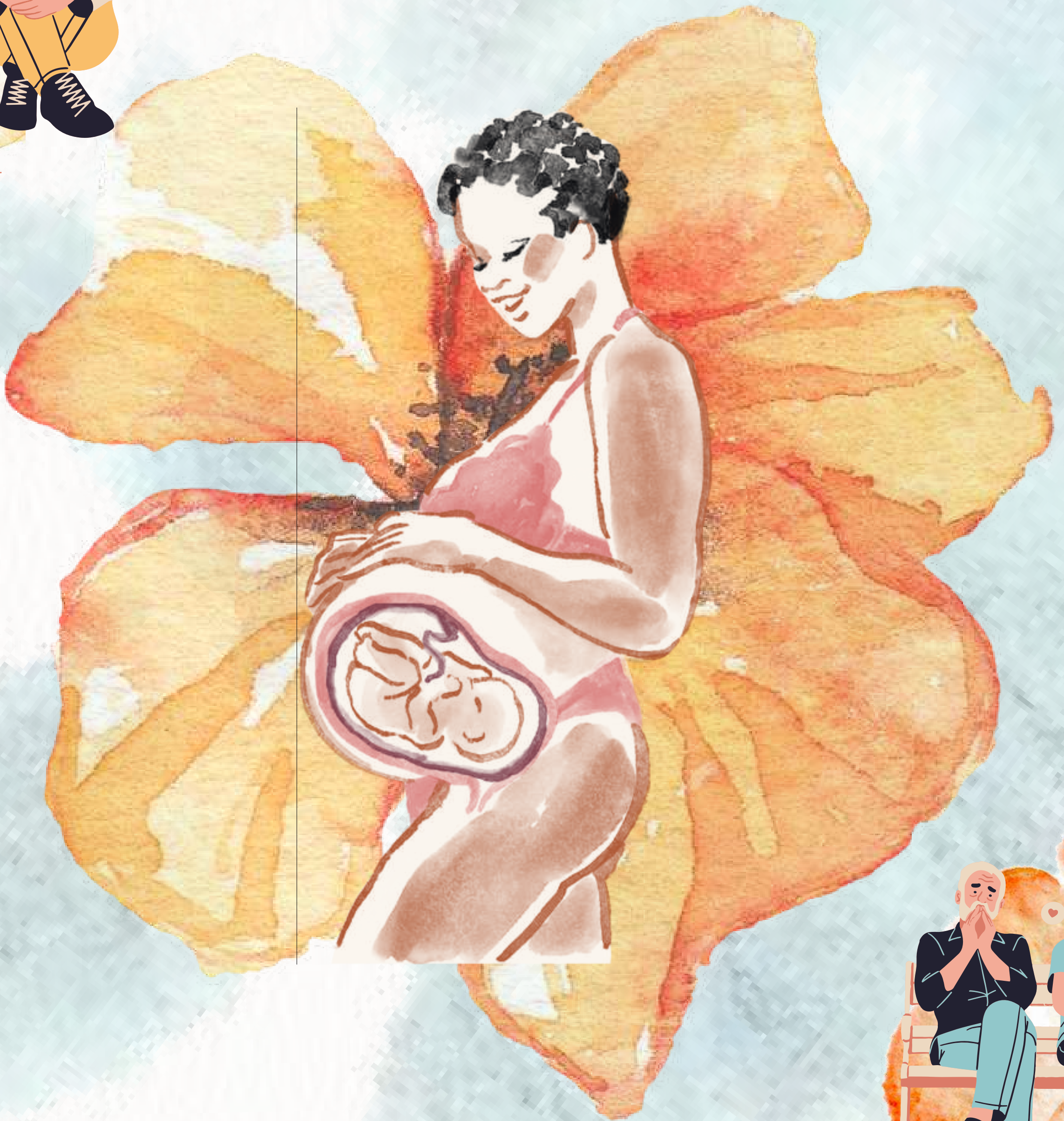


PBHL 215.03 **INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC HEALTH**



Fall 2025
Professor Shaon Lahiri
Course Syllabus

College of Charleston
Department of Public Health Sciences and Administration



WELCOME

It is a pleasure to have you in this course!

The class meets on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**, in **Johnson 207**, from **9:25am - 10:40am**, **August 19 - December 8, 2025.**

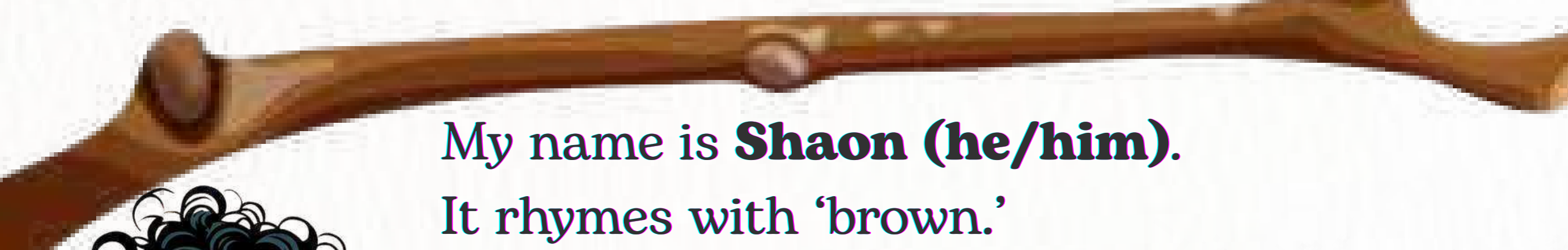
The CRN is 13362.

The course is worth 3 credits.

There are no prerequisites.



This course introduces the basic tenets, applications, and functions of public health, including integrating public health with other health professions. It will provide a history of public health, an overview of the core disciplines, and exploration of current events and issues in the field. We will also adopt a unique focus on Public Health and Statistics on Race, Equity and Inclusion.



My name is **Shaon (he/him)**.

It rhymes with 'brown.'

Call me Shaon or Professor Lahiri or Dr Lahiri. Don't call me Mr Lahiri or Sharon.

Learn about me on [my website](#).

My office is Johnson 314.

My email is lahiris@cofc.edu.

I am deeply passionate about public health!



Vision for this Course

This course is a tasting menu of different public health concepts.

Hopefully, you will find at least one of these topics tasty enough to merit a second course.



I want you to understand how public health impacts our policies, communities, and well-being.

Unique Flavor of this Course

This course has a unique focus on:
Public Health and Statistics on Race, Equity and Inclusion

What does that mean?



Sally Student

Data literacy is a crucial skill for just about any field these days. We need to know how to understand and use data effectively.



Race is also a crucial idea to understand population health disparities and intervention opportunities. This course will show you how race and health intersect in public health data!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Outline the various components of the public health system.
2. Describe interrelationships among different components of the public health system
3. Identify eras in the historical development of public health and ways that public health affects everyone's daily life.
4. Outline the role of law and government in promoting and protecting the health of the public and identify specific functions and roles of governmental public health agencies in assuring population health.
5. Explain the basic principles of epidemiology, including rates, risk factors, disease determinants, causation, and public health surveillance.
6. Apply measures of population health and illness, including risk factors, to community health improvement initiatives.
7. Identify criteria for evaluating health systems, including matters of access, quality, and cost.
8. Describe the impact of the environment and how communicable diseases, including animal and food-borne diseases, affect health.
9. Explain how various occupations, professions, and careers contribute to carrying out public health's core functions and essential services.



Cool, and what are the **student learning outcomes**?



First, communicate public health information to diverse audiences using a variety of media.



Second, demonstrate an understanding of race as a social construct and how it is used in public health data and decision-making.



Finally, identify and communicate connections between foundational public health concepts and real-world issues.



What are the required materials? Do I need to buy a textbook?

Nah, fam. **You just need a computer.** All materials provided on OAKS.



Lol, ok 'FAM.' Are you trying to use slang to appeal to students?



Um, maybe, I don't know... Wow, is that the time?? I gotta go!



The College requires all students to have a laptop. Bring your laptop to every class. Please see [this page](#) if you need help getting one.

Ensure Zoom is installed in case we hold class online due to inclement weather. I recommend installing Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Office. You can install all [for free here](#).

Complete all readings before class on Tuesdays. Slides will be posted on OAKS.



DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of health education specialists is projected to grow by 7% in the next ten years. this is **above average** compared to all occupations.



Your **grade** in this course will follow this grading scale.



Percentage	Letter Grade
90-100 %	A
88-89%	A-
85-87%	B+
80-84%	B
78-79%	B-
75-77%	C+
70-74%	C
68-69%	C-
66-67%	D+
64-65%	D
62-63%	D-
<62%	F

All grades will be rounded to the nearest integer.

For example:
87.5% → 88%
87.4% → 87%

All grades are **EARNED** in this course. They are not negotiated.

SHAON'S DROP-IN ENRICHMENT HOURS

Mondays
2-3pm

Johnson
314



What is that? I've literally never heard of that before.

One hour (optional) each week dedicated to YOU in my office. We can talk about the course content, assignments, college, life, etc.

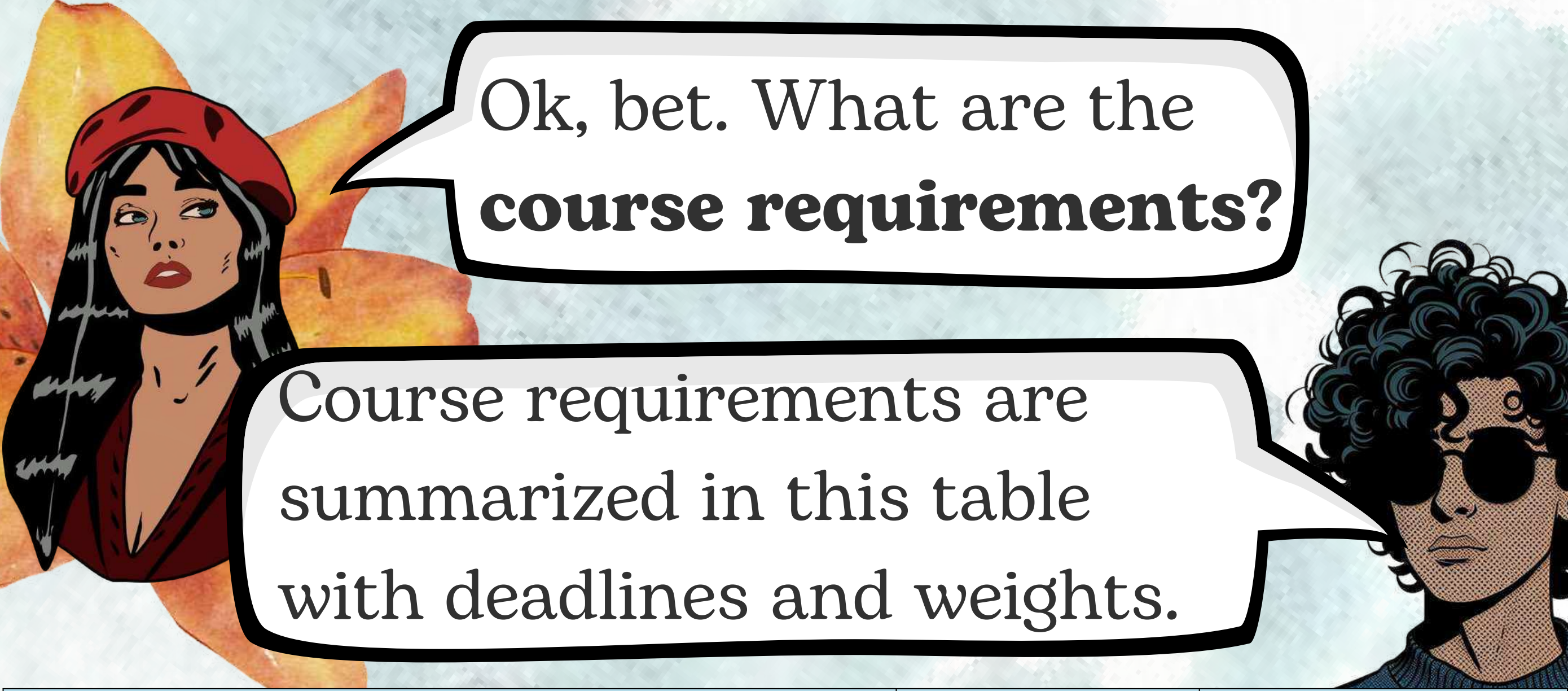


Ok, but why should I attend if I don't have to? Is this a trick?

It's totally optional. Enrichment hours are a great place to clarify doubts, answer questions, or just learn more! I don't get paid more money for enrichment hours. It's purely for sharing knowledge and helping!



TRY IT OUT!



Ok, bet. What are the **course requirements?**

Course requirements are summarized in this table with deadlines and weights.

Requirement	Weight	Deadline
Quizzes (4)^	20%	9/16, 10/7, 11/4, 11/18
Participation = Preparation + Attendance + Engagement	25%	Every Class
What is Public Health Media Project*	20%	12/4
Scavenger Hunt Group Activity*	15%	9/12
Debate*	20%	10/23

*Rubric and detailed guidelines will be posted on OAKS for this assignment.

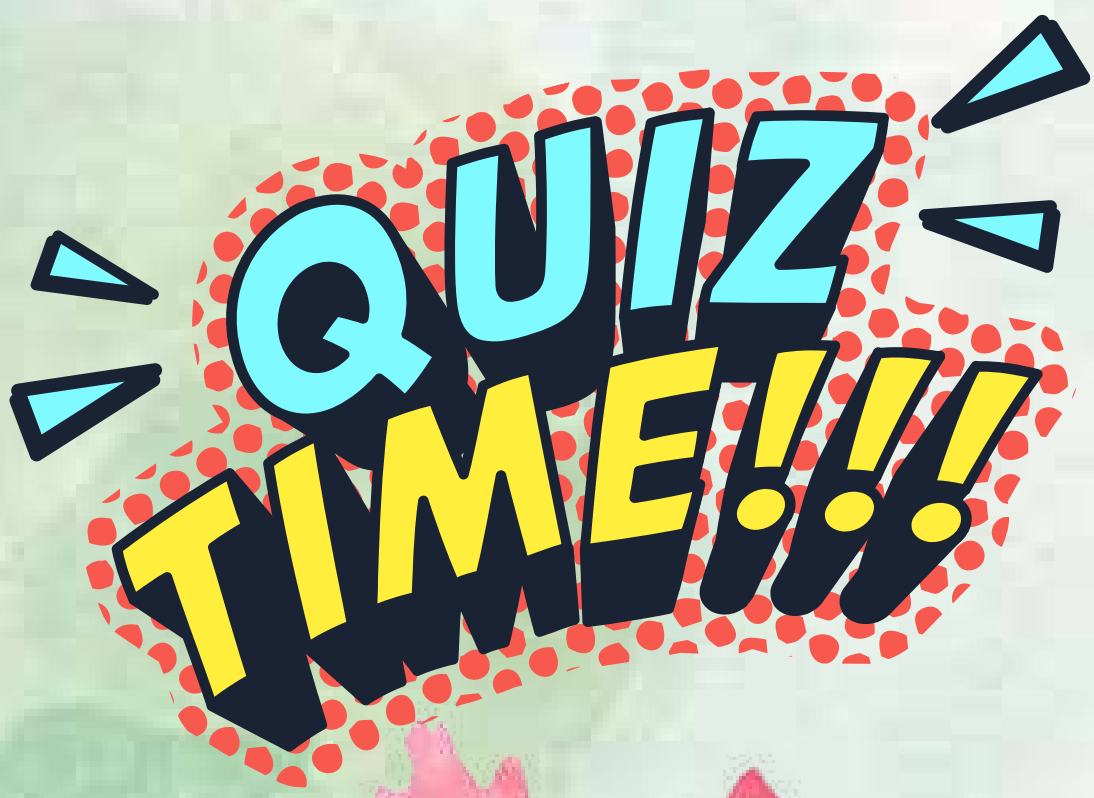
^Answer keys for all quizzes posted on OAKS ~48 hours after each quiz.

BREAKDOWN of Quizzes



Why? Quizzes assess your understanding of course content. Questions are very applied in nature so they reflect real-world intuitive understanding of concepts, and not just memorization.

What? 10 multiple choice, matching, or short-answer questions in 30 mins. You can use your notes, readings, or slides. Don't use AI or the internet. **You must work alone and take the quiz in class.**



Not totally getting the quiz questions? Email me or come to enrichment hours!

How? Four non-cumulative quizzes during semester. Lowest quiz score dropped at end of semester. Answer key posted ~48 hours after each quiz. If >75% of class gets a question wrong, everyone gets credit for that question. Do not email me about the quiz questions until after the answer key has been posted.

BREAKDOWN of Participation



Why? In college, learning is not passive and teacher-directed. It is up to you to learn. **I will lead you to the water of knowledge, but it is you that must drink from it.**



What? Participation in each class is out of 5 points. Two points are for showing up and leaving on time. If you arrive or leave class >5 minutes late or early, you will lose points. Two points are given for submitting good quality work before or during class. One is point for engagement during class, in the form of paying attention, asking questions, and working well in activities. I cold call on students. If you don't know, say "I don't know" and try to answer. **I care about you making an effort!**

Anything else? Excused absences are for illness, emergencies, and religious holidays only. Email me ahead of time if you will miss class. You have **two** unexcused class absences you can take without penalty. After that, it's -10% per missed class for Participation.

BREAKDOWN

of What is Public Health Media Project



Why? Communicating critical information and concepts to the general public is essential for protecting population health and preventing disease. This is especially crucial when health is politicized and mis/disinformation is widespread.

What? In a small group or alone, you will design a creative, accurate, and engaging product explaining the core functions of public health to a specific audience. This could be a board game, song/rap, podcast, children's book, series of TikTok videos, or something else (with my prior approval). The content should be accurate, evidence-based, and audience-appropriate. You will upload the final product just for my eyes, and **will not** have to present it in front of your classmates. More details on OAKS.



Get Creative!

BREAKDOWN

of Debate



Why? Public health often involves difficult ethically ambiguous policies and programs. It is essential to have a reasoned discussion of the arguments for and against a particular policy or program to ensure it reduces harm and maximizes benefits.

What? I will split you into small groups, and will assign your group an issue and a stance (for OR against the issue). As a group, you will then prepare an opening statement, points for rebuttal, and a closing statement. Then groups will engage in the debate, followed by reflection.



Well-reasoned argumentation is the bedrock for effective public health decision-making.

BREAKDOWN

of Scavenger Hunt Group Activity

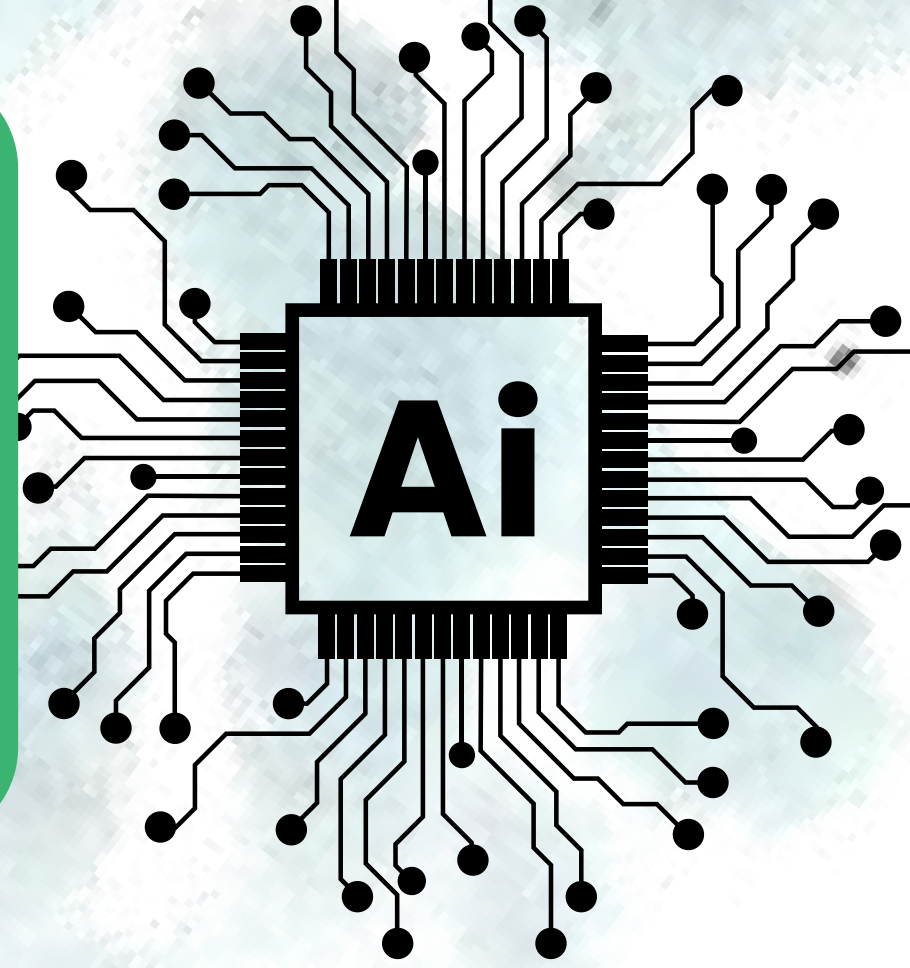


Why? Public health necessitates a deep understanding of context. A key aspect of this context is the history of race, discrimination, and health. Charleston offers a unique opportunity to understand these key social determinants of health.

What? You will have two entire class periods to travel with your group to key places in Charleston and complete an assignment. You will submit this assignment on OAKS and deliver a brief (5-7 minute) class presentation on your findings.



GENERATIVE AI USE IN THIS COURSE



Proofreading documents, and generating study guides for quizzes.

**YOU Can
Do THIS**

Any other specific use for which I have given pre-approval.

Brainstorming for Group and Individual Project, and in-class activities

Troubleshooting IT or software issues.

Generating images for Group Project and in-class activities.



DON'T USE GEN AI TO THINK FOR YOU

DON'T USE GEN AI TO WRITE FOR YOU

DON'T USE GEN AI TO ANSWER YOUR QUIZ QUESTIONS

Always ask first if you are unsure.

Defaulting to Gen AI impedes your ability to think, reason, and express your ideas. We need to learn how to reason, think, and express ourselves on our own to validate and appraise the results of Gen AI.



Extra Credit

Get extra credit
for learning how
to save a life!



There are 4 potential extra credit opportunities in this course. If you want to take them, they must be completed before November 14th. You can earn up to a maximum 5% boost to your overall course grade through these optional opportunities. All details on OAKS.

NARCAN TRAINING

**AND THE BAND PLAYED ON
(MOVIE)**

ZOTERO USE (SOFTWARE)

**ERIN BROCKOVICH
(MOVIE)**

Extension & Late Work Policy



I do not accept any excuses for submitting late work. This includes last minute tech 'glitches', being 'confused' about deadlines, or any other excuse except for family/medical emergency.

But why?



To incentivize advance planning and treating deadlines as sacred. These habits will serve you well during and after college! Always ask me if unsure.



Every day an assignment is late results in -10% for that assignment up to 3 days. After that, the grade will be 0. No makeups.

You can have an extension of up 3 calendar days without penalty for the media project and in-class activities (except quizzes) if you email me before the deadline. Without an email in advance, the late penalty will apply.

To get the extension, email me and ask for it before the deadline and you shall have it!

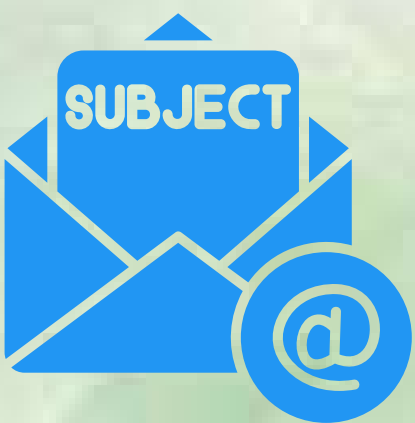
EMAIL POLICY



Good email etiquette is an essential feature of professional and academic communication. Mastering it early will help develop your professional habits and avoid unintentional rudeness! Please follow this approach:



‘Email’ comes from ‘e-mail’ (Electronic mail). So we follow basic letter writing conventions.



Include your course number when writing to your professor. Include a short description of the topic of your email in the ‘Subject’ line.



Start every email with “Hello” followed by “Dr [Last name],” using your professor’s last name. With me, just say “Hi Shaon,” or “Hi Dr Lahiri,”



Keep email short and to the point. This is not a text. End with “Best Regards,” followed by your name.

Additional Policies



Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have any special needs (e.g., vision, hearing, English as a Second Language, learning, medical) please let me know so that I can make appropriate arrangements. Any student with a documented disability should contact the Center for Disability Services (CDS) to move forward with the college's established accommodation process. Students already connected with CDS for academic-related accommodations should provide me with a letter from CDS. email: snap@cofc.edu; phone: 843-953-1431; location: Lightsey Center 104. Please contact me if your status changes during the semester (e.g., a medical condition that may limit your ability to complete the assignments as they stand).

Academic Integrity

You are expected to practice the standards of academic integrity required by the University's Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code include, but are not limited to, improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and other forms of academic misrepresentation. Failure to adhere to these standards will result in disciplinary measures up to and including referring you to Office of the Dean of Students and addressed through the conduct process. You can find information about the College's policies on academic integrity in the Student Handbook. Any questions regarding these expectations can be clarified by your instructor.

See **Outline of Classes** on OAKS for details on required readings and topics for each week.

Have a question that **can't** be answered by reading the syllabus or looking at OAKS? Email me!



"Hope" is the thing with feathers



"Hope" is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Emily Dickinson

PBHL 215.03 - Introduction to Public Health

Outline of Classes

Professor Shaon Lahiri, PhD, MPH

College of Charleston School of Health Sciences
Department of Public Health Sciences and Administration

Fall 2025

Table 1 below lays out the reading material that must be covered each week before class on Tuesday. The only exception to this requirement is the first class. Ensure you complete the readings before coming to class as we will use class time to engage in activities and learn concepts that supplement the readings. If you ever have questions about the material, please feel free to come to drop-in enrichment hours (Mondays, 2-3pm in Johnson 314) or email me. I will be happy to help you understand the material (that's literally my job!). Some assignments listed here are not in the syllabus. These will be discussed in class, and will be part of the Participation grade. All details and rubrics will be provided on OAKS.

Table 1: Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings or Assignments
Tuesday, August 19, 2025	Syllabus, definitions, basics	Syllabus
Thursday, August 21, 2025	History and Functions of Public Health	Complete Syllabus Quiz, Watch short YouTube video (Hans Rosling)
Tuesday, August 26, 2025	History and Functions of Public Health	Chapter 1 from <i>Public Health</i> (Shultz, Sullivan & Galea)
Thursday, August 28, 2025	SDOH/Health Disparities	
Tuesday, September 2, 2025	SDOH/Health Disparities	Chapter 2 from <i>Public Health</i> (Shultz, Sullivan & Galea), Chapter 2 from <i>Introduction to Public Health</i> (Schneider)
Thursday, September 4, 2025	Ethical Controversies	
Tuesday, September 9, 2025	Scavenger Hunt Activity (don't come to classroom)	
Thursday, September 11, 2025	Scavenger Hunt Activity (don't come to classroom)	Scavenger Hunt Assignment on OAKS due September 16th
Tuesday, September 16, 2025	Public Health Governance	Chapter 2 from <i>Community & Public Health</i> (McKenzie, Pinger & Seabert), Quiz 1 in class, Presentations
Thursday, September 18, 2025	Public Health Governance	Presentations continued
Tuesday, September 23, 2025	Statistics and Race in Public Health	Chapters 4 and 5 from <i>Thicker Than Blood</i> (Zuberi)
Thursday, September 25, 2025	Statistics and Race in Public Health	
Tuesday, September 30, 2025	Infectious Disease	Chapter 9 from <i>Introduction to Public Health</i> (Schneider)
Thursday, October 2, 2025	Infectious Disease	Public Health Organization Overview Assignment Due End of Day
Tuesday, October 7, 2025	Chronic Disease	Chapter 4 from <i>Community & Public Health</i> (McKenzie, Pinger & Seabert), Quiz 2 in class
Thursday, October 9, 2025	Chronic Disease	Government Agency Organizer Worksheet Due End of Day
Tuesday, October 14, 2025	FALL BREAK	
Thursday, October 16, 2025	Debate	Debate work, Advising Module
Tuesday, October 21, 2025	Debate	Debate work, Advising Module
Thursday, October 23, 2025	Debate, Reflection, Ethics	Debate Activity Due, Advising Module Due

Date	Topics	Readings or Assignments
Tuesday, October 28, 2025	Epidemiology	Chapter 3 from <i>An introduction to public health and epidemiology</i> (Carr, Unwin & Pless-Mulloli)
Thursday, October 30, 2025	Epidemiology	
Tuesday, November 4, 2025	Social & Behavioral Factors	Chapters 1, 2, and 3 from <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> (Fadiman), Quiz 3 in class
Thursday, November 6, 2025	Social & Behavioral Factors	
Tuesday, November 11, 2025	Environmental Health	Chapters 1, 2, and 3 from <i>Silent Spring</i> (Carson)
Thursday, November 13, 2025	Environmental Health	
Tuesday, November 18, 2025	Public Health Careers and Systems	Quiz 4 in class
Thursday, November 20, 2025	Public Health Careers and Systems	
Tuesday, November 25, 2025	Thanksgiving	
Thursday, November 27, 2025	Thanksgiving	
Tuesday, December 2, 2025	No class	Work on What is Public Health Media Project, Extra Enrichment Hours by appointment
Thursday, December 4, 2025	No class	Extra Enrichment Hours by appointment, What is Public Health Media Project Due