

Introduction to Community & Public Health

(COMHE 301.00 001)

Thursdays 9:30am-12:00pm

East Harlem Campus (Room, TBA)

Pre-Requisite: Admission to the COMHE major, or permission

Jessie Daniels, PhD**Office:** 5th Floor, E.Harlem Bldg.**Office hours:** By appointment**Email:** jdaniels@hunter.cuny.edu

(Preferred contact)

Phone: TBA (no voice mail)**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the social, cultural, political, environmental and economic factors that affect health as well as provide practical experience in what is involved in developing effective community health education. In addition, there is a particular focus in this class on critical media literacy within the digital era as it relates to community health education. Specifically, this course is designed to 1) cultivate an awareness of the structural, political, and cultural factors which lead to social change that can positively affect health; 2) develop skills and experience in critical thinking, writing, and presenting to groups and, 3) provide an introduction to community organizations working in New York City in order to gain an understanding of the ways that these can promote health. The assignments in this course follow these goals and are designed to: first, encourage students to critically analyze the underlying assumptions of existing health education and promotion; second, to consider ways to address the underlying structural inequality that negatively affects health; and, finally, to be able to thinking critically, write clearly, and present effectively about these issues.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic – and How It Changed Science, Cities and the Modern World. Steven B. Johnson. (Riverhead Books, 2006). ISBN: 9781594482694

Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights and the New War on the Poor. Paul Farmer. (University of California Press, 2004). ISBN: 9780520243262

Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of a Disaster. Eric Klinenberg. (University of Chicago Press, 2003). ISBN: 9780226443225

Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane and the Color of Disaster. Michael Eric Dyson. (Westview Press, 2006). ISBN: 9780465017614

Additional required may be assigned from peer-reviewed journals. These articles will be assigned and made available via Blackboard.

VISUAL TEXTS:

Throughout the semester, we will see a number of films. These are considered “*visual texts*” for the class. An important goal of the course is to develop *critical media literacy*, and learning to “read” visual texts is a key way to do that.

For films that we watch in class, many of these films are the instructor’s personal copies and not available via the Hunter library system, so it is important that you are in class to view the films. (we do not loan out the films and will not show them twice.)

You may also be required to view some films outside of regular class time. These additional films will be available through the Hunter library system *or* available through online video viewing sites, such as YouTube (www.youtube.com).

The films are all documentaries that have a clear connection to other course material (lectures and assigned readings) and you should think about these connections as you view the films. To help guide your thinking about the connections and your critical media literacy skills, at the beginning of the semester we will provide you with “Video Worksheets.” *By the end of the semester, you should be able to make these connections and critically evaluate the documentaries on your own.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking through clear, well-organized writing.
- Evaluate community health education discourse using a critical theoretical framework that takes into account inequality in a democratic society;
- Distinguish between community-level and individual-level educational campaigns;
- Articulate a critical media literacy when screening visual texts;
- Describe how culture and social movements work to positively affect health;
- Write and present clearly about the underlying social, political, policy, environmental, economic, and cultural factors which affect health;

COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE:

- Be able to communicate effectively with the public, whether in one-to-one conversations, public speaking to groups, or through computer-mediated communication, to in order to convey knowledge of basic health and social indicators clearly and in culturally appropriate ways.
- Identify relevant languages, respectful attitudes and demonstrate deep cultural knowledge in all aspects of their work with individuals, their families, community members and colleagues.
- Find, comprehend, and review public health research relevant to specific populations, communities, and health conditions or issues. (Research analysis)
- Develop community health goals informed by community involvement and relevant public health research. (Research analysis)
- Write and prepare clear reports on their clients, their own activities and their assessments of individual and community needs.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY:*Background*

Another important element of *critical media literacy* is being fluent in digital technology, such as the Internet. This is a “blended” class, that is, the class is designed to “blend” face-to-face interaction with online interaction. There is a growing body of educational research that suggests “blended learning” is the ideal mix of learning environments because it builds additional literacy skills through online learning, while it continues to reap the benefits of interpersonal interaction in the classroom. So, for some class sessions we will “meet online” in the discussion boards; for other class sessions, we will meet in the regular classroom for face-to-face sessions; and, for other class sessions you will go into the city to better understand a community organization. Each of these sites is an equally important venue for learning and participation, and attendance (or some proxy of attendance) will be taken.

Blackboard

Details about the course, grades, and reading assignments will be posted on Blackboard. You should check Blackboard regularly.

Bookmarks

You should create a simple, effective, reliable way (Bookmark, Tab, Configure your browser so Blackboard is your homepage) to make sure you check Blackboard often. If you have difficulty accessing Blackboard, or spending time online generally, please see one of us individually to address this early on in the semester.

* * *

Hunter Email

It is very important that you be able to login to and check your Hunter email account regularly (at least once a day).

Listserv

If you have not done so already, please make sure that you sign up for the track-specific email listserv (comhe-l). This is the main way that the department will communicate with you.

* * *

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance. Attendance to class sessions is mandatory, no matter where these class sessions are held – in a classroom at Hunter, at a location in the city, or online.

Participation. (10 points) Since the class only meets once a week, it is especially important that each student attend regularly, *participate in class activities including in-class writing exercises*, and stay through the entire class period. If something prevents you from being able to meet your obligation for attending and participating in the entire class, please email me before the class that you must come late to, or leave early from or miss.

Writing Assignments. (30 points) There will be a series of three (3) assigned writing topics connected to required readings, visual texts, and in-class discussions. Each writing assignment will be worth a designated 10 points, for a total of 30 points for the semester.

Due dates for each assignment are: 9/15, 11/3, and 12/1. A more detailed review of the topics to be addressed in these assignments and the requirements for each will be handed out in a separate document.

Mid-Term Exam. (30 points) There will be one mid-term exam that will be worth 30 points of your grade. This exam will be held in class on the following date:

- **Mid-Term Exam, Thursday, 10/13 (30 points)**

There will be no make-up exams given. If you know you will not be able to attend class on this date, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to take the exam **before** the date scheduled. (In the event of a *verifiable* emergency, students will be given a different exam, completely in essay format, to fulfill the requirement.) The exam format will be as follows: in-class multiple choice and short answer (two sentences each); and a take-home essay. The take-home essay assignment for the mid-term will be to evaluate a community health issue using some of the analysis we will read during the first half of the course.

Evaluation of Two Community-Based Organizations. (30 points) After the mid-term exam, you will go into the city and conduct informational interviews (not research interviews) with at least two community-based organizations. Early in the semester, students should identify two organizations here in New York City that incorporate some community-educational strategies that have implications for health. Please note that this is slightly different from saying that you are to find organizations that are focused on “community health.” As you will see from all of the reading for this course, there are lots of ways to address community ‘education’ needs, including health, without explicitly stating that is the intended goal. After you conduct your informational interviews, you will present and discuss what learned in an informal way to others in the class. And, you will write up an evaluation that compares and contrasts the goals of each organization with your understanding of the structural causes of health disparities.

If you do not complete these assignments on time and submit them according to the specified guidelines, **you will receive a 0 for the assignment.**

Course Evaluation Rubric

Participation	10 points
Writing Assignments	30 points
Mid-Term Exam	30 points
Community Organization Evaluation	30 points
TOTAL	100 points

Grading Scale

Grading Scale

The grading scale we use in this class is the same scale used by Hunter College and is as follows:

NUMERIC	LETTER GRADE
97.5-100%	A+
92.5-97.4%	A
90.0-92.4%	A-
87.5-89.9%	B+
82.5-87.4%	B
80.0-82.4%	B-
77.5-79.9%	C+
72.4-77.4%	C
70.0-72.3%	C-
60.0-69.9%	D
59.9% and below	F

Grades Reflect the Work You Put Into the Course

Your grade is determined by your effort, ability, and the points you accumulate by doing the work, participating in class, completing assignments and submitting them in on time throughout the semester. We share a firm belief that grades should reflect students' effort and ability on the assignments given to the entire class. Therefore, we will not negotiate grades with students after the semester is completed.

No Right to an Incomplete

As a general rule, "incompletes" are a bad idea for students and for professors. Therefore, we almost never grant them. No student has the right to expect an incomplete and granting them is completely at the discretion of the professor.

Scholastic Requirements

Student grades are reviewed each semester to determine eligibility for remaining in programs of the School of Health Sciences. Each student must maintain an overall GPA of 2.5 for each semester and a grade of C or better in each major course.

WHAT I EXPECT FROM STUDENTS IN THE CLASS

- Attend class.
- Participate in discussions and exercises, both in class and online.
- Treat others in the class with respect.
- Do the assigned readings *before the class* for which they are assigned.
- *Come to class prepared to write about and discuss the readings.*
- Do online writing assignments as required and turn them in on time.
- Take exams on dates in syllabus.
- Contact the instructors with any concerns related to the course. Please use e-mail.

Failure to do any of the above will negatively affect subjective evaluation of your grade.

HUNTER COLLEGE POLICIES

Academic Honesty

It is important that all the work you do for this course reflects your own effort, ideas, and writing. This is called “intellectual honesty” or “academic honesty.” The College has a strong policy regarding this, and it reads as follows:

“Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.”

“Any deliberate borrowing of the ideas, terms, statements, or knowledge of others without clear and specific acknowledgement of the source is intellectual theft and is called plagiarism.” Hunter College 2003-2006 Graduate Catalog, page 12.

“It is not plagiarism to borrow the ideas, terms and statements, or knowledge of others if the source is clearly and specifically acknowledged. Students who consult such critical material and wish to include some of the insights, terms or statement encountered must produce full citations in an appropriate form.” Hunter College 2003-2006 Graduate Catalog, page 12

If you ever have any questions about how to avoid plagiarism, please email either of us: jdaniels@hunter.cuny.edu.

Services for Disabled Students

There is an Office of Disabled Students in Student Services, 1128 East Building, 68th Street Campus, 772-4857. Support services and accommodations are available to provide students with disabilities greater accessibility to the academic environment. Those eligible include students with mobility, visual and hearing impairments. It also includes students with learning disabilities, psychiatric disorders or any medical condition that limits one or more of life's basic functions.