatory)	0 – 25
Other extra-credit	0 – 25
Total	550

The translation of points earned to a letter grade is defined with the following rubric:

- 496 points and above A**
- 441 – 495 B**
- 386 – 440 C**
- 331 – 385 D**
- 330 or less F**

Student progress

Grades will be available through Blackboard's Grade Center; feedback from the instructor and/or TA may sent by e-mail.

Group work

Group work is encouraged and will be an integral part of the course. Groups will be formed during the first meeting of the course. During this time period students will be given the option of freely assembling and joining one until a set deadline; however, if a student does not join a group by the set date, the instructor will assign the student at random to a group. The maximum number of members allowed will be determined in the first day of class. Blackboard's group sign-in section is set to not allow joining freely or going over this number; groups can be of less than the set number members, or students can elect to work individually.

Although group work should be equally distributed, each will appoint a "Group Leader" who will be the liaison between the group and other groups and the instructor; another student (secretary) should be appointed for the responsibility of submitting group work and assessment. When completing a group assessment, the score will be the same for all members; however, at the end of the course, each group member will complete a "group-peer evaluation" in which students will evaluate, and rank member's participation to receive proper merit in the form of extra credit points.

Each group member must complete a "Group Peer Evaluation" to assess each member's contribution on the project. Extra-credit will be awarded accordingly to each member's score.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance is an important component of this course since information not contained in the textbook will be presented during class through lectures and discussions. So:

- Attend all classes and be punctual (no later than 15 minutes after scheduled time start).
- You are expected to personally sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of each class. Responsibility for doing so is solely of the student. Not signing-in equals to being absent.
- Avoid being late to class; students are discouraged from coming to class late or leaving early since this is disruptive to the instructor and more importantly to classmates. If you are late, please sign in after class. However, it will have an impact on your grade; being late is arriving 15 minutes past the start of the lecture; two (2) late sign-ins is equal to one (1) absence, and will also affect the possibility of being awarded IP points.
- **Absences will affect your final score/grade.** You required at least an 80% attendance (12 out of 15), including the first week of class. Furthermore, for each absence you will be deducted approximately 33% of a grade (18 points). **You are allowed three excused absences; a fourth absence means that you will be dropped from the course.** Exceptions will be made in the case of University

excused absences (sponsored activities approved by the Dean of students). You will only be able to make up for activities, exams, or assignments (scheduled or unscheduled) in the case of University excused absences (sponsored activities approved by the Dean of students).

Communication and Feedback Plan

This section includes how you and your students are expected to communicate during the course. When can students expect feedback from you? (I.e. within 24-48 hours) What tools can they use to contact you? UTEP email is the preferred method; send all emails to gabmejia@utep.edu; additionally emails can be sent to the courses' appointed teaching assistant; his/her email will be provided later in the course. Occasionally, a Skype® session can be scheduled – if set up with previous time. Your instructors Skype® ID is gabboim61.

Class disruptions

The use of cell phones (even for text messaging), headphones in any manner, is **prohibited** during class. Laptop computers can be used if needed for in-class assignments. Students who are continuously talking during lectures are showing disrespect for their classmates who are serious about learning. In such case, students will be asked to leave the lecture and will only be invited to return at the discretion of the instructor and will be considered absent for the day.

Active participation

Students are encouraged to actively participate in the learning process. This includes attentive listening. A second component of active participation is asking questions for clarification of confusing information and expressing opinions. You can also make use of email, chat, or online discussion groups for these purposes.

Policy on examinations

Examinations will be held in class on the scheduled dates. You will have a maximum of 2-and-a-half hours to complete the midterm and final examinations. No lectures will take place on these dates.

Missed examinations: No extensions on examinations will be granted. If a student misses the midterm or final examination, a make-up exam may be re-scheduled **only** if the student has informed the instructor of the absence **prior** to the beginning of the examination, and only if the absence is approved by the instructor. All re-take exams have a point deduction penalty of 20% of the value of the exam, which will not allow the student to score higher than 80% of the value of the assessment. Only in rare instances will a student be excused from the examination. Students that due to a **University excused absence** missed a quiz will be given the opportunity to complete it at the end of the semester, and before the scheduled date for final examination; however, a similar penalization will be applied also. All other reasons or justifications are not valid for re-taking a quiz. This is not negotiable.

Policy on late assignments

Homework and other assignments must be turned in when scheduled in order for graded score points to be awarded points. A 10% deduction on graded score will be applied for every **24 hours** an assignment is overdue, including weekends. No assignments will be accepted if submitted more than 1 week after the due date.

Notice on dropping the course, withdrawals, and incomplete.

Students may drop individual courses or completely withdraw from the University as described below. Refer to the on-line Academic Calendar at www.utep.edu/calendar or to the *Class Schedule* to identify the dates during which adds, drops, withdrawals, and pass/fail registration changes may occur.

a) Student-initiated Drops

It is the student's responsibility to officially drop a course that s/he no longer wishes to take. Failure to do so may result in a grade of "F" on the student's academic record. Athletes must receive permission from the Miner Athletic Advising Center before dropping a course. International students with F or J visas must receive permission from the Office of International Programs before dropping a course.

b) Administrative Drops

During registration periods for upcoming semesters, students will be dropped from registered courses for failure to meet prerequisites or co-requisites after final grades have been posted for the current semester and before the beginning of late registration for next semester. A student may petition the department chair of the course in question for a prerequisite or co-requisite waiver.

At the discretion of the instructor, a student may be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort. Students may also be administratively withdrawn from a course during the semester for other reasons, with the concurrence of the academic dean or department chair. A grade of "W" will be assigned before the course drop deadline and a grade of "F" after the course drop deadline. A grade of "F" received due to disciplinary action imposed by the University overrides a grade of "W" received through a student-initiated or faculty drop. Students will be notified of their drop through their UTEP e-mail account.

c) Grade Assignment for Drops and Withdrawals

Grades will be assigned as follows when a student drops a course or completely withdraws from the University:

1. If a student drops a course before the official census date of a semester, neither the course nor a grade will appear on the student's academic record.
2. If a student drops from a course after the census date but before the student-initiated course drop deadline listed in the *Class Schedule*, a grade of "W" will be assigned.
3. If the student drops after the student-initiated course drop deadline, instructors will determine a grade of "W" or "F" for each course. A grade of "W" is considered only under exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the

instructor and department chair for the course. A student may petition for a grade of “W” in writing with the necessary supporting documentation.

d) Incomplete course work

If eligible, the student may receive a grade of Incomplete (I) that will appear on the academic transcript; an “I” (incomplete grade) can only be considered only if requested by the student in advance of the conclusion of the course and only for legitimate, documented emergencies. Failure to request and negotiate the terms of an “Incomplete” grade before the conclusion of the course will result in a denial except in the most extraordinary circumstances.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University’s educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected the UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student’s own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Notice on Students with Disabilities on Special Accommodations

Students with disabilities needing accommodations must present to the professor evidence from DSSO verifying that they have provided documentation and are eligible for services. Deadline to comply with documentation is at the end of the first two weeks of the semester. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Classes begin	Jan. 19
Census Day	Feb. 3
Pope’s visit (University closed)	Feb. 17
Spring break	Mar. 7-11
Cesar Chavez day (University closed)	Mar. 25
Course drop deadline	Apr. 1
Last day for complete withdrawal	May 5
Last day of classes	May 5
Dead day	May 6
Final exams week	May 9-13

Final grades due to the Records Office	May 18
Final grades available online for students	May 23

COURSE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT:

Course related: Your instructor is available to assist you online, by phone, and by email throughout the semester.

Technical support: Click on the “Help” hyperlink in Blackboard platform after logging in to your “My UTEP” portal at <http://my.utep.edu>. Furthermore, get additional technical information and assistance at The University of Texas at El Paso’s Helpdesk.