Course title: Public Health Field Practicum
Course code: PUBH 3003 THPH
Programs offering course: Community Public Health
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 4.00
Contact hours: 55.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description

The Public Health Field Practicum is a hands-on research design course. Through lectures, fieldwork, and workshops, students complete community-based data collection and a scholarly research paper on a focused public health topic in one of the communities visited in the previous course. Reciprocity is essential in community-based, participatory research. Therefore, the subject matter for this practicum will expand upon preliminary data collection completed in the communities visited during the CPH course. Students will work in groups of their choosing and decide amongst themselves in which communities they will complete their short -- though comprehensive -- community health research project. Project includes writing and presenting a research proposal, developing appropriate diagnostic tools, gathering and analyzing data about a public health issue, devising an evaluative plan, producing a scientific report, and presenting findings. The overarching goal of this project is to develop a well-researched paper that explores factors associated with a high-priority health topic within a community. Each group, then, has the opportunity to design a modest public health intervention that engages community members to learn about or act upon this need. The community project proposal is presented to faculty and students at Khon Kaen University, and projects are funded based on merit and available funds.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Conduct a competent literature review
- Develop a research proposal and plan
- Design appropriate tools for researching a specific health topic in a community
- Collect and analyze data to identify and develop appropriate research projects relevant to community health problems and needs
- Develop a plan to address a community’s health issue with a level of community participation based on results from literature review, health policy concepts, and community feedback
- Utilize leadership behaviors in collaborating with health team members in the community to identify a need for planned change
- Present well-organized findings to a larger audience and community
- Write a scholarly research paper

Course Prerequisites

PUBH 3001 THPH and PUBH 3002 THPH

Methods of Instruction

This course consists primarily of in-class workshops and field work, combined with classroom lectures by Khon Kaen University (KKU) faculty, student-led presentations, and group work outside the classroom. The field work includes visits to a community to conduct community-based research, as well as a later visit to potentially implement a project requested by the community. In-class workshops are guided by instructors to design research instruments or analyze data.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Literature Review 15%
2. Research Protocol 15%
Research Results Report

Community Project

Final Presentation

Participation

TOTAL

Course Requirements

Literature Review

Students will conduct a thorough literature review to identify existing knowledge related to the assigned research question, theories or concepts related to the research topic, and existing methodologies that have been applied to investigate the research topic. Students will orally present this knowledge and draft a written summary (which will become Section II of the Research Results Report).

Research Protocol

A research protocol is a detailed description of a study designed to answer a specific research question. Students will meet with advisors to develop a research protocol that will include, at minimum:

- Background, including definition of key terms
- Research question
- Research objectives
- Variables
- Methodology: research design, participants, sample size, ethics, study setting, instruments, sampling strategy, data collection methods, data analysis
- Schedule
- Budget

Research Results Report

This report conveys the results of the community research and will be written like an academic research journal article. It will not exceed 4000 words, excluding the abstract and references, with an abstract not exceeding 300 words.

Assessment

The Research Results Report will be due via email. Submissions received after the due date and time will be considered late and have 5% deducted. Each subsequent 24 hours later will result in a 10% deduction.

The research results report will be assessed on:

1. Length & Requirements* 10%
2. Title & Abstract: 5%
3. Introduction: 5%
4. Literature Review: 15%
5. Methods and Materials: 15%
6. Results: 10%
7. Discussion: 10%
8. Conclusion: 5%
9. Word Choice* 10%
10. Sentence Structure* 5%
11. Mechanics* 10%

Requirements

- The report must have the section headings, as listed in the Assessment (above), except for categories with asterisk (*). It may have any sub-headings, if necessary.
- The last sentence of the introduction must contain the research question or research objectives.
- Introduction and Background must contain background information about the community (including the results from the needs assessment) and appropriate literature review.
- The document must be submitted in Microsoft Word format (Apple’s Pages can be converted to MS Word).

Suggestions

- Writing academic journal articles (like the many articles you have read throughout the duration of this program) follows a fairly predictable pattern. In fact, most journals stipulate the titles of an article’s
sections. Use this existing framework to structure your report.

- The literature review (within the Introduction and Background) should provide all of the information needed for the reader to understand your research. A literature review does not describe individual research in list format (e.g., "One researcher found that.... Another report stated that..... In other study, though, researchers stated that....")
- Methods and Materials sections often follow a similar pattern of sub-headings, such as: Study Setting, Participants, Ethical Considerations, Measurements, Data Analysis.
- The Results section objectively reports the important findings from your research. No interpretation of the meaning of the results occurs here. Tables, figures, and charts should be used. Text should not restate every detail found in tables/charts. Rather, text should point out the most important results within that table/chart.
- The Discussion section is where you connect what previous researchers have found (in the Introduction and Background) to what you have found (Results). How do your results fit into the context of existing knowledge? What is the meaning, or significance, of your results? What limitations and biases must we consider about your study?
- The Conclusion section should be very short (no more than a half page). It should restate the main conclusion of your results without introducing any new information. It often concludes with a forward-looking statement, such as recommendations for future research and possible interventions to address any health issues identified.

**Community Project**

Following data collection, students will conduct public hearings in the community to share their findings and receive feedback and direction from the community. Community feedback may direct students to return to the community and organize a project that addresses a need of the community. Students will consider themselves agents for the community’s requests.

**Assessment**

The presentation will be assessed on:

- Public Hearing: 20%
- Project Budget and Schedule: 20%
- Project Execution: 20%
- Report Appendix: 40%

**Final Presentation**

Each group will present their research as a whole from start to finish, including the needs assessment, community research, data findings, and community project (if applicable), and recommendations for improvement. Related health policy topics and background information should be incorporated throughout the discussion.

**Assessment**

The presentation will be assessed on:

- Content: 40%
- Organization: 20%
- Format: 20%
- Speed: 10%
- Clarity: 10%

**Requirements**

- The total presentation length, including question and answer time, should not exceed 30 minutes. Exceeding this time limit will result in point deductions.
- Borrowed information, such as photos or statistics, must be properly cited (APA short format) on the slide where the information appears.
- Each group member must present some portion of the presentation.

**Participation**

**Attendance**

Attendance is required at all lectures, workshops, meetings, and field work. Arriving more than 15 minutes late will be considered absent. One unexcused absence is allowed. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a 20% reduction of your class participation grade.
N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

Class: 1.1 PHFP Session 1

Course Introduction & Topic Selection

Reading

- Cottrell, R., & McKenzie, J. (2010, Chapter 1, 1-21)

Class: 1.2 PHFP Session 2

Conducting Research in Health

Reading


Class: 1.3 PHFP Session 3

Literature Reviews and Critically Assessing Research

Assignment: Student create conceptual model for their research

Reading

- Cottrell, R., & McKenzie, J. (2010, Chapter 3, 39-63)

Class: 1.4 PHFP Session 4

Students Oral Presentation of Conceptual Model

**Week 2**

Class: Semester Break

**Week 3**

Class: 3.1 PHFP Session 5

Research Objectives and Instrument Design

Reading


Class: 3.2 PHFP Session 6

Coding Variables and Database Management

Reading

- Cottrell, R., & McKenzie, J. (2010, Chapter 11, 227-244)

Class: 3.3 PHFP Session 7

Quantitative Data Analysis Techniques

Assignment: Preparation for the presentation of the research method

Reading

- Cottrell, R., & McKenzie, J. (2010, Chapter 12, 53-267)
Class: 3.4 PHFP Session 8
Oral Presentation of Research Methods

Week 4
Class: 4.1 PHFP Session 9
Writing Research Papers

Week 5
Class: 5.1 PHFP Session 10a
Piloting Instruments
Class: 5.2 PHFP Session 10b
Field Preparation
Class: 5.3 PHFP Session 11
Oral Presentation of Research Results

Week 6
Class: 6.1 PHFP Session 12
Oral Presentation of Project Proposal
Class: 6.2 PHFP Session 13
Advisory Meeting: Research Results Report
Class: 6.3 PHFP Session 14
Project Closeout Meeting

Week 7
Class: 7.1 PHFP Session 15
Final Presentations

Course Materials
Readings