

Department of Public Health

The Department of Public Health offers a Master of Public Health (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-health-sciences/public-health/master-public-health-mph/>) program that provides students with competencies required to understand the unique challenges inherent to public health practice and education. All students receive a specialization in health equity. The curriculum reflects the College of Nursing and Health Sciences mission and emphasizes the conceptual, analytical, and experiential skills required to serve in the public health sector. Throughout the program, an emphasis is placed on the five core areas of public health: biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health policy and management, and social and behavioral sciences. There are also seven cross-cutting areas interwoven into the curriculum: communication, diversity and culture, leadership, professionalism and ethics, program planning and assessment, public health biology, and systems thinking.

Students may choose from various electives that cover different public health areas of interest: biostatistics and epidemiology, social and behavioral science, public health policy, healthcare administration, health promotion and education, international health, environmental health, and disaster health and emergency preparedness. Students should check with the department regarding elective availability, then meet with an advisor to develop a course plan that is consistent with their desired electives.

Transfer of Credits

Following admission, 9 units of approved graduate work completed elsewhere may be applied toward the MPH degree.

Additional Requirements

At the beginning of clinical coursework, including the field practicum, students are required to provide documentation of TB screening and immunizations appropriate for the clinical or field practicum setting.

A student's health status must permit him/her to safely undertake and complete clinical (field practicum) experience required for the degree. As a fully prepared public health practitioner, the student is expected to take responsibility for self-evaluation of her/his health status, including an assessment of the safety and appropriateness of practice in the clinical context.

The Joint Commission (<https://www.jointcommission.org/>), contracted facilities, and the College of Nursing and Health Sciences require that all graduate students undergo a background check prior to their placement at clinical and field practicum sites. The cost of the background check is the responsibility of the student. International students have additional fees based on the cost of a background check in their country.

Students may select additional elective courses to support their programs of study as directed by faculty.

Programs

Master's

- Master of Public Health (<http://catalog.apu.edu/academics/college-nursing-health-sciences/school-health-sciences/public-health/master-public-health-mph/>)

Courses

GSPH 504, Bioethics and Healthcare Policy, 3 Units

This course will outline the role of the healthcare leader in ensuring human rights are upheld in healthcare systems. This course focuses on bioethical analysis, decision-making and moral policy analysis, and formulation. Through course discussion, group and individual assignments, and oral and written presentations, students will analyze and apply bioethical principles to decision- and policy- making processes in the workplace and at national levels. Healthcare ethics and policy will be considered from a Christian worldview.

GSPH 506, Spiritual Concept Analysis in Health Care, 3 Units

This course focuses on scholarly research and analysis of selected concepts in the spiritual care of people from the Judeo-Christian perspective. Students also examine healthcare research/other healthcare literature for adequacy with respect to the concept they select. Various assignments facilitate greater student awareness of their own spiritual journeys and knowledge of faith traditions other than their own. The course is conducted as a tutorial/seminar experience.

GSPH 508C, Research and Theory in Health Care, 3 Units

This course prepares the healthcare practitioner to apply theory and research evidence in healthcare environments. The relationship between theory and research is examined as students consider questions about the nature, construction, and use of each. Selected theories are explored, and students learn how ideas are developed and used in practice and research. Students also learn the fundamentals of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research and deepen their understanding through systematic search, critique, and summary of research studies with application to health care. Students work in groups to develop a research plan addressing a healthcare-derived question. Experience in statistical analysis of research data is included.

GSPH 510, Social Determinants of Health, 3 Units

A central focus of the public health field is understanding the etiology, occurrence, and distribution of health outcomes (morbidity and mortality). One growing area of importance within the field is examining how health and disease are influenced and maintained by social, economic, and political risk factors - called social determinants of health. This course provides a macro-level overview of concepts, research, and theoretical models of social determinants of health. Through interactive lectures, readings, and assignments, students are exposed to major areas of study linked to social determinants of health, with discussions centered on the following key questions: What social factors are the greatest challenge to health outcomes within local communities? What does it mean to use a social determinants lens when studying health outcomes among diverse multicultural populations? What are health disparities and how might they best be addressed? What behavioral lifestyle factors commonly interplay with social determinants of health?

GSPH 512, Health, Culture, and Diversity, 3 Units

This course covers the issues of health disparities in the United States and the development of culturally competent programs. Students examine what is meant by culture, the ways in which culture and health issues intersect, and how public health efforts can benefit by understanding and working with cultural processes.

GSPH 514, Research Proposal Writing, 2 Units

This course focuses on the application of the concepts in GSPH 508C Research and Theory in Health Care. The goal is the completion of a research proposal that details the problem, the research purpose, questions or hypotheses to be tested, a critique of the literature, the design and methods of the study including protection of human subjects, the plans for analysis, use of the study, and the budget and personnel.

Prerequisite: GSPH 508C

GSPH 515, Health Care Entrepreneurship, 3 Units

The course provides an opportunity to combine the strengths of public health training with new and existing approaches to social innovation and entrepreneurship from a Christian perspective. Students have opportunities to imagine solutions and mobilize resources to advance the public good and strengthen public health service. Course material introduces entrepreneurial concepts and tools to develop skills for use in various business environments.

GSPH 518, Population Health Management, 3 Units

This course covers important topics in the effective management of public health departments and agencies. Students develop knowledge and skills to fulfill roles in public health management as leaders, administrators, fundraisers, and internal and external communicators. Course content includes ways to be an effective coach to maximize the team's performance, the essentials of effective partnerships, how to create and sustain public health initiatives using business skills, how to run meetings, ways to manage electronic correspondence, and effective strategies to keep the public health organization running smoothly.

GSPH 519, Global Health Systems, 3 Units

This course examines international health systems in terms of infrastructure and function. Students examine the benefits and risks of universal healthcare, third party reimbursement systems, and global availability and access to medical services.

GSPH 520, Public Policy, the Health Care System, and Public Health Policy in the United States, 3 Units

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of public policy, health care systems and public health policy process in the United States. Students will gain an understanding of how the healthcare system works and how United States public health care policy has been developed. Review and analysis of current various proposals for healthcare reform will be conducted.

GSPH 521, Poverty and Health Policy, 3 Units

This course examines the nature and extent of poverty, health equity, and policy primarily in the United States. It considers possible causes and consequences, and the antipoverty effects of existing and proposed policies. This course will discuss labor markets, culture, and discrimination in shaping poverty. Also, it will explore how health policies seek to ameliorate poverty and other forms of social disadvantage throughout the life course. Finally, we explore the public health implications regarding poverty, inequality, and policy.

GSPH 522, Cultural Inclusivity in Health Care, 3 Units

In this course, students explore the topics and tools necessary for the application of cultural inclusivity processes in various healthcare settings. Curriculum includes an overview of demographic changes in the United States, cultural inclusivity, diversity related to specific groups, and the paradigm of cultural and linguistic diversity. Attention is also given to the costs, time, and skill sets associated with the process of moving a healthcare organization toward cultural inclusivity.

GSPH 525, Epidemiology, 3 Units

This course covers the application of epidemiological procedures to the understanding of the occurrence and control of conditions such as infections and chronic diseases, mental disorders, community and environmental health hazards, unintentional injuries, and geriatric problems. Other topics include quantitative aspects of epidemiology, including data sources, measures of morbidity and mortality, evaluation of association and causality, study design, and screening for disease.

Prerequisite: Undergraduate statistics and biology courses.

GSPH 526, Public Health Biology, 3 Units

Human health problems comprise a wide range of infectious, degenerative, neoplastic, and genetically based disease factors. In addition to these factors, human disease results from a wide range of environmental and socially caused pathologies. This course presents the basic scientific and biomedical concepts of modern public health problems and explores the mechanisms and models of the major categories of disease. An integrative approach using knowledge of nutrition, exercise, mind-body, and spiritual practices is explored. The biologic principles presented in this course are foundations to developing and implementing public health disease prevention, control, or management programs in the students' future.

GSPH 527, Advanced Biostatistics and Epidemiology, 3 Units

This course focuses on the application of statistical approaches in epidemiologic research, covering data management and selection of the appropriate statistical model. Regression analysis including linear regression, logistic regression, Poisson regression, and Cox regression is reviewed. Content also covers basic concepts in survival analysis including censoring, survival function, and hazard function. Epidemiologic methods for assessing causation, including mediation analysis, propensity score matching, and instrumental variable analysis, are also covered. Students learn to apply different analytic approaches using public databases.

GSPH 532, Infectious Disease Epidemiology, 3 Units

This course covers key methods for practicing infectious disease epidemiology, including study design, interpretation of data, and assessment of validity. Course content covers methods in infectious disease epidemiology, airborne transmission, diarrheal diseases, blood and body fluids as reservoirs of infectious disease, vector-borne/zoonotic diseases, and parasitic diseases. Students learn how to apply content and use problem-solving skills to develop effective prevention strategies.

GSPH 535, Environmental Health, 3 Units

This course examines essential issues in environmental health, including the scientific and historical foundations, regulatory and policy issues, models and tools for assessing community environmental health, and an overview of select issues and implications of the environment on national and global health. Topics explored include select environmental pollutants in the air, water, soil, and food sources; hazardous waste, risk assessment and communication; and issues of environmental justice and vulnerable populations, nationally and globally.

Prerequisite: Undergraduate biology, chemistry, or ecology

GSPH 537, Occupational Health and Safety, 3 Units

This course examines concepts and issues in occupational health and safety, identifying the significance to workers and public health. Students study social influences, historical events of worker injuries, industrial hygiene, and applicable principles of toxicology, worker quality of life, and safety in the workplace.

GSPH 540, Global Health, 3 Units

Students in this course examine global health issues, emerging priorities, and worldwide challenges affecting population health and disease. They also address opportunities in and challenges to international health, holistically examine determinants of human health, and plan, implement, and evaluate programs and potential solutions to promote international prevention interventions and optimal human health worldwide, with a focus on global health equity.

GSPH 543, Public Health Communication, 3 Units

This course provides an overview of the use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community health decisions, with a focus on how communication concepts, theories, and methods are used for public health promotion and practice. Health communication theories include models of persuasive communications/mass media effects, social marketing, interpersonal communications, risk perceptions, and diffusion of innovations. Students work in pairs to develop/evaluate a health communication intervention that addresses a current public health issue within a specific target group.

GSPH 546, Principles and Practices of Toxicology, 3 Units

Students in this course examine the principles of toxicology, including dose-response relationships, toxicokinetics, mechanisms and methods of toxicity, select exposures to toxic substances and accompanying toxidromes, the use of antidotes, and relevance to public health.

GSPH 550, Assessment, Program Planning, and Evaluation, 3 Units

Assessment, program planning, and evaluation bridges the gap between conceptual definitions, conceptual frameworks, and practice. Students take the lead in translating evidence-based research findings to evaluation of existing and proposed public health programs in order to assess and address population health needs. Students develop a program and evaluation plan that includes evidence-based and best practices, a logic model, and formative and summative evaluation.

GSPH 551, Theories of Health Behavior, 3 Units

This course helps students develop a knowledge foundation of health behavior theories and skills for developing theoretically based behavior-change programs. Given that a major focus of public health promotion, education, and prevention programs is on "changing health behavior," there is an ongoing quest to understand why people do what they do to (a) improve or maintain their health, and/or (b) worsen their health. Through lectures, readings, and assignments, students critically review and apply a range of health behavior theories that target the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and community levels.

GSPH 555, Infectious Diseases and Public Health, 3 Units

Students in this course examine the role of infectious diseases in regional, national, and global public health. Students study the historical context and surveillance of communicable diseases, as well as emerging issues in the field. Course content also includes the identification and management of infectious diseases, with students using case studies and proposing threats along with opportunities in prevention, education, and health promotion.

GSPH 560, Strategic Leadership in Health Care, 3 Units

This course is designed to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes about leadership across the healthcare continuum. The student will consider the professional role of the healthcare administrator both from a leadership and a management perspective. Areas of concentration will include leadership theory, structure of healthcare institutions, systems thinking and decision-making, performance improvement including quality and safety issues, risk management and effective communication skills. Application of business skills will be integrated. Students will consider the theoretical and research background, current issues and trends, leadership and administrative implications of specific topics.

GSPH 561, Public Health Across the Disaster Cycle, 3 Units

Students in this course evaluate the roles of public health in natural and human-caused disasters, from "simple" to complex humanitarian events. Using case studies, students analyze the functions of public health agencies and practitioners in the context of institutional systems and the disaster cycle (prevention/preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation). Field trips outside of class hours may be required.

GSPH 566, Politics and Policies in Disaster Health and Emergency Preparedness, 3 Units

Students in this course evaluate existing governmental and institutional policies related to disaster health and emergency management (DHEM) within political systems. Implementation and evaluation of policy are analyzed and applied.

GSPH 568, Health Care Finance, 3 Units

This course is an introduction to financial concepts and skills needed for healthcare leaders, managers, and executives. Students develop skills in assessing multiple dimensions of financial performance and learn methods to improve the financial health of an organization in the context of the current patient care system.

GSPH 571, International Health Care, 2-4 Units

This course provides students with experience in nursing care in other countries. Students prepare with coursework in the United States, then travel abroad, where they have experiences in acute and/or chronic care settings, exploring cultural, economic, systems, philosophical, and other aspects of care that influence the provision of health care in other countries. A debriefing period is provided upon return.

GSPH 581, Disaster Health and Emergency Management Principles and Practices, 3 Units

Students in this course examine the practice of emergency management and the evolving field of disaster health. Content addresses traditional and current perspectives related to understanding disaster cycles and the relationship between disaster research and practice.

GSPH 593, Field Practicum, 3 Units

In this integrative learning experience, students complete hours in the field applying coursework and classroom learning in a real-world setting under the guidance and supervision of faculty and community-based preceptors, preparing them for professional careers in public health.

GSPH 594, Additional Field Practicum Experience, 1-5 Units

This field practicum elective gives students the opportunity to complete additional hours of practicum experience, allowing them to directly apply course content, public health knowledge, and skills acquired from the MPH program, under the guidance and supervision of faculty and community-based preceptors. This experience enriches classroom activity with practical understanding, and give students the chance to demonstrate an integration of coursework into a real-world setting, preparing them for a professional career in public health.

Prerequisite: GSPH 593

GSPH 595, Special Topics in Public Health, 1-6 Units

In this course, a topic of current interest to students is examined in depth. Students analyze and evaluate topics/issues to reach and express a position, enhance personal development and/or to develop a particular project. If students elect this course more than once during their program, each such course must address a different topic.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

GSPH 597, Capstone, 1 Unit

This guided-study course provides a summative experience for completion of the Master in Public Health program and guides the student through the process of demonstrating an integration of theoretical, clinical, and research knowledge from course work throughout the program to the solution of a major public health problem in this culminating project. Each graduate candidate will identify a unique health problem in an actual healthcare setting to address, perform a thorough review and synthesis of current literature, select an appropriate theoretical framework, and develop a creative and innovative solution to the problem. Candidates will meet regularly throughout the semester with course faculty to prepare for and discuss their progress and will submit their work for publication or comparable external review format at the end of the semester.

Prerequisite: Completion of all Academic Core and Specialty courses

GSPH 598, Thesis, 1 Unit

This course is the second part of a two-course sequence (after GSPH 514 Research Proposal Writing) that supports student development of a thesis in the Master of Public Health program. The thesis has served as an option to the master's capstone project.

Prerequisite: GSPH 514

GSPH 599, Readings in Public Health, 1-3 Units

A student may elect to pursue special interests for credit at any time during the program under the supervision of a faculty member. This course is an independent study, arranged with a faculty member of the Department of Public Health.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing

GSPH 613, Graduate Statistics, 3 Units

This course presents the knowledge of descriptive, correlational, and inferential statistics used in research that serves as the basis for evidence-based practice. Students develop the ability to perform descriptive and inferential data analysis techniques, use software applications to aid in statistical calculations and presentation, and interpret findings.

Prerequisite: Undergraduate statistics and biology courses.

GSPH 615, Grant Writing, 3 Units

This course gives students an opportunity to identify funding needs of nonprofit organizations, research and identify potential grant sources, and learn how to write a competitive grant proposal. Students learn the components of grant proposals, and acquire technical knowledge on designing supporting documents such as project timelines, logic models, work plans, and budgets.