

Environmental Epidemiology – HLS 454 / MPH 554

Spring 2006, Wednesdays 2:30 PM – 5:20 PM

Instructor – Thomas R. Ruiz, M.S.

Contact Information: Work: (505) 528-5152 (until 1/27/06 – new number TBD)
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Office hours: 1:15 PM – 2:30 PM (Wednesdays) or by appointment.

Required Textbook: None – Handout materials to be provided

Course Description and Objectives

This course is intended to provide a foundation for those interested in gaining an appreciation of thematic and research aspects pertinent to environmental health and epidemiology. The course will make use of assigned readings from book chapters and published articles, as well as discussion around case studies that illustrate investigations of environmental exposures. All students will be required to complete two (2) editorial essays pertaining to topics in environmental health. Additionally, graduate students will complete one (2) research paper throughout the semester involving an environmental health topic of choice from the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*. Each graduate student research paper will be 5-10 pages in length and the graduate student will provide a presentation on the subject at the end of the semester.

Class Policies

Attendance and participation is required. Absences without a legitimate reason will result in a proportional reduction from the final grade. Please inform the instructor by phone if you will be absent. A call will not necessarily excuse you, but will be taken into consideration by the instructor. Since this class meets only once a week, if you miss one session, it is equivalent to a week's worth of class time. Therefore, I will start to become concerned with your attendance after one absence. Three (3) or more unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. Since some of the classroom time will be via dialogue and critical thinking rather than straight from any book, it will be very difficult to make up the session. The class begins at 2:30 PM and the student is strongly encouraged to arrive on time. If a pattern of tardiness develops, this could result in points being taken away from your final grade. Finally, for those with cell phones, please remember to turn off your ringer when you enter the classroom.

Teaching Methods

Discussion of assigned book chapters and article readings, presentation of case studies, completion of course project, and an oral presentation (for graduate students) will be used as teaching strategies and evaluation criteria towards a final grade. Students are expected to read all suggested materials before attending each class. Active and substantive class participation during class is enthusiastically encouraged.

Evaluation of Student Performance

- Editorial Essays. Students will prepare two 250-word editorial essays on environmental health topics. The instructor will provide further instruction and guidelines in class.
- Quizzes & Exams. Announced quizzes (2) and exams (2) will be designed to test student understanding of material presented in lecture, guest lectures, assigned readings, homework assignments, key issues discussed during group presentations, information presented by slides and videos, etc.

- Oral Presentation. Each graduate student will be required to make a presentation at the end of the semester. The topic of this presentation will be an environmental health topic chosen from the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*. This will allow graduate students to take an active part in an issue in environmental epidemiology of actual concern and interest. Graduate students will be expected to consult several resources in the preparation of their group presentation (library, internet, instructor's supplemental material). Use of some type of audiovisual aids (overheads, slides, poster boards, PowerPoint presentation, chalk board, etc.) will be required.
- Written Course Project (for Graduate Students). In conjunction with the oral presentation above, students working individually will complete one (1) written 5-10 page research paper on an environmental health topic.

Grading Scale

A	90-100 %
B	80-89 %
C	70-79 %
D	60-69 %
F	< 60 %

Approximate Point Distribution

Activity	Points (Graduate)	Weight (Graduate)	Points (Undergraduate)	Weight (Undergraduate)
Class Participation	50	7.69%	50	11.11%
Editorial Essays (2)	100 (50 each)	15.38 %	100 (50 each)	22.22%
Quizzes (2)	100 (50 each)	15.38 %	100 (50 each)	22.22%
Exams (2)	200 (100 each)	30.77 %	200 (100 each)	44.44%
Written Course Project (grad)	100	15.38 %	--	--
Oral Presentation (grad)	100	15.38 %	--	--
Total Points	650	100%	450	100%

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have (or believe you have) a disability and would benefit from classroom accommodation(s), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office located at Garcia Annex [Phone: 646-6840; TTY: 646-1918]. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or that may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss any concerns with the Instructor.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Register with SSD and obtain accommodation documents early in the semester;
2. Deliver the completed accommodation and testing form(s) to the instructor(s) within the first two weeks of beginning of classes (or within one week of the date services are to commence);
3. Retrieve the signed form(s) from faculty and return to SSD within five (5) days of receipt from faculty and at least one week before any scheduled exam; and,
4. Contact the SSD Office if the services/accommodations requested are not being provided, not meeting your needs, or if additional accommodations are needed. Do not wait until you receive a failing grade. Retroactive accommodations cannot be considered.

Faculty Responsibilities:

1. Sign the *ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM* and *TESTING ACCOMMODATION FORM* (when presented), retain a copy, and return the original to the student within five (5) working days of receipt;
2. Contact SSD immediately if there are any questions or disputes regarding accommodation(s), disruptive behavior, etc.; and,
3. Refer the student to SSD for any additional accommodations.

Accommodations: SSD Office, 646-6840 (Garcia Annex, Rm 102) Michael Armendariz
Discrimination: EEO/ADA & Employee Relations, 646-3333 (Hadley Hall, 15) Elva Telles

All medical information will be treated confidentially.

ADA GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY

Academic Standards - It is important to remember that academic standards are to be maintained. Each student accommodation is evaluated on its own merits on a case-by-case basis following an interactive process with the student. If you have reason to believe that the approved accommodations are unreasonable, contact the SSD official immediately at 646-6840. Academic requirements that the recipient can demonstrate are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student (or to any directly related licensing requirement) will not be regarded as discriminatory.

Attendance - Flexibility in attendance policies may be needed for legitimate reasons such as health-related disabilities that flare up episodically (diabetes, epilepsy, cancer, etc.). On the other hand, there may be circumstances that require the student to be present for graded in-class participation, clinicals, etc. that cannot be made up. Attendance policies should not be arbitrary and if attendance is a part of the grade there must be clearly defined reasoning. The university instructor is under no obligation to excuse the student's failure to satisfy basic essential requirements simply because the student has not made the effort to manage the disability. Be particularly mindful of claims of differential treatment. [Example: A professor has a strict attendance policy on paper, but has modified it for others.]

Is attendance essential?

- *Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and among students?*
- *Do student contributions constitute a significant component of the learning process?*
- *Does fundamental nature of the course rely upon student participation as an essential method for learning?*
- *To what degree does a student's failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?*
- *Which method is used to calculate the final grade?*
- *And what are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?*

Classroom Materials - Every effort should be made to use textbooks and videos available in alternative formats for students with disabilities (i.e., closed-captioned, on tape, etc.).

Confidentiality - It is important that any medical and/or disability information be held in strictest confidence. At no time are students with disabilities to be: a) segregated from other students; b) made examples of; or, c) identified as disabled students. Any discussions relative to accommodations are to be held in private.

Disruptive Behavior - Behavior that is disruptive to the academic environment should not be tolerated from any student, and disability status is not an excuse for such actions. Behavioral standards should be delineated in the syllabi and actions outside of the acceptable standards should be immediately addressed with the student privately. Student discipline matters may be referred to the Office of Vice President for Student Services according to Student Handbook procedures.

Notetakers - If the SSD Office has requested a "notetaker" as a reasonable accommodation, ask students who take good notes if s/he would be willing to take notes on NCR paper (provided by SSD) or have the notes copied for a student with a documented disability. Under no circumstances should the student with the disability be identified without consent. Once the notetaker is accepted, arrangements to introduce the notetaker to the student with disability(ies) may be made for coordination of schedules.

Proctor - A proctor is required for all exams/quizzes under conditions of "quiet room testing" and/or "extended time," if other students tested under normal circumstances are similarly supervised. If a proctor is not available in your department, contact the SSD Office and a proctor will be scheduled.

Punctuality - There may be students with mobility and other impairments who depend on classes starting and ending on time in order to get to the next class on time, take medication, take a bus, etc. Likewise, professors expect the same professional courtesy from students.

Testing - Do not assume students with disabilities will know where and when to take exams under conditions of "quiet-room testing." Some students will continue to report to the regular classroom if the faculty member does not take the initiative to carry out the instructions on the Testing Accommodation Form prior to the scheduled exam(s). Classroom Accommodations: SSD Office, 646-6840 (located in Room 102 of Garcia Annex) **Michael Armendariz** Discrimination Concerns: EEO/ADA & Employee Relations, 646-3333 (located in Room 15 of Hadley Hall) **Elva Telles**

Tentative Course Schedule – HLS 454 / MPH 554

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
1/25	Course Overview & Introduction to Environmental Epidemiology (<i>Ruiz</i>)	N/A
2/1	The Legal Context of Environmental Protection in the U.S. / Bordering on Environmental Disaster (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Article - “ <i>Bordering on Environmental Disaster</i> ”
2/8	Conceptual Issues in Environmental Health (<i>Escobedo</i>)	Supp. Article - “ <i>Tragedy of the Commons</i> ”
2/15	Design, Analysis & Interpretation in Epidemiology (<i>Escobedo</i>)	TBD
2/22	QUIZ #1 / Biological Markers of Exposure (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Chapter 5
3/1	Molecular Epidemiology / Epidemiological Aspects of Environmental Hazards to Reproduction (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Chapter 6
3/8	Conceptual Issues in Occupational Health & Injury (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Chapters 7 & 9
3/15	EXAM #1 / Recent Progress in Childhood Lead Exposure (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Chapter 12
3/22	SPRING BREAK	
3/29	Case Study of Sunland Park, NM (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Article - “ <i>Clean Up or Cover Up?</i> ”
4/5	Waterborne Disease: The Importance of Drinking Water Disinfection (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Chapter 8
4/12	Ionizing Radiation & Electromagnetic Fields (<i>Arnold</i>)	Supp. Chapters 10, 11
4/19	QUIZ #2 / Air Quality, Asthma and Related Environmental Factors (<i>Ruiz</i>)	Supp. Materials
4/26	Health Effects from Environmental Noise Exposure (<i>Arnold</i>)	Supp. Chapter 14
5/3	Group Presentations	N/A
5/10	EXAM #2	