Public health seeks to understand, and also to protect and improve, health at the level of a community or population. Communities make decisions and allocate resources that, intentionally or not, fundamentally shape human life. For example, great reductions in sickness and early death have come from social interventions with relatively low financial cost, such as physically separating drinking water from sewage, or distributing aspirin, condoms, mosquito nets, vaccines or soap, or sharing new ideas about life’s possibilities. The way a society is organized affects the way that social and scientific knowledge is distributed within it; access to that knowledge shapes health at the individual level. At its heart, the study of public health focuses on questions about relationships between science and society, and between reality and possibility: what effective public health policy is and how we can measure its effectiveness; what the relationship is, and ought to be, between research and policy; how we reconcile important moral and economic claims, or balance other values that compete with maximizing health; what counts as disease, over time and among cultures; how we think about cause and responsibility; what constitutes a healthy environment; how our fundamental beliefs determine our approaches to health decisions; and how such decisions ought to be made.

Requirements

Application to the concentration must be completed in the Spring of sophomore year. Applications are due during pre-registration. Application materials can be obtained on the public health website public-health.williams.edu by early April or by e-mailing the chair of the program. Due to excess demand for the concentration, applicants are not guaranteed admittance to the program. Depending on availability, a few students may be admitted in the Spring of Junior year with a mid-April deadline.

All students wishing to pursue the Area of Concentration should take this course early in their careers, preferably sophomore year. Students may petition the advisory committee to substitute a course taken in a study-abroad program focused on global health, providing that the course is equivalent in scope. However, students who plan to take advantage of this option should have taken at least two other courses from among the electives by the end of their sophomore year, and should recognize that those who lack a foundation in the core issues of the field may find it more challenging to prepare their proposal for admission to the concentration.

Statistics

Statistical analysis is at the heart of the quantitative tools necessary to study the health of populations. One course in statistics from the list below is required of all concentrators.

Elective Courses

Concentrators must take at least three electives, with at least two different prefixes, from the list below. Elective courses are grouped by category, but these clusters are not meant to constrain students to a single “track” within the program. Instead, each student is free to determine, with the guidance of an advisory committee member(s), a set of electives that provides an intellectually coherent exploration of their particular areas of interest within the field of public health. In choosing electives, students should consider the balance of breadth versus depth that will allow them to gain theoretical and methodological sophistication in one or more areas. Students may not substitute an independent study for any of these electives. Winter Study courses may not be counted towards the electives.

Experiential Component

Because many public health challenges cannot be fully appreciated until one has hands-on experience with real communities and actual populations, each concentrator must have at least one relevant field-based educational experience with a research component. This requirement may be met through participation in an approved study abroad program (see below), one of the Winter study courses marked with an asterisk, a WS99 project, or a not-for-credit summer or academic-year internship. In every case, the advisory committee must approve the project in advance. Please note that experiential component should address both the “public” and “health” in public health. Projects that center on clinical or lab or that do not have a meaningful health component will generally not satisfy the PH experiential requirement.

PHLH 402 (S) Senior Seminar in Public Health
The capstone seminar provides concentrators with the opportunity to reflect upon and synthesize their experiential learning in the context of understanding gained from a cohesive set of elective courses, and through the lens of a variety of intellectual and disciplinary frameworks. A second goal is to give concentrators experience working in a multi-disciplinary team to address a real-world, and in many cases very daunting, public health problem. Students will read, discuss, and compose written reflections on primary source empirical papers addressing a range of issues and disciplines in the field of public health. For example, topics may include the social determinants of health, environmental health risks, and access to health care. Students will also be divided into three or four research teams to investigate a contemporary real-life issue in public health by designing a study; collecting and analyzing data; and disseminating findings by written report and formal oral presentation to the public health advisory committee faculty. The capstone course is required of all concentrators, but may be opened to other students with relevant experience at the discretion of the instructor and the advisory committee, if space permits.

Written Proposal
To be considered for admission to the Area of Concentration in Public Health, students must submit a written statement describing the portfolio of courses, study abroad, and experiential learning component(s) they intend to pursue. In this proposal, candidates for the concentration should describe their intellectual goals, and if relevant, how these relate to their professional goals. A fundamental purpose of the proposal requirement is to encourage the student to consider concretely how s/he will engage with socio-cultural, behavioral, policy, and/or biomedical aspects of population health. To this end, students should address whether a methodological or disciplinary emphasis ties their chosen courses together, and how the intended experiential component will relate to this set of questions. This proposal is due by the end of course registration period in the spring of the sophomore year, and should be prepared in consultation with a member of the advisory committee. Concentrators are required to revisit and update their proposal prior to registration in the spring of the junior year, and to provide documentation of their internship experience both prospectively and retrospectively. Please note electives will not be offered every year. Students should check the course catalog as they considering possible electives.

PHLH Bioethics + Interpretations of Health

**CHIN 253 / COMP 254 / WGSS 255 SEM "Illness" in Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature and Culture**

- Taught by: Man He
- [Catalog details](#)

**PHIL 211(S) TUT Ethics of Public Health**

- Taught by: Julie Pedroni
- [Catalog details](#)

**PHIL 213(F) TUT Biomedical Ethics**

- Taught by: Julie Pedroni
- [Catalog details](#)

**PHIL 228 / STS 228 / WGSS 228 LEC Feminist Bioethics**

- Taught by: Julie Pedroni
- [Catalog details](#)

**PHIL 337 TUT Justice in Health Care**

- Taught by: Julie Pedroni
- [Catalog details](#)

**PSYC 354(S) SEM Health Psychology**

- Taught by: Rebecca Crochiere
- [Catalog details](#)

**REL 246 / ANTH 246 / ASIA 246 / WGSS 246 TUT India's Identities: Nation, Community, & Individual**

- Taught by: Kim Gutschow
- [Catalog details](#)

**STS 311 / AMST 352 / ASIA 352 SEM Global Health in the Transpacific**

- Taught by: Shoan Yin Cheung
- [Catalog details](#)

PHLH Biomedical Determinants of Health

**BIOL 134 / ENVI 134(F) LEC The Tropics: Biology and Social Issues**

- Taught by: TBA
- [Catalog details](#)

**BIOL 219 TUT Dangerous Exposures: Environment, Immunity, and Infectious Disease**

- Taught by: Lois Banta
- [Catalog details](#)

**BIOL 313(S) LEC Immunology**

- Taught by: Damian Turner
- [Catalog details](#)

**BIOL 315 LEC Microbiology: Diversity, Cellular Physiology, and Interactions**

- Taught by: Lois Banta
- [Catalog details](#)
BIOL 417 SEM Translational Immunology: From Bench to Bedside
  Taught by: Damian Turner
  Catalog details
PSYC 313 / NSCI 313 SEM Opioids and the Opioid Crisis: The Neuroscience Behind an Epidemic
  Taught by: Shivon Robinson
  Catalog details
PSYC 335(S) SEM Early Experience and the Developing Infant
  Taught by: Amie Hane
  Catalog details

PHLH Core Courses

PHLH 201(S) SEM Dimensions of Public Health
  Taught by: Marion Min-Barron
  Catalog details
PHLH 402(S) SEM Senior Seminar in Public Health
  Taught by: Kiaran Honderich
  Catalog details

PHLH Decision-Making by Institutions + Individuals

ECON 205 SEM Public Economics
  Taught by: TBA
  Catalog details
ECON 230 LEC The Economics of Health and Health Care
  Taught by: Lara Shore-Sheppard
  Catalog details
ECON 381 / ECON 571(S) LEC Global Health Policy Challenges
  Taught by: Susan Godlonton
  Catalog details
ECON 465(S) SEM Pollution and Labor Markets
  Taught by: Matthew Gibson
  Catalog details
ECON 468 SEM Your Money or Your Life: Health Disparities in the United States
  Taught by: Tara Watson
  Catalog details
ECON 504(F) SEM Public Economics in Developing Countries
  Taught by: Jon Bakija
  Catalog details
PSCI 209 / WGSS 209(F) SEM Poverty in America
  Taught by: Cathy Johnson
  Catalog details
PSCI 228 LEC International Organization
  Taught by: Cheryl Shanks
  Catalog details
PSYC 326 SEM Choice and Decision Making
  Taught by: Kris Kirby
  Catalog details

PHLH Methods in Public Health

ANTH 371 / STS 370 / WGSS 371(F) SEM Campus and Community Health in Disruptive Times
  Taught by: Kim Gutschow
  Catalog details
ECON 523 / ECON 379(S) SEM Program Evaluation for International Development
  Taught by: Pamela Jakiela
  Catalog details
MATH 412(S) LEC Mathematical Biology
  Taught by: Julie Blackwood
  Catalog details

PHLH Nutrition, Food Security, and Environmental Health

AFR 211 / AMST 211 / ENVI 211 / SOC 211(S) LEC Race, Environment, and the Body
  Taught by: TBA
  Catalog details
BIOL 220 / ENVI 220(S) LEC Field Botany and Plant Natural History
  Taught by: Joan Edwards
  Catalog details

BIOL 308(S) LEC Integrative Plant Biology: Fundamentals and New Frontiers
  Taught by: Claire Ting
  Catalog details

ENVI 230 SEM Geographies of Food Justice
  Taught by: April Merleaux
  Catalog details

ENVI 246 / AMST 245 / HIST 265 SEM Race, Power, & Food History
  Taught by: April Merleaux
  Catalog details

GEOS 207 / ENVI 201(S) LEC The Geoscience of Epidemiology and Public Health
  Taught by: TBA
  Catalog details

PHLH 220 SEM International Nutrition
  Taught by: Marion Min-Barron
  Catalog details

PHLH Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health

PHLH 310 SEM Equity in Health
  Taught by: Mats Målqvist
  Catalog details

PSYC 335(S) SEM Early Experience and the Developing Infant
  Taught by: Amie Hane
  Catalog details

PSYC 356(S) SEM Developmental Psychopathology: Trajectories of Risk and Resilience
  Taught by: Catherine Stroud
  Catalog details

STS 102 / WGSS 103 TUT Breeding Controversy: Technologies and Ideologies of Population Control
  Taught by: Shoan Yin Cheung
  Catalog details

PHLH Social Determinants of Health

AFR 211 / AMST 211 / ENVI 211 / SOC 211(S) LEC Race, Environment, and the Body
  Taught by: TBA
  Catalog details

ECON 380 / ECON 519 LEC Population Economics
  Taught by: Lucie Schmidt
  Catalog details

ECON 468 SEM Your Money or Your Life: Health Disparities in the United States
  Taught by: Tara Watson
  Catalog details

PHLH 310 SEM Equity in Health
  Taught by: Mats Målqvist
  Catalog details

PHLH 351(F) TUT Racism in Public Health
  Taught by: Marion Min-Barron
  Catalog details

PSCI 209 / WGSS 209(F) SEM Poverty in America
  Taught by: Cathy Johnson
  Catalog details

PSYC 356(F) SEM Asylum: Understanding the Psychological Effects of Persecution, Trauma, and the Migration Experience
  Taught by: Jennifer McQuaid
  Catalog details

REL 269 / ANTH 269 / ASIA 269 / STS 269(F) TUT Mindfulness Examined: Meditation, Emotion, and Affective Neuroscience
  Taught by: Kim Gutschow
  Catalog details

STS 215 / GBST 217 SEM Viral Inequality: Power and Difference in Pandemics
  Taught by: Shoan Yin Cheung
  Catalog details

PHLH Statistics Courses
PHLH 201  (S)  Dimensions of Public Health  (DPE)

Public health is concerned with protecting and improving health at the level of a community or population. Although individual behavior is an essential element of public health, collective, rather than individual, outcomes are the focus of public health study. In this course we will survey the field of public health, introducing students to core concepts and methods that highlight the interrelationship of individual choice and social institutions with environmental and biological factors in producing health outcomes at the population level. We will develop these concepts and methods within the context of signal cases and public health crises.

Requirements/Evaluation:  two papers on a selected population or country and health issue, peer reviews and active contribution to class discussion

Prerequisites:  none

Enrollment Limit:  14

Enrollment Preferences:  sophomores, potential Public Health concentrators

Expected Class Size:  14

Grading:  no pass/fail option,  yes fifth course option

Distributions:  No divisional credit  (DPE)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes:  This course fulfills the DPE requirement because of its central focus on the ways that difference and power shape health outcomes in the U.S. and internationally. It uses an interdisciplinary approach to explore issues including the historical relations between communities of color, healthcare providers, and public health practitioners; contestation over the role of markets and government in public health; and
differing explanations for the patterns of race, class, etc., in health outcomes.

Attributes: PHLH Core Courses

Spring 2023

SEM Section: 01  M 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm  Marion Min-Barron
SEM Section: 02  W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm  Marion Min-Barron

PHLH 220  (F) International Nutrition  (DPE) (WS)
Global malnutrition continues to represent one of the most challenging issues of international development. Problems of both under- and overnutrition beginning as early as in utero can detrimentally influence the health, development and survival of resource-limited populations. This course introduces students to the most prevalent nutritional issues through a food policy perspective and exposes them to a wide variety of interventions, policies and current debates in the field of international nutrition. In addition to exploring the multi-level programmatic approaches for the prevention and treatment of the related nutritional problems, students will gain exposure and experience in program design and program proposal writing. Readings will involve both real-world programmatic documents/evaluations as well as peer-reviewed journal articles. Examples will be drawn from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Requirements/Evaluation: six 1-page essays, one final term paper (10-15 pages), one oral presentation, and active class participation
Prerequisites: PHLH 201 or permission of instructor
Enrollment Limit: 12
Enrollment Preferences: Public Health concentrators
Expected Class Size: 12
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2) (DPE) (WS)

Writing Skills Notes: As a writing skills course, students will write six 1-page essays (each with an optional rewrite) which will help build the specific writing skills necessary for the final 10- to 15 page paper. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course exposes the issues of difference, power and inequity by exploring the unequal distribution of resources and power at the global, national and intra-national level within the international nutrition context. We will also critically engage with issues of power, cultural difference and related ethics in the context of international development and nutrition programming.

Attributes: PHLH Nutrition, Food Security + Environmental Health

Not offered current academic year

PHLH 310  (F) Equity in Health
Equity in health has been defined as inequalities in health outcomes based on irrelevant social characteristics. The Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 highlight equity in health as a main focus and key to achieving social sustainability. This course will introduce students to the concept of equity in health, and discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the pathways to unequal health outcomes. The social determinants of health and how they translate to uneven outcomes will be explored and discussed. There will also be a special focus on gender and gender-based violence as a driver of ill health. How to reduce inequity in health will be discussed and debated. Readings will involve some of the classic texts on health equity as well as recent explorations of the area.

Requirements/Evaluation: weekly short reflection papers and one final paper (10-12 pages)
Prerequisites: PHLH 201 Dimensions of Public Health or Permission of Instructor
Enrollment Limit: 16
Enrollment Preferences: Public Health Concentrators
Expected Class Size: 16
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)
Attributes: PHLH Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health PHLH Social Determinants of Health

Not offered current academic year
In the face of a global pandemic and increased police brutality, states and counties across the nation have declared racism a public health crisis. This push to identify systemic racism as a high priority in public health action and policy is an important symbolic and political move. It names the faults of histories, systems and institutions but also brings to the spotlight the individual and community responsibility to dismantle racism in the US. In this tutorial, we will examine racism in public health policy, practice and research through an investigation of several mediums of evidence and information, ranging from peer reviewed literature to news editorials, podcasts and documentaries. We will explore specific pathways by which racism functions in the disciplines of biostatistics, epidemiology, social & behavioral sciences, health policy & management and environmental health sciences while also examining the dynamics of power and history in research and community practice. We will also gain skills in speaking across differences and articulation of how our own perceptions and lived experiences of race and racism impact our study of public health. This tutorial will most likely elicit uncomfortable and hard conversations about race and requires an openness to self-reflection and the practice of listening and articulation.

Requirements/Evaluation: bi-weekly tutorial papers, weekly journaling, oral commentaries and tutorial discussion

Prerequisites: PHLH 201
Enrollment Limit: 10
Enrollment Preferences: Public Health concentrators
Expected Class Size: 10
Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option
Distributions: (D2) (DPE)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: In this course students will examine and critically examine the inequities and race based social and health injustices, and the ways racism infiltrates public health action and policy, both historically and currently. They will also refine their self reflection skills in understanding how their own positions of privilege and power, or lack thereof, inform their understanding of public health.

Attributes: PHLH Social Determinants of Health

Fall 2022
TUT Section: T1 TBA Marion Min-Barron

PHLH 397 (F) Independent Study: Public Health
Public Health Independent Study
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2022
IND Section: 01 TBA Amie A. Hane

PHLH 398 (S) Independent Study: Public Health
Public Health Independent Study
Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option
Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2023
IND Section: 01 TBA Amie A. Hane

PHLH 402 (S) Senior Seminar in Public Health
The capstone seminar provides concentrators with the opportunity to reflect upon and synthesize their experiential learning in the context of understanding gained from a cohesive set of elective courses, and through the lens of a variety of intellectual and disciplinary frameworks. A second goal is to give concentrators experience working in a multi-disciplinary team to address a real-world, and in many cases very daunting, public health
problem. Students will read, discuss, and compose written reflections on primary source empirical papers addressing a range of issues and disciplines in the field of public health. For example, topics may include the social determinants of health, environmental health risks, and access to health care. Students will also be divided into small research teams to interact with local organizations and investigate a contemporary real-life issue in public health. The capstone course is required of all concentrators, but may be opened to other students with relevant experience at the discretion of the instructor and the advisory committee, if space permits.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** active seminar participation, written reflections, contribution to the team research project, and a 12- to 15-page final paper

**Prerequisites:** completion of at least four courses counting towards the PHLH concentration

**Enrollment Limit:** 12

**Enrollment Preferences:** senior Public Health concentrators; students who are not senior Public Health concentrators should contact the instructor

**Expected Class Size:** 10

**Grading:** no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

**Distributions:** No divisional credit

**Attributes:** EXPE Experiential Education Courses  PHLH Core Courses

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**Winter Study**

**PHLH 13 (W) Concluding your Experiential Component: Public Health Reflections**

Because many public health challenges cannot be fully appreciated until one has hands-on experience working on public health issues with populations or communities, each Public Health concentrator must have at least one relevant field-based educational experience. This requirement is known as the Experiential Component (EC). This winter study course will serve as the final step in completing the EC requirement. Through in-person meetings and online discussion, students will be asked to critically reflect on their EC experience, write about their intellectual and emotional journey during their EC and discuss with classmates how this EC experience ties into previous Public Health courses and potential career and graduate educational goals. Students will meet in-person on Tuesday, January 4, 2021: 10-1pm and Tuesday, January 25, 2021: 10-1pm. For the weeks in between these two dates, students will engage in weekly online asynchronous discussions with their classmates.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated on class discussions, reflection papers and a 10-page paper which can be waived.

**Prerequisites:** PHLH 201 and completion of their Experiential Component internship/work experience.

**Enrollment Limit:** 25

**Enrollment Preferences:** Public Health concentrators who are Seniors will be given preference.

**Grading:** pass/fail only

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**PHLH 16 (W) Addiction Studies and Diagnostics**

The goal of this class is to help students develop an effective understanding of the definition, impact, and treatment of addiction. Students will be familiarized with the DSM-5, the text used to diagnose mental illness in the US. Speakers will tell their stories in their journey from addiction to recovery. Students will be expected to accurately diagnose the speakers according to the criteria in the DSM-5. Finally, an extensive annotated bibliography and oral presentation will be presented in groups at the end of the course. The goal of the class is to have students carry this knowledge forward and be more informed about addiction and recovery in personal, family, social, professional, and community life. That goal is two-fold; to help make better and more informed choices personally and with other people.

**Requirements/Evaluation:** Class and other participation outside the classroom and group project at end of course.

**Prerequisites:** none

**Enrollment Limit:** 20
Enrollment Preferences: instructor's choice

Expected Class Size: NA

Grading: pass/fail only

Unit Notes: I have taught this class nearly a dozen times and greatly enjoy doing so. I work as an addiction therapist and have personally been in recovery for 35 years. I earned an MA at the Hazelden Graduate School in 2009.

Materials/Lab Fee: $44

Attributes: EXPE Experiential Education Courses  SLFX Winter Study Self-Expression  STUX Winter Study Student Exploration  WELL Winter Study Wellness

Winter 2023

LEC Section: 01  MW 7:00 pm - 9:30 pm  K. Richard Berger

PHLH 99 (W) Independent Study: Public Health

Open to upperclass students. Students interested in doing an independent project (99) during Winter Study must make prior arrangements with a faculty sponsor. The student and professor then complete the independent study proposal form available online. The deadline is typically in late September. Proposals are reviewed by the pertinent department and the Winter Study Committee. Students will be notified if their proposal is approved prior to the Winter Study registration period.

Class Format: independent study

Grading: pass/fail only

Winter 2023

IND Section: 01  TBA  Amie A. Hane