M19-551 Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis in Public Health and Clinical Medicine  
Spring 2023  
Fridays, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm (see information below for typical class length)  

This syllabus is currently being edited for Spring 2023. Canvas will always have the most up-to-date information.

INSTRUCTORS  
Graham A. Colditz, MD, colditzg@wustl.edu  
Carrie Stoll, MSW, MPH, carolyn.stoll@wustl.edu

OFFICE HOURS (VIRTUAL)  
Wednesdays, 12-1 pm starting January 26, see Canvas for Zoom link  
Or by appointment

CLASS STRUCTURE  
In Spring 2023 this class will be held in-person (subject to University policies). Although the class is scheduled from 9 am – 12 pm, most classes will only run 9-10:30 am (see below for exceptions). In order to allow for shorter in-person sessions that focus on interactive learning, students are expected to engage with assigned materials (readings, videos, assignments, etc) prior to class.

Attendance policy: Up to 2 regular classes (NOT workshops) may be missed without affecting your grade, however you must notify us either before the class or within 24 hours after class. However, we understand the importance of flexibility in this challenging time and if this expectation is becomes difficult for you to fulfill please reach out to the instructor team and we will address it on a case-by-case basis. In certain situations we will allow you to attend class via Zoom, but you must get approval prior to class. We also record all classes and make the recording available on Canvas.

CLASS COMPONENTS

1. Asynchronous materials: Every week, asynchronous materials (a combination of videos, slide sets, discussion board posts, readings) will be posted on Canvas on Friday afternoons. You are expected to complete these weekly tasks prior to class the following Friday. Each week there will be a list of key readings (ones you are expected to be familiar with prior to class) and recommended readings (helpful readings but will not necessarily be used in synchronous class). Readings will articles that you can download via Canvas, and chapters from the textbook (Systematic Reviews in Health Care: Meta-analysis in Context, 2nd Edition, Mattias Egger, George Davey Smith, and Douglas Altman, eds., BMJ Books, 2001, available as an ebook via Becker Library).

2. In-person class: Classes will be held on Fridays, 9 am -10:30 am in the Taylor Avenue Building (600 S. Taylor).

3. Workshop Classes: There are 3 weeks in which you should reserve Fridays, 9 am - 12 pm for project workshop classes: Feb 3, April 21, and April 28. Closer to those dates you will be assigned a specific smaller time window within those 3 hrs that you are expected to attend, but for now please reserve the 3 hr block on your schedule.

4. Group assignments and projects: Throughout the semester you will apply the concepts to design and perform a systematic review and/or meta-analysis on a research question of your choosing. There will be a series of weekly assignments that build to your final project. We highly encourage you to work in a group (2-4 students), although you are allowed to work individually.

5. Weekly assignments: In addition to the larger group assignments, there will be a series of smaller assignments in which you will apply class material to your project topic. In addition to submitting these assignments, you will sometimes be expected to critique/comment on assignments from your classmates. These assignments are typically due prior to class so that we can use them during class.
6. **Office hours** Carrie will hold weekly Zoom office hours on *Wednesdays, 11-12 pm*. You can join the office hour Zoom meeting anytime during that hour to ask questions about content, assignments, projects, etc. You are also welcome to email instructors directly to request a meeting outside of the weekly office hours.

**PREREQUISITES**  
Introductory epidemiology and biostatistics 1 (or permission of the course master)

**TARGET AUDIENCE**  
Clinicians and doctoral students interested in conducting research synthesis or meta-analysis to inform practice or policy, medical students and clinical training program participants, students in MPH addressing application of epidemiologic data to prevention. Prior clinical or community research experience is helpful but not required.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**  
Introduction to the use of meta-analysis and related methods used to synthesize and evaluate epidemiological and clinical research in public health and clinical medicine. Concepts introduced and illustrated through case studies of public health and medical issues.

Objectives are to learn how to use a variety of formal and informal methods for synthesizing clinical trial and epidemiological information on public health risks, to understand how to use these methods to assess the strength of the evidence in policy development and clinical contexts, and to appreciate how research synthesis can contribute to rational policy making in controversial areas.

**COMPETENCIES**  
Ability to design research synthesis and meta-analysis

- Define research question
- Define literature search strategy
- Conduct literature search and document the process
- Apply eligibility criteria, data extraction, and data quality scoring
- Develop data analysis plan
- Understand and interpret fixed-effects, random-effects, and meta-regression methods and results
- Recognize heterogeneity and approaches to quantification and reporting of among-study variation

Skills and experience to conduct analysis

- Master data analysis and model fitting in context of meta-analysis
- Quantitatively evaluate publication bias
- Be able to estimate combined results from reports of randomized trials, observational studies, and diagnostic test

Master the core reporting strategies

- Master reporting standards for RCTs and observational data in context of meta-analysis
- Master forest plot, summary tables, and publication bias presentations

Draw inferences from data to inform clinical and public health practices

- Correctly use reasoning for design and methodologies employed
- Present oral and written reports from analyses
- Place inference in context of clinical and public health implications for action and future research

**GRADING**  
Your grade will be based on:

- Class participation (5%)
- Introduction post (1%)
- Topic Workshop: Preliminary topic presentation (10%)
- Library Search Request Assignment (5%)
- Mid-semester course pulse survey (1%)
- Analysis HW 1 (5%)
- Analysis HW 2 (5%)
- Final workshop (15%)
- Final paper (30%)
- Weekly assignments (small quizzes, discussion posts, brief assignments, etc) (23% total spread across small assignments worth 2-5% each)

**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**
Attendance to the in-person sessions is expected, and the class is designed with this in mind. However, virtual attendance to individual classes may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. In order to attend a session virtually you must request the zoom link from before class.

Up to 2 classes (NOT workshops) may be missed without affecting your grade, however you must notify us either before the class or within 24 hours after class. Attending virtually (with prior permission) counts as attending class.

Exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Carrie with any requests.

**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. Extensions will be given on a case-by-case basis. Please reach out to Carrie (Carolyn.stoll@wustl.edu) if you need an extension.

**READINGS**

Supplemental readings from Introduction to Meta-Analysis, Michael Borenstein, Larry V Hedges, Julian PT Higgins, and Hannah R Rothstein, Wiley, 2009, are also given. Additional readings will be available through Canvas.

**Additional Resources**
- UK NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) [http://www.nice.org.uk/](http://www.nice.org.uk/)
- PLOS template for systematic review – meta-analysis article preparation [www.plosone.org/static/tpl_plos_meta.doc](http://www.plosone.org/static/tpl_plos_meta.doc)

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics covered</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Student introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Defining the research question and searching the literature (Becker)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>TOPIC WORKSHOP</td>
<td>Workshop slides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Statistical methods: effect sizes, basic meta-analysis calculations</td>
<td>Library search request assignment</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Statistical methods, continued: regression, cumulative meta-analysis</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Heterogeneity: I², subgroup analysis</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Study selection/managing search results Data extraction/assessing risk of bias</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>Meta-analysis in STATA Computer Lab</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td>Writing a protocol PRISMA/reporting</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Meta-analysis in STATA Computer Lab 2</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Apr 7</td>
<td>Analysis combining individual patient data Combining diagnostic test results</td>
<td>Weekly assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>Drug safety and adverse events Network analysis</td>
<td>Workshop slides</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>FINAL WORKSHOP</td>
<td>Workshop slides</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>FINAL WORKSHOP</td>
<td>Workshop slides</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>May 5</td>
<td>Steps to get ready to publish; Applying results to policy and practice</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
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**CLASS PUBLICATIONS**

Many students go on to publish based on the work they performed in this class. Since 2011, the following publications have been produced by participants in this class:


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 insure 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.

**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/.

**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/

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/

The Diversity and Inclusion Student Council promotes an inclusive campus environment for all School of Medicine students.

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/
MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Services are available for full-time students enrolled on the Medical School campus. Students can make an appointment with Dr. Karen Winter (kwinters@wustl.edu) or through Student Health Services.

There are also contractual mental health service providers who are available off-campus. More information regarding this coverage and a list of participating providers are accessible via https://wusmhealth.wustl.edu/ and then clicking on Students and scrolling down to Mental Health Information https://wusmhealth.wustl.edu/students/mental-health-information/.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Dr. Winters, 314-362-3523, or to any of our off-campus providers https://wusmhealth.wustl.edu/