

SPH 491A: Capstone

Winter 2017 • University of Washington

Instructor: Deborah Hinchey

Overview

This is a 2-quarter course that incorporates service-learning in a community based, public health setting. The service-learning placement affords students the opportunity for the development of a reciprocal relationship in which the student contributes to, learns from and about a local agency and the population(s) that it serves. Throughout the course, students will reflect on and integrate their service-learning experience and academic content as a means to assess community needs and strengths and gain a deeper understanding of public health and its role in community based problems.

Learning Objectives:

- Research the role, structure and function of, and the population served by, a community based agency and summarize findings
- Analyze the impact of a public health problem on a population
- Map community resources, assess needs and synthesize community strengths and gaps
- Develop an approach to address a public health problem and articulate recommendations to a community agency
- Systematically apply PH knowledge to personal experiences within a service placement
- Evaluate personal attitudes and approaches to working with diverse communities and examine the impact of service on learning and communities

Skills developed:

- Peer teaching, working in groups, oral and written synthesis, accessing and reading professional literature
- Effectively working in a diverse environment, interpersonal skill building, conflict resolution, practical problem solving

Role of Service-Learning in the Course

Service-learning provides students an opportunity to experience theories traditionally studied in the classroom in action as they serve with community-based organizations. In this public health capstone, students will integrate their direct service experience, conversations with community organization stakeholders, and their accumulated public health training to explore a public health issue and draft program recommendations informed by their community and academic experiences.

To facilitate group work in the course, we would like groups of five or six students to engage in service at each organization. Students will work approximately 50 hours (around 5 hours a week) for 10 weeks-- starting in week three of four or five of their first capstone quarter, and ending in week four or five of their second capstone quarter.

Assignments Related to Service-Learning

Population Profile: Students identify the population with whom they will be working and provide relevant demographic information

Interview with site supervisor/staff: In order to help students identify potential public health issues faced by their agency/population with whom they are working, students conduct an individual or group interview with a staff member at their site

Choosing a Literature Review Topic: Students select an evidence-based public health issue that impacts the population with whom they are working; this will be the focus of their work moving forward

Agency Overview: In groups, students provide a thorough overview of the agency with whom they are working; areas to cover include: programs and services offered, history, staffing structure (org chart), budget and funding, mission and values, etc.

Literature Review: Students conduct in-depth, academic research on their PH issue of choice

PH Problem: Local Level: A brief overview of how the population is impacted locally by the PH issue;

included in this assignment is an overview of current, local (and national, potentially) programs and services available

Stakeholder Interviews: Students will engage in-person with a minimum of 2 people currently working at their site OR in the area of their PH issue

Community Asset Map: Students map the area surrounding the service site and/or the area in which patrons/clients live and access services

Synthesis Paper: Recommendations, Synthesis and Reflection: A final synthesis of all of the past work; this assignment culminates with a research based recommendation to the agency focused on the PH issue

Service learning hours: Students are required to complete 50 hours of service over the 20-week period

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