Course Description
This course will examine the challenges and methods in the implementation of health disparities research and interventions. It is intended to both complement and expand the knowledge gained in other BCHS courses by focusing specifically on minority/underserved populations. The course will explore readings and foster discussions that will include: ethics and research in minority/underserved communities; issues, barriers and facilitators to engaging minority/underserved communities in health research; examining basic research questions in minority health; understanding the application of research findings to program development; how to integrate theory and research, and issues and challenges of program implementation. An overarching goal is to increase awareness and knowledge of research on minority health, as well as unique issues to consider when engaging in public health research and practice in these communities.

The purpose of this class is to introduce basic issues, challenges, and opportunities that are encountered in health disparities research and interventions. Current research and resources from minority health and health disparities literature will provide the background for student assignments.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

• Gain an appreciation for the diverse approaches available to eliminate health disparities through research and intervention;
• Examine challenges and opportunities for conducting research and interventions with minority/underserved communities;
• Understand the importance of using social ecological models and behavioral theories in intervention research;
• Identify effective interventions for addressing health disparities;
• Critically evaluate whether an intervention program is generalizable across populations;
• Recommend strategies for making research designs and health promotion programs more culturally-appropriate for use in minority/underserved communities.

Teaching Philosophy
In the classroom, we will explore and apply concepts that help us to understand the context of minority health and health disparities. Active participation through critical reflection in the classroom is essential to learning for us all. We see the class as a partnership between teacher and students in which we each bring experience and perspectives that can enrich our interaction. We encourage each of you to create an environment in which all students can speak freely. With an atmosphere of respect and trust, we believe we can flourish as a learning community.

Effective teaching of any class requires an ongoing assessment of the class activities, readings, and assignments. There is a formal course evaluation conducted by the departmental registrar at the end of the semester. However, we believe feedback from students while the class experience is fresh is valuable for our planning. Therefore, please feel free to provide comments on the class activities, readings, or classroom atmosphere via an appointment or email message. Please consider these questions in your comments: What did you like about the class; what would you change; what did you learn and what concerns/issues do you have. Please remember it is equally helpful to hear positive reactions as well as constructive criticism.

Faculty Availability
Please e-mail Celeste V. Petruzzi at celestep@pitt.edu to set up an appointment with Dr. Garza or Rhea Buccigrossi at rheab@pitt.edu to set up an appointment with Dr. Fryer.

Academic Integrity
Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh’s Policy on Academic Integrity. The Provost Office maintains a website that provides details on the Code for Academic Integrity; please see:

http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ai1.html

Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity.

Disability
If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible. Additionally, you should contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 216 Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the semester. DRS will verify your disability and assist with determining reasonable accommodations for this course.

Course website
Course material will be found on the Blackboard site for this class. The website for Blackboard is http://courseweb.pitt.edu. To login, you must have a Pitt account. Your login ID and password is the same as your login ID and password for your Pitt account. To access the site for this class, double click on the course title, BCHS 2526 Health Disparities Research: Methods and Interventions. The site will contain all assignments and additional information.
Readings
This class will use required readings assigned for specific weeks. It will be imperative to print out the readings, as copies will not be available in class. The full references for the required and recommended readings are provided at the end of the syllabus. Additional readings will be available online through PittCat under “Course Reserves”. You will find the semester broken into weeks, and the readings for that week are listed under the appropriate folder. A password will be made available during class that will enable you to access the articles through PittCat. Books will be placed on reserve at the library that holds the copy. For many of the online documents, access is free even from remote sites off campus. To access the Health Sciences Library system, go to http://www.hsls.pitt.edu. Double click on either PubMed or Ovid. IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have not already done so, you must create an HSLS Account in order to access both electronic databases and journals off-campus. To create an HSLS account, visit the HSLS Web page and click the “Remote Access” link in the upper-right hand corner of the web page. Then, click the “Create an account now” link and follow the instructions to activate your account. Note that your user name is your complete University of Pittsburgh email address, including the @pitt.edu.

Once your HSLS Account has been activated, you should return to the HSLS Web page, click the “Remote Access” link in the upper right hand corner of the HSLS Web page, and then login with your user name and password. Once you have logged in, you can then access electronic databases, such as PubMed (with links to many full-text articles and available through the University of Pittsburgh) and Ovid, as well as available full-text electronic journals.

Grading
Participation and Class Attendance: (10%)
Attendance and active participation is expected. You are expected to have read the required readings prior to class. Your participation is critical to our class culture and to the development of course objectives and concepts.

Assignment 1: Completion of IRB module (10 points; 10%)—Due 1/22/08 by 4:00 pm.

Assignment 2: Directed Reading Questions (10 points; 10%)
You are to develop directed questions from the readings for a total of ten (10) class sessions for the semester. Your questions can come from the required or recommended readings list and are intended to help facilitate discussion. You are to submit one thoughtful question which is related to the readings at the beginning of each class session and cannot turn in more than one question per class. These questions will also serve as evidence of your attendance. For each submission, please include your name, date and class session.

Assignment 3: Annotated Bibliography and Essay (30 points; 30%)—Due 2/26/08 by 4:00 pm.
An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and other scholarly documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (less than ½ a page per article) descriptive and evaluative page, called the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. The annotated bibliography should be a concise exposition, succinct analysis, and informed library research. Elements of the bibliography should include a summary addressing the central theme and scope of the text, an evaluation of the authority or background of the author, the intended audience, a statement about how the annotation illuminates your interests in research and intervention in minority/underserved communities, and the value of the research (Is it a reasonable work? Are the ideas
or concepts in line with the field or do they go against the dominant ideas? What is the value-added of this annotation to your work?)

Be mindful of making the bibliographies relevant to the course material. You may find one of the articles and its bibliography a good starting point for your annotated bibliographies.

**This assignment has two components:**

**Part A** (15 points): You are asked to provide an annotated bibliography of 10-15 peer-reviewed, current articles. This bibliography should broadly focus on a topic within the field of minority health and health disparities research relevant to the course (e.g., methodology, ethics, research design, recruitment strategies, community advisory boards). **The emphasis is on literature that examines issues relevant to this class.** Do not forget your own reaction to the article and an indication of its merit to the literature on your topic.

**Part B** (15 points): The second part of this assignment entails the synthesis of the literature within your annotated bibliography into a 3-5 page essay. The goal of this essay is to provide a well-researched summary of the current state of the research in that area.

The total assignment (Parts A and B) should be no more than 10-12 double-spaced pages. The goal for this assignment is to help you generate ideas and systematically review the literature in an area of interest. Additionally, Parts A and B of Assignment 2 should help you complete Assignment 3.

**Assignment 4: Group Assignment and Final Paper (40 points; 40%)—Due 4/22/08 by 4:00 pm.**

This assignment is designed for students to conduct an in-depth analysis of a research topic of your choice. You may choose between the following two options: (1) Design an intervention that is culturally-appropriate, reflecting your knowledge of the course material; **OR** (2) Assess an existing or a proposed intervention program. The target population must be a minority/underserved population. This assignment has both group and individual components to allow for a more multidisciplinary team approach to public health problem-solving.

**Group Component** (25 points): For the **group component**, each group will select one of the two options listed above and as a multidisciplinary team, design the intervention or assessment as it relates to a public health problem. You are expected to prepare a 30 minute group Powerpoint presentation on your chosen topic to be given during Week 14 or 15, followed by a 10-15 minute question and answer period. The number of groups will be determined by the number of students registered for the class and will be formed at the beginning of the semester. You are strongly encouraged, but not required, to choose a topic early so that your individual work for Assignment 2 can help formulate ideas for the group project in Assignment 3. Submit a hard copy of your Powerpoint presentation on the due date (4/22/08).

**Individual Component** (15 points): For the **individual component**, each student will be asked to write a scholarly, 3-5 page research paper about a specific aspect of the group project. Students are expected to work on their papers independently, focusing on particular components of the project that they found the most interesting. We encourage you to focus on an issue that is relevant to your current or future research.
Course Schedule

1/8/08 - Week One: Introduction to Course and Research Ethics

By the end of this class, each student will be able to understand:

- The scope and nature of the course
- Broadly define the concept of research ethics

Class Activities:
- Introductions
- Syllabus overview
- Lecture Discussion
- Guest Speaker: Stephen B. Thomas, PhD, Director, Center for Minority Health
- Guest Speaker: John Siegel, MLS, Health Science Library

Required Readings:
The Public Health Code of Ethics
Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) Code of Ethics

Assignment:
Complete the on-line research ethics training course at the University of Pittsburgh by Week 3. Go to the Research Conduct and Compliance for Human Subject Research webpage at http://www.rcco.pitt.edu/educ/. Then click on “What is Required – Research Modules”. Log–in and complete the Research Integrity Module (formerly Module 1). Once completed, submit a copy of this certificate to the instructor. (If already completed, submit copy of certificate).

1/15/08 - Week Two: Research Ethics and Minority/underserved communities

By the end of this class, each student will be able to understand:

- Research ethics and the consequences of ethical violations
- The importance of ethical research as it pertains to minority/underserved communities
- The importance of trust in research for minority/underserved communities

Class Activities:
- Lecture/Discussion
- Video: “We All Have Our Reasons”
- Guest Speaker: Stephen B. Thomas, PhD, Director, Center for Minority Health

Required Readings:
The Belmont Report
Freimuth, Quinn, Thomas, Cole, Zook, & Duncan (2001)
Seto (2001)
Coughlin (2006)
Recommended Readings:
Wainwright & Forbes (2000)
Wax (1991)
Manson, Garrouote, Goins, & Henderson (2004)
Thomas & Quinn (2000)

1/22/08 - Week Three: Research in the context of justice

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
- Understand the importance of justice in health research and interventions
- Gain an appreciation for philosophical arguments about minority health and health disparities research and interventions

Class Activities:
- Due: Assignment #1
- Lecture/Discussion
- Guest Speaker: Stephen B. Thomas, PhD, Director, Center for Minority Health
- Guest Speaker: Christopher Ryan, PhD, CIP, Institutional Review Board

Required Readings:
Blaxter (1997)
Cooper, Moore, Gruskin, & Krieger (2004)

Recommended Readings:
Strandmark (2004)
Carrese & Rhodes (1995)
Krieger (1999)

1/29/08 - Week Four: Overview of Types of Interventions conducted with Minority/Underserved Groups and Communities

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
- Describe key components of interventions with minority/underserved communities, including randomized clinical trials

Class Activities:
- Lecture/Discussion
- Video: “REACH 2010: Success Stories from our Communities”

Required Readings:
Ma’at (2001)
COMMIT RESEARCH Group (1991)

Recommended Readings:
Fogarty, Heilig, Armstrong, Cabral, et al. (2001)
Viadro, Farris, and Will (2004)
2/5/08 - Week Five: Interventions: Theoretical models/guides

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
  o Review social ecological models and how these can be used in intervention research
  o Understand the practice and role of behavioral theories in intervention development
  o Apply theoretical and conceptual models to research and interventions with minority/underserved populations

Class Activities:
  o Lecture/Discussion

Required Readings:
US DHHS (2005) (To be handed out in Class)
Forbes & Wainwright (2001)
Grzywacz & Fuqua (2000)
Pasick and Burke (2007)

Recommended Readings:
Hill (1965)
Krieger (2001)
Macdonald (2001)
McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz (1988)

2/12/08 - Week Six: Access, Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Health Research: Barriers and Strategies

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
  o Further discussion on community trust
  o Understand barriers of research with minority/underserved populations
  o Identify strategies to engage minority/underserved communities in research and intervention
  o Learn successful strategies and avoiding pitfalls

Class Activities:
  o Lecture/Discussion
  o Guest Speaker: Kumaravel Rajakumar, MD, General Academic Pediatrics, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh

Required Readings:
Burrows, Liburd, & Burroughs (1998)
Hodge, Weinmann, & Roubideaux (2000)
Mabel, Browner, & Leiber (2001)
2/19/08 - Week Seven: The Role of Community Advisory Boards, Community Consultation in Research, and the Community Research Advisory Board (CRAB)

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
- Provide a definition for a community advisory board
- Understand how to construct a community advisory board
- Describe how the CRAB bridges the gap between research and the community

Class Activities:
- Lecture/Discussion
- Panel Discussion: Sandra Quinn, PhD, Associate Dean, GSPH, Angela Ford, PhD, CMH Associate Director & community member

Required Readings:
Green & Mercer (2001)
Quinn (2004)
Strauss, Sengupta, et al. (2001)

Recommended Readings: None

2/26/08 - Week Eight: Interventions: Cultural Confidence in Intervention Research

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
- Understand the intersection of social ecology and cultural confidence
- Review common definitions relevant to cultural competence
- Employ cultural confidence in health disparity intervention research

Class Activities:
- Due: Assignment #3
- Lecture/Discussion
- Guest Speakers: James Butler, DrPH, Behavioral & Community Health Sciences
  Mindi Spencer, PhD, Kellogg Health Disparities Postdoctoral Scholar, Center for Minority Health

Required Readings:
Norton & Manson (1996)
Tervaton (1998)
Recommended Readings:
Seid, Stevens, & Varni (2003)

3/4/08 - Week Nine: Interventions: Community Organizing/Coalitions and Advocacy

*By the end of this class, each student will be able to:*
  - Understand community organizing, empowerment and capacity building
  - Describe the role of coalitions in interventions

*Class Activities:*
  - Lecture/Discussion
  - Guest Speakers: Michael Yonas, DrPH, School of Medicine, Division of Family Medicine
    Peter Whitt, MSW, LSW, Cleveland State University, Center for Health Equity

*Required Readings:*
Altpeter, Earp, & Schopler (1998)
Denham, Quinn, & Gamble (1998)
Fouad et al. (2001)
Thomas (1990)
Yonas et al. (2006)

*Recommended Readings: None*

3/18/08 - Week Ten: Interventions: The Role of Spirituality and Faith-Based Interventions

*By the end of this class, each student will be able to:*
  - Understand the role of religious institutions in providing health care
  - Describe how religious ideologies act as barriers and opportunities for health care

*Class Activities:*
  - Lecture/Discussion

*Required Readings:*
Duan, Fox, Derose, Carson, & Stockdale (2005)
Holmes (2004)
Thomas, Quinn, Billingsley, & Caldwell (1994)

3/25/08 - Week Eleven: Interventions: Lay Health Advisors and Research Advocates

*By the end of this class, each student will be able to:*
  - Understand the roles of lay-health advisors/trainers in health promotion
  - Articulate how lay health advisors can increase the chances of intervention success and sustainability

*Class Activities:*
  - Lecture/Discussion: James Butler, DrPH, Behavioral and Community Health Sciences
Required Readings:
Browne (2007)
Browne (2006)
Freedman (1998)
Johnson, Green, Anderson-Lewis, & Wynn (2005)

Recommended Readings: None

4/1/08 - Week Twelve: Review of Critical Components of Research Interventions and Effective Strategies to Engage Minority/Underserved Communities, including Community-Based Participatory Research and Practice

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
- Articulate evidence-based components of research interventions targeting minority/underserved communities

Class Activities:
- Lecture/Discussion
- Video: “REACH 2010: Success Stories from our Communities”

Required Readings:
Fisher & Ball (2003)
Pinto, et al. (2000)

Recommended Readings:

4/08/08 - Week Thirteen: Policy Implications of Minority Research

By the end of this class, each student will be able to:
- Understand the role of policy in eliminating health disparities
- Describe factors affecting the development of policy initiatives

Class Activities:
- Lecture/Discussion
- Guest Speakers: Julie Donohue, PhD, Health Policy & Management
  Michael Lin, PhD, Health Policy & Management

Readings Required:
Smedley (2003)
Stokols (2000)
Recommended Readings:
Thomas & Quinn (1993)
Stone (1998)

4/15/08 Week Fourteen:
Course Evaluation
Class time to work on group presentations

4/22/08 Week Fifteen:
Due: Assignment #4
Student Presentations
REFERENCE LIST

**Week 1—Jan. 8, 2008**

Required Readings:

SOPHE Code of Ethics: [http://www.sophe.org/about/ethics.html](http://www.sophe.org/about/ethics.html)
The Public Health Code of Ethics: Posted on Web via any Internet search engine

**Week 2—Jan 15, 2008**

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


**Week 3—Jan. 22, 2008**

Required Readings:

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 4—Jan. 29, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 5—Feb. 5, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 6—Feb. 12, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7—Feb. 19, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:** None

**Week 8—Feb. 26, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 9—March 4, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:** None

**Week 10—March 18, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:** None

**Week 11—March 25, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:** None
**Week 12—April 1, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 13—April 8, 2008**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**
