

University of Florida
College of Public Health & Health Professions Syllabus
PHC3603: Critical Issues in Public Health (3 hours)
Semester: FALL 2021
Delivery Format: On-Campus/Canvas/Top-Hat

Instructor Name:	Jamie Pomeranz, PhD
Course Day and Time	Mondays Periods 3-4 9:35 am – 11:30 am
Room Number:	G301
Phone Number:	352-273-6017
Email Address:	pomeranz@ufl.edu
Office Hours:	By Appointment

Prerequisites

Students must be enrolled in the Bachelor of Health Science or the Bachelor of Public Health Program. There are no courses that you need to take as a prerequisite to this class.

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide students the opportunity to learn multiple ways to view current controversial topics in public health. The course covers current public health topics encompassing biomedical issues, social and behavioral factors related to health, and the environment.

Course Objectives and/or Goals

During this class, students will:

- Compare and contrast the most current complex public health issues and challenges in society
- Analyze peer-reviewed publications addressing controversial public health issues
- Integrate, compare, and articulate multiple perspectives of public health issues from both a proponent view and an oppositional view.
- Comprehend the influence of personal bias on how public health issues are presented.
- Synthesizing and discussing multiple viewpoints of the assigned public health issue based on current evidence and societal trends.

Blended Learning

What is blended learning and why is it important?

A Blended Learning class uses a mixture of technology and face-to-face instruction to help you maximize your learning. Knowledge content that, as the instructor, I would have traditionally presented during a live class lecture is instead provided online before the live class takes place. This lets me focus my face-to-face teaching on course activities designed to help you strengthen higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Competency in these skills is critical for today's health professional.

What is expected of you?

You are expected to actively engage in the course throughout the semester. You must come to class prepared by completing all out-of-class assignments. This preparation gives you the knowledge or practice needed to engage in higher levels of learning during the live class sessions. If you are not prepared for the face-to-face sessions, you may struggle to keep pace with the activities occurring in the live sessions, and it is unlikely that you will reach the higher learning goals of the course. Similarly, you are expected to actively participate in the live class. Your participation fosters a rich course experience for you and your peers that facilitates overall mastery of the course objectives.

Required Textbook

There is an online text for this class through Top Hat. Additionally, you will be using the website ProCon.org to complete reading assignments. ProCon.org is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization. The purpose of this website is to provide resources for critical thinking and to educate without bias. It promotes informed citizenship by presenting research on controversial issues in a straightforward, nonpartisan format.

Required Equipment

Computer, tablet, or smart phone with high speed internet access.

For technical support for this class, please contact the UF Help Desk at: Learning-support@ufl.edu, (352) 392-HELP (option 2), or <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Top Hat

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you

will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/665119>

Note: Our Course Join Code is: **665119**

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

Kritik.io

We will be using Kritik.io, a peer-to-peer learning platform in this course. It is an engaging and gamified web technology that helps you develop your higher-order-thinking skills (HOTS) according to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive thinking. It also improves your soft skills in feedback communication.

An email invitation will be sent to your school email account that contains the link to register an account on Kritik and enroll in the course.

Don't worry if you don't see any content in the course right away, I will make it available to you as we progress through the semester.

Please note that the app is currently accessible only in the browser. If you have any questions about Kritik, please contact their support team at support@kritik.io or use the live chat in the app. They usually respond promptly in a few hours. You can also visit Kritik Help Center at <https://www.kritik.io/student-user-guidance-page>, which outlines a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

Instructional Methods

- 1. Quizzes:** Following each online lecture, students will complete a 5-question quiz through canvas (10 quizzes total). You will have **ONE** chance to take each quiz and the quizzes will be timed. Each quiz will be assigned 20 minutes. The quiz for each assigned module is due the prior Sunday at 11:59 pm.
- 2. Weekly Readings:** Each week you will have assigned readings directly related to the current Week's controversial public health topic. Details of the reading assignments will be provided through Canvas.
- 3. Attendance, Professionalism and Participation:** We will meet one day per week as

outlined below. Every Monday will involve a discussion of the controversial issues and the class will engage in a “reasoned discourse” (like a debate, but without the contentious connotations) about a controversial public health issue. You are responsible for reading the assigned material prior to the discussion. You will be assigned to one of eight groups. Each group will be assigned a position to argue: four groups on the pro side, four groups on the con side.

Full participation within these discussions will count towards your participation grade. Points will be deducted from your group participation grade for the following (but not limited to): not involved in the group discussion, performing activities other than the course discussion such as texting, studying for other exams, etc., frequent absences, and unprofessional behavior. Additional points will be based on your participation on Top Hat course activities.

Attendance/Tardiness: Class is considered an appointment. Students taking an advanced course in helping professions and public health are expected to keep appointments and arrive on time, prepared to learn and remain for the entire class period. Attendance will be recorded every week. Missing more than two classes will affect your attendance, professionalism and participation grade. See Make Up Policy below for additional detail.

Faculty have received feedback from students and other colleagues regarding frequently arriving to class late. When a student enters the classroom late it is disruptive to the entire class. Tardiness is not acceptable in public health and helping professions, and will not be tolerated in the classroom. If you are more than five minutes late three times, you will lose an attendance check worth five points.

We do realize that students may have a class directly before this course at a distant location, making it difficult to arrive to class on time. Students in this situation must provide written documentation to the instructors no later than the second week of class.

4. **Exams:** There will be two exams in the course. Each exam will consist of up to 50 questions (short answer and multiple choice). The exams will not be cumulative and will cover the main ideas from the reading as well information communicated during class discussions. Please note all exams will be taken during class using Canvas. This means that you must bring a device that will allow you to take the exam.

Lock down browser- You are required to download the lock down browser for your exams. This has to be done BEFORE exam 1. If you do not have this set up on your device, you will not be permitted to take the exam until you have the browser set up. The details for the lock down browser are on Canvas.

A note about make-up exams: Make-up examinations are not normally given in this course. The only circumstances in which a makeup exam will be given are:

1. An official, University sponsored event requires you to be off campus during the exam
2. A medical emergency prevents you from attending class
3. A family emergency prevents you from attending class
4. Jury duty

5. Military service, a religious observance, or a similar obligation prevents you from attending class.
6. COVID-19 symptoms, illness or quarantine

If you miss an examination for any reason, you must contact us before the exam and you must provide written documentation of the event in order to schedule a make-up exam.

5. **Main Points Paper:** Students will be required to complete one main points paper for a selected issue by reading about the topic on ProCon.org, the Top Hat materials, and other available evidence. The goal of this assignment is for students to review important points relevant to both sides of the issue. You must state and analyze the main points of each section on ProCon.org: Background, Pro and Con (See rubrics in canvas). This assignment is to be submitted through Canvas prior to the topic being discussed in class. For example, if you picked the topic Vaccines for your Main Points Paper, your Paper will be due on 9/12/2021 @ 11:59 pm given that Vaccines is taught on 9/13/2021. Five points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late (no exceptions). This allows you plenty of time to write your paper and also ask questions.

You will use the groups tab in Canvas to choose your topic. You are allowed to pick only one topic. Please contact the instructor should you have questions or concerns. Your topic selections must be completed on or before 9/7/2021 @ 5pm. Failure to do so will result in reduction of possible points from your assigned paper grades.

6. **Policy Brief Paper (Group Assignment)**

You must complete a Policy Brief on an assigned topic. You will be ASSIGNED to either a Pro or Con side of the topic. You CANNOT pick which side you prefer or personally support. The purpose of this assignment is to force you to advocate for a perspective regardless of your own personal opinion.

You are to pretend you are working for a legislative lobbying organization. In each Policy Brief you will attempt to persuade a Congress person to vote for your side or fund your assigned side of the topic. One goal of this assignment is to have you summarize information in a concise manner. Students sometimes assume that more information is better. Concise summary is an important skill, especially when attempting to convince someone of a particular point-of-view. You will complete this assignment as a group. Your group will put together a handout which will be used as a presentation document for your group to present to the class. You will record your presentation as a group. Your presentation should be no more than 10 minutes in length. Please see Canvas for additional details. Your Policy Brief handout and presentation must be submitted via Canvas on or before 11/29/2021 @ 5pm.

7. **Kritik Black Lives Matter Assignment:** So much is happening right now in our society that is affecting every single human being. However, the racial injustices that have plagued this country long before COVID-19 are, and should be, our top Public Health priority. We should all be asking ourselves how we can help address these issues not by just denouncing the injustices, but by playing an active role in creating change. This is your first step in creating real change. All of the topics we are covering in this class always brings social injustice to the forefront. This assignment will allow you as students to reflect on and discuss how racial injustice impacts each of the topics we discuss in class. You will also have an opportunity

review and evaluate your peers as they reflect and propose ideas to address such inequalities from a public health perspective.

Each week you will be asked to reflect and address social injustice and racial inequality as it pertains to the weekly critical issue. The due dates for (1) Creation – Tuesday following class at 11:59 pm, (2) Evaluation – Friday at 11:59 pm and (3) Feedback – Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Calendar

Week	Date(s)	Topic(s)	Readings
1	08/23/21	Course Overview	Syllabus/Top Hat Chapter 1 Introduction
2	08/30/21	E-Cigarettes	Top Hat Chapter 2 and https://www.procon.org/headlines/is-vaping-with-e-cigarettes-safe/
3	09/06/21	No Class - Labor day	
4	09/13/21	Vaccines	Top Hat Chapter 3 and https://vaccines.procon.org/
5	09/20/21	Social Media	Top Hat Chapter 4 and https://socialnetworking.procon.org/
6	09/27/21	Healthcare	Top Hat Chapter 5 and https://healthcare.procon.org/
7	10/4/21	Abortion	Top Hat Chapter 6 and https://abortion.procon.org/
8	10/11/21	Exam One	
9	10/18/21	Marijuana	Top Hat Chapter 7 and https://medicalmarijuana.procon.org/
10	10/25/21	Immigration	Top Hat Chapter 8 and https://immigration.procon.org/
11	11/1/21	Gun Control	Top hat Chapter 9 and https://gun-control.procon.org/
12	11/8/21	Obesity	Top Hat Chapter 10 and https://obesity.procon.org/
13	11/15/21	Right to Die	Top Hat Chapter 11 and https://euthanasia.procon.org/
14	11/22/21	Drug Use and Sports	Top Hat Chapter 12 and https://sportsanddrugs.procon.org/
15	11/29/21	Defund the Police	Top Hat Chapter 13 and https://www.procon.org/headlines/defund-the-police-top-3-pros-and-cons/
16	12/6/21	Exam Two	

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

UNDERGRADUATE Grading:

1.	Two Exams @ 20 % each	40 %
2.	Main Point Paper	10 %
3.	Policy Brief Paper	10 %
4.	Attendance/Professionalism/ Participation	10 %
5.	Weekly Quizzes	10 %
6.	Kritik Assignments	20 %
	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	100

Translating Number of Points to Letter Grades

Letter Grade	Letter Grade
A (93-100%)	C+ (77-79%)
A- (90-92%)	C (70-76%)
B+ (87-89%)	D+ (67-69%)
B (83-86%)	D (63-66%)
B- (80-82%)	D- (60-62%)
	E (<60%)

Please be aware that the Bachelor of Health Science Program does not use C- grades.

For greater detail on the meaning of letter grades and university policies related to them, see the Registrar's Grade Policy regulations at:

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Make Up Policy

Make-up for attendance is not normally given in this course. The only circumstances in which a makeup attendance check will be given are:

1. An official, University sponsored event requires you to be off campus during the exam
2. A medical emergency prevents you from attending class
3. A family emergency prevents you from attending class
4. Jury duty
5. Military service, a religious observance, or a similar obligation prevents you from attending class.
6. COVID-19 symptoms, illness or quarantine

In the event that students miss more than two classes due to COVID-19 symptoms or the need to quarantine, students will be asked to complete an additional Main Point paper on a topic assigned by the instructor. Excessive absences may require additional make up assignments at the discretion of the instructor.

UF Policy Related to Required Class Attendance

All faculty are bound by the UF policy for excused absences. For information regarding the UF Attendance Policy see the Registrar website for additional details:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>
<http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html>

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

COVID-Related Illness or Quarantine

In the event that an instructor has to miss class due to a COVID-related illness or quarantine, students will be asked to participate in an online, synchronous class section using Zoom. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Professionalism and COVID

As students pursuing a path in the health professions or public health, it is crucial to demonstrate professional behaviors that reflect integrity and commitment to the health of patients, fellow health professionals, and to populations we serve. To accomplish this, a strong responsibility for the well-being of others must be evident in our decisions, along with accountability for our actions. Professionalism in the health disciplines requires adherence to high standards of conduct that begin long before graduation. This is particularly true during times of health emergencies such as the

COVID pandemic, given our professional habits can have a direct impact upon the health of persons entrusted to us.

If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit this link for details on where to get your shot, including options that do not require an appointment:

<https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/vaccinations/vaccine-availability/>. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.

In response to COVID-19, the following professional practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to protect the health and safety of ourselves, our patients, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times while in Health Science Center classrooms and within Health Science Center buildings even if you are vaccinated.
- If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website for more information.
- Continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing.
- Avoid crowded places (including gatherings/parties with more than 10 people)

Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class. Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.

Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

Continue to regularly visit coronavirus.UFHealth.org and coronavirus.ufl.edu for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> for information about COVID-19 symptoms, which may include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of taste or smell.

Policy Related to Guests Attending Class:

Only registered students are permitted to attend class. However, we recognize that students who are caretakers may face occasional unexpected challenges creating attendance barriers. Therefore, by exception, a department chair or his or her designee (e.g., instructors) may grant a student permission to bring a guest(s) for a total of two class sessions per semester. This is two sessions total across all courses. No further extensions will be granted. Please note that guests are **not** permitted to attend either cadaver or wet labs. Students are responsible for course material regardless of attendance. For additional information, please review the Classroom Guests of Students policy in its entirety. Link to full policy:

<http://facstaff.phhp.ufl.edu/services/resourceguide/getstarted.htm>

SUPPORT SERVICES

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, it is strongly recommended you register with the Dean of Students Office <http://www.dso.ufl.edu> within the first week of class or as soon as you believe you might be eligible for accommodations. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation of accommodations to you, which you must then give to me as the instructor of the course to receive accommodations. Please do this as soon as possible after you receive the letter. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

Students in UF Health Sciences programs should be mindful that unique course accommodations may not be applicable in a clinical, fieldwork or practicum setting. Thus, planning a semester in advance with the DRC Health Sciences Learning Specialist, Lisa Diekow ldiekow@ufsa.ufl.edu , is highly encouraged.

Counseling and Student Health

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- The Counseling and Wellness Center 352-392-1575 offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>. On line and in person assistance is available.
- You Matter We Care website: <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.
- The Student Health Care Center at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at: <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>

- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from:
Alachua County Crisis Center:
(352) 264-6789
<http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Public health and health professions are based on the belief in human dignity and on respect for the individual. As we share our personal beliefs inside or outside of the classroom, it is always with the understanding that we value and respect diversity of background, experience, and opinion, where every individual feels valued. We believe in, and promote, openness and tolerance of differences in ethnicity and culture, and we respect differing personal, spiritual, religious and political values. We further believe that celebrating such diversity enriches the quality of the educational experiences we provide our students and enhances our own personal and professional relationships. We embrace The University of Florida's Non-Discrimination Policy, which reads, "The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act." If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities for inclusive learning environment, please see your instructor or refer to the Office of Multicultural & Diversity Affairs website: www.multicultural.ufl.edu