INSTRUCTORS

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OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment

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Class meets Fridays, 8:05-9:55am

GIT: Architecture East 107 or Emory: Claudia Nance Rollins Building (CNR), Room 1051

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary course, examines how cities and neighborhoods can have both positive and adverse effects on human health, and produces recommendations to improve these outcomes. Seminar is an elective planning and public health course that explores the interconnections between these fields and equips students with skills and experiences to plan healthy communities.

LIST SCHOOL LEVEL, DEPARTMENT, AND/ OR PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

Use analytic reasoning and quantitative methods to address questions in public health and population-based research

Describe environmental conditions, including biological, physical and chemical factors, that affect the health of individuals, communities and populations

Describe behavioral, social and cultural factors that contribute to the health and well being of individuals, communities and populations

Describe major environmental risks to human health ranging from the local to global scale
LIST LEARNING OBJECTIVES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMPETENCIES

By engaging in lectures, readings, and in-class discussions and by completing class assignments, students will be able:

1) To understand the relationship between public health and the built environment, emphasizing what we know and do not know;
2) To examine built environment and public health issues at multiple scales from local to regional to national;
3) To develop a more acute awareness of the physical and social environments around them and actively perceive and understand the health and safety implications these environments present to those living in them.
4) To develop an understanding of the fields of public health and planning and their contributions to built environment literature; and,
5) To gain familiarity with the methods involved in assessing the relationship between public health and the built environment and the strengths and limitations of these methods.

This course is intended to utilize an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the relationship between public health and the built environment. The objectives of this course are:

1) To expose students to the multiple perspectives on public health and the built environment through the use of the socio-ecological model, lectures by planning and public health experts, and readings;
2) To examine the relationships between built environment components, such as transportation, land use, community and economic development, urban design, and architecture and specific health issues, such as transmission of infectious diseases and incidences of chronic disease; and,
3) To develop a working knowledge of various methods used to assess the built environment and its impact on public health; and
4) To prepare students to perform professionally in an interdisciplinary environment.

EVALUATION

Grading Practices: Assignments are graded in the usual A, B...F system. In general, we endeavor to follow these grading standards:

"A" : exemplifies excellence: including clear reasoning, sound methods, forceful exposition, and stimulating ideas in comparison with others at the same stage of career. Independent and creative thinking utilizing a thorough understanding of course concepts is evidenced. Language usage, calculation, attribution, and formatting are essentially free of error.

"B" : allowing for growth in performance between now and graduation, the work would be considered satisfactory professional planning work given the time and resources allocated to it.Assertions are correct; arguments are persuasive. Mastery of course concepts is evidenced. Errors in language usage, attribution, calculation and/or formatting are minimal.

"C" : even allowing for growth in performance between now and graduation, the work would be considered less than satisfactory in a professional planning environment. There may be errors in fact or in understanding of course concepts. Arguments may not be convincing; there may be multiple errors in language usage, grammar, attribution, calculation and/or formatting.

"F" : the work does not address the assignment, fails to meet ordinary expectations for English language exposition, or appears to have been completed in a manner violating the Institute Honor Code.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

The RSPH requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic course of study must be the original work of the student.
Assignments:

**Article Critique** (20% of course grade) Each class session will include a joint presentation from two students comparing and contrasting two articles relevant to that session’s focus. Student teams will choose one of the two articles; professors will assign the other one. Students are expected to collaborate on both the written critique (10%) and the class presentation (10%). Critiques will comment on the articles’ application to the semester assignment. The 2-3 page written critique will include the following components:

1. **Introduction:** provides an overview of the articles’ purpose and main argument and offers the writers’ thesis regarding the articles’ strengths and weaknesses.
2. **Summary paragraph:** briefly reviews the articles’ strengths and weaknesses regarding framework, research question, methods, use of evidence and or conclusions.
3. **Conclusion:** presents commentary on the article’s overall usefulness in replicating or informing built environment and health research and application, and the semester assignment.

In class, the student pairs will deliver a presentation comparing and contrasting the two articles with a few PowerPoint slides or as a facilitated discussion with the rest of the class. A few students will be able to satisfy this component of the course by preparing article critiques relevant to the built environment scavenger hunt (see below) and leading table discussions at the debrief on Friday 9/6 in Decatur. Due as scheduled.

**Built Environment and Public Health Scavenger Hunt** (10% of course grade) The built environment— the roads, homes, schools, parks, businesses, places of worship and other man-made elements occupying the human environment— holds an important influence in our lives. How we design our communities affects our health by shaping whether we choose to walk or drive to destinations; time spent commuting; and ultimately how much physical activity we get. It affects the number of injuries from automobiles or pedestrian accidents and our access to food from a garden versus a fast-food drive through. The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate the relationship between design and building healthy communities. Teams of approximately five students will each complete an exercise adapted from the CDC's Healthy Community Design Initiative that involves the completion of six daily tasks in two different environments in the Atlanta area: Chamblee and Decatur. The scavenger hunt is scheduled for Friday evening Sept. 6 starting at 5:30pm in Decatur ending with a debrief session at Raging Burrito from 6:30 to 7:30pm. In addition to participating in the debrief session, short reflections and photos illustrative of your experience are to be posted to T-Square site as deliverables. Students unable to participate on the 6th are expected to complete the exercise independently at some point prior to class on September 13th.

**Beltline Tour Reflection** (10% of course grade) Students will participate in a Beltline Tour and comment on ways information they received on the tour and through previous independent research differs from that presented in the Healthy Atlanta Beltline materials. Due TBA.

**Greenspace Planning and Health** (10% of course grade) The Georgia Community Greenspace Program. Students will review assigned greenspace plans to identify how local governments planned to permanently protect 20% of their land area, and follow-up by interviews with the local Greenspace planner to find out what happened. Students will discuss the relationship between greenspace plans and public health. Due TBA.

**HIA Exercise** (10% of course grade) Health Impact Assessment is a useful public health and planning tool. The in-class exercise will be handed in at the end of the session. Due 11/14.

**Semester Healthy Communities Plan** (oral=15%; final=25%). Interdisciplinary teams of students will select a local neighborhood of interest and develop a report guiding a planning and/or public health agency on ways to create, retrofit or maintain a healthy community in the selected area. Your report should include the following: (1) a history of the area, (2) a critique of the current state of the area’s built environment and health, (3) recommended approaches (policies, interventions, stakeholders, etc.) toward improvements measured against the targets set forth in Health People

Required: Area selection. Due on 9/19. Post to t-square.

Optional: Semester Healthy Communities Plan Draft. Student teams submit their draft semester assignment for peer review. Due on 10/24. Exchange with peer review teams.

Required: Presentations and Professional Report. Presentations will be limited to a maximum of 20 minutes and should include time for questions and discussion. Presentations on 11/14 and 11/21. Final Report post to t-square and hand-in hard copy on 11/21.

Course Schedule: