

**M19-500 Current Topics in Public Health (1 credit)**

Fall 2021 (08/31/20 – 12/7/20)

Tuesdays, 12:00 to 12:55 pm

Location: via Zoom

**INSTRUCTORS**

Allison King, MD, MPH, PhD

**OFFICE HOURS**

By appointment

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**PREREQUISITES**

None

**TARGET AUDIENCE**

Pre-doctoral students, typically medical students. Those outside of the MD/MPHS program should contact Dr. King before enrollment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**

After interesting research studies are presented at meetings or published in journals, news media often disseminate results to a broader audience. As health care providers, we will be asked about these news stories by patients and other contacts. The objectives of this course are to:

- 1) Facilitate discussions about the accuracy of scientific representation in news media.
- 2) Prepare future health care providers to review population health research and communicate findings accurately.

**COMPETENCIES**

- 1) Be familiar with key sources of population health research & news.
- 2) Review news-making population health stories for balance and understanding.
- 3) Communicate population health research for multiple audiences.
- 4) Discuss how population health and clinical medicine intersect in media communication settings.

**GRADING**

Your grade will be based on:

- 40% attendance
- 10% presentation
- 30% written project
- 20% class discussion

**Grading Scale**

A+: 97-100; A: 93-96; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

Class attendance is required. As a courtesy to other students, you are expected to arrive on time. More than one unexcused absence from class may result in a lowered grade. Readings assigned for each class should be read ahead of the class and students should be prepared to discuss the material from readings.

### **Class attendance (40%)**

Class attendance is required. As a courtesy to other students, you are expected to arrive on time. More than one unexcused absence may result in a lowered grade. Be especially responsible about attendance during guest lectures dates. The value of the class stems from the quality of the conversations and dialog with peers and instructors.

### **Presentation (10%)**

Each student will present a written project as a class discussion topic one week. Students will prepare a 3-5 page double spaced paper to summarize a current public health topic and the controversies surrounding it. A cogent synthesis of potentially opposing views and public health implications of the work should be presented.

### **Written project (30%)**

Students will prepare a 3-5 page double spaced paper to summarize a current public health topic and the controversies surrounding it. A cogent synthesis of potentially opposing views and public health implications of the work should be presented.

### **Participation in class discussion (30%)**

Each student in the class is expected to participate actively in the class discussion each week. Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and being ready to review the science and implications of the research presented. Each week students are also expected to come to class with a news or journal article of interest that was published or presented in media in the previous week.

### **POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments will result in a deduction of one grade point (A+ down to A) for each day late (including weekends) unless prior approval is obtained from the instructor or a compelling situation prevents prior approval (i.e. documented health issues or family emergencies).

### **ASSIGNMENTS & DUE DATES**

Students will be assigned dates for presentation on the first day of class. Rescheduling of dates is the responsibility of the assigned student. News/journal articles should be emailed to the class by the Friday before the date of presentation.

**The final written project is due on 12/15/20.**

## **DROP DATES**

You may drop for any reason during the course of the semester. However, you may only receive a partial or no tuition reimbursement depending upon how far into the semester you drop the course. See the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Late withdrawals will appear on your transcript as a withdrawal.

## **MPHS Academic Policy Guidelines:**

Guidelines regarding MPHS course registration and enrollment, grades, tuition obligation, and academic leave are consolidated in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Please review this document.

## **MPHS Guidelines for Academic and Non-Academic Transgressions:**

By registering for this course, you have agreed to the terms of the **MPHS Academic Integrity Policy, outlined below and in more detail in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#)**. Please review this policy before submitting your first graded assignment.

## **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy:**

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that may lead to probation, suspension, or dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism (the use of someone else's ideas, statements, or approaches without proper citation). Academic dishonesty also includes copying information from another student, submitting work from a previous class for a new grade without prior approval from your instructor, cheating on exams, etc. You are responsible for reviewing [WashU's academic integrity resources](#) to become aware of all the actions that constitute academic dishonesty.
- All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Registrar for investigation and potential disciplinary action. In addition, the instructor will make an independent decision about the student's grade on any assignment in question. The MPHS process regarding academic dishonesty is described in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#)

## **DISABILITY RESOURCES**

It is the goal of Washington University to assist students with disabilities in removing the barriers their disabilities may pose and provide support in facing the challenge of pursuing an education at Washington University.

Washington University recognizes and accepts its professional, legal and moral responsibility to avoid discrimination in the acceptance and education of qualified students with disabilities and to provide reasonable accommodations to such students consistent with the principles embodied in the law. These guidelines apply to students seeking admittance as well as to those who become disabled while they are enrolled.

Washington University makes every effort to ensure that all qualified applicants and students can participate in and take full advantage of all programs and opportunities offered within the university. Washington University encourages and gives full consideration to all applicants for admission. Washington University does not discriminate in access to its programs and activities on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, color or national origin.

To learn more about services provided to students with disabilities, initiate the process of formal documentation and/or to arrange for accommodations, please review the [Disability Resources](#) for the Med School at the start of the course.

## **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: [shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth](https://shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth).

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES**

You can also speak confidentially and learn about available resources by contacting [Dr. Gladys Smith, PhD](#), Sexual Violence Prevention Therapist and Licensed Psychologist at the Medical Campus, (314) 362-2404. Additionally, you can report incidents to the Office of Student Affairs or by contacting WUSM Protective Services 314-362-4357 or your local law enforcement agency.

### **BIAS RESOURCES**

The University has a process through which students and staff who have experienced or witnessed bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. For details see: [diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/](https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/).

### **Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

**The DEI Training Team** designs, facilitates and leads diversity education programming for faculty, staff and students on a wide range of topics including: creating a climate of respect, the value of diversity and the role of biases in our day-to-day lives.  
[diversity.med.wustl.edu/training/](https://diversity.med.wustl.edu/training/)

**The Office of Diversity Programs** promotes diversity among and prepares medical students to lead in a global society. A priority for the Office of Diversity Programs is to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures and identities.  
[mddiversity.wustl.edu/](https://mddiversity.wustl.edu/)

**The Diversity and Inclusion Student Council** promotes an inclusive campus environment for all School of Medicine students.  
[sites.wustl.edu/disc/](https://sites.wustl.edu/disc/)

**The Office for International Students and Scholars** embraces the university's mission of welcoming promising students from around the world.  
[wumma.wustl.edu/](https://wumma.wustl.edu/)