Instructor: Dr. Julie Smith-Gagen MPH, PhD  
Office: 215 Lombardi Recreation Center  
Phone: 682-7082  
E-mail: jsmithgagen@unr.edu (this is the best way to reach me)  
Office Hours: Friday 12-1 pm and by appointment by confirmed email.

Course Description

This course meets the Core Objective 9: Students will be able to connect science and technology to real-world problems by explaining how science relates to problems of societal concern; be able to distinguish between sound and unsound interpretations of scientific information; employ cogent reasoning methods in their own examinations of problems and issues; and understand the applications of science and technology in societal context.

Epidemiology is the basic science of public health. It answers questions such as who gets disease and why. This course covers the fundamental principles of epidemiology through examples and stories. We will begin with an investigation into the Black Death in the 14th century when science knowledge and modes of communication were very limited and societal reactions were extreme. We will examine AIDS in the 20th century and SARS and the West African Ebola epidemic in the 21st century and examine society’s reaction despite increasing knowledge regarding the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human diseases.

We will examine the societal conditions that lead to cholera outbreaks in the 19th century and examine how John Snow overcame societal and political challenges to his water-borne theory of transmission and developed epidemiological methods in the absence of scientific evidence, to address and solve the problem. We will examine societal and political responses to public health technology and methods such as advanced diagnosis and prevention strategies including vaccine and quarantine. We will also examine how our faster and broader communication methods via the Web impact population knowledge and decision making regarding vaccines. By identifying similarities and differences between societal reactions to these epidemics, students will be able to distinguish the impact science had on these epidemics.

By studying epidemiology, you will become a more effective consumer of health information in the media – by utilizing evidence-based thinking. You will learn tools to read the research, frame and re-frame the issues and analytically examine the conclusions and options for intervention. Though examples, you will learn how health information is collected and processed. You will learn how to interpret and understand the strengths and weaknesses of epidemiological data to draw reliable inferences about the cause of disease and disease control strategies. We will explore the scientific process and misunderstandings of the scientific processes and you will shrewdly be able to weigh-in on the hotly debated issues such as cell phones and brain cancer, vaccines and autism, guns and gun violence, and other topics of your choice.

Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course should be able to correctly:
1. Describe the historical roots of epidemiologic thinking and their contribution to the evolution of the scientific method, diagnosis and treatment tools.
2. Use basic epidemiologic measures for describing morbidity and mortality to express numerically the amount and distribution of health- and non health-related outcomes.
3. Use the distribution of a health-related outcome to generate hypotheses that might provide an explanation.
4. Explain basic statistical and epidemiologic concepts of estimation, inference, and adjustment to establish association.

5. Explain how to use evidence of an association to make a judgment about whether an association is causal.

6. Describe the basic epidemiologic study designs that are used to test hypotheses, identify associations, and establish causation.

7. Critically examine and evaluate the strength and limitations of a public health topic (scientific literature, mass media, intervention, or policy) and demonstrate quantitative regard for various sources of error.

Required Texts:


2. Bookstore/Amazon/Kindle/Audio Book

3. Bookstore/Amazon/Kindle/Audio Book

Required supplies:
1 pack 50 Index Cards
Basic Calculator (arithmetic)
Access to and use of Web Campus including use of Library Guide (Public Health Library Guide/Books/ Catalog Search (Encore)).

Academic Dishonesty Policy:
Academic dishonesty is against university as well as the system community standards. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses. Plagiarism is defined as submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one's own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one's work to be used in this fashion. Cheating is defined as (1) obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual or unauthorized use of books, notes, text and other materials; (2) obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination; (3) taking an examination for another student, or arranging for another person to take an exam in one's place; (4) altering or changing test answers after submittal for grading, grades after grades have been awarded, or other academic records once these are official.
Disciplinary procedures for incidents of academic dishonesty may involve both academic action and administrative action for behavior against the campus regulations for student conduct. University policy (“University Code of Conduct and Policies” on Academic Standards) states any of the following actions may be taken: “Sanctions for violations of university academic standards may include the following: (1) Failing the student for the assignment - awarding a failing mark on the test or paper in question (2) requiring the student to retake the test or resubmit the paper; (3) lowering the student’s final grade for the course one or two grade points - (such as: from a “B” to a “C”); (4) failing the student for the course - filing a final grade of “F” on the grade report. A student failed in a course due to academic dishonesty may not utilize the “repeat option” for that course. In addition, a student may not utilize the “withdrawal” option for a course in which the student is found responsible for academic dishonesty. A student may also be subject to student disciplinary action for academic dishonesty through the “University Code of Conduct” and pursuant to the provisions of the Board of Regents Code, Title 2, Chapter 6.”

A failure to understand what constitutes plagiarism or cheating is not a valid excuse for academic misconduct. All assignments in this course are subject to the academic dishonesty policy. Be sure that you properly cite, in text as well as in the reference list, and quote sources where applicable. Be certain that you are submitting your own work, words, and other creations – it is completely unacceptable and there are serious consequences for submitting someone else’s work, in part or in whole, as your own. Violations of academic standards of this nature will be dealt with very seriously and will, at minimum, incur an “F” on the assignment. Sentences or short passages may be quoted and cited from sources; however, direct copying from any source, with or without proper citation, is completely unacceptable. Making simple changes or simply rearranging the organization of material is plagiaristic.

I use software to check all assignments against those from previous classes, as well as from other sources. All exams are to be taken without the aid of books, notes, study sheets, other persons, any electronic device (such as cell phones, PDA’s, Blackberry, computers), or any other method unless otherwise specified.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me before you turn in the assignment.

Attendance Policy: By NSHE policy in Title 4 Chapter 20 A, Section 3, paragraph 1, [http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20-20-20General20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf](http://system.nevada.edu/tasks/sites/Nshe/assets/File/BoardOfRegents/Handbook/T4-CH20-20-20General20Policies%20Regulating%20Students%20and%20Student%20Government.pdf), there are no official absences from any university class. It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class. In the event that a student misses a class because of an official university function or event or because of serious personal issues, the Office of the Vice President for Student Services may, at its discretion, send an explanation to affected faculty. The instructor shall make the final determination on whether the missed work can be done at a time other than during the regularly scheduled class period.

If there is an unusual circumstance and you must leave class early, you must inform the instructor before class and leave with the instructors approval. If you miss class and the instructor has waved or postponed a grade (excused absence), you are still responsible for any work, assignments, handouts, notes, or other information you missed due to any absence.

Disabilities
Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodation.

**Statement for Academic Success Services:** For example, "Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter/](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/)), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring/](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring/)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/](http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/)). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Statement on Audio and Video Recording:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Student Orientation to WebCampus**
For those of you who are new to WebCampus or have questions, there is a one-hour Student Orientation to WebCampus workshops during the first week of the semester.

**Athletes**
If you are an athlete who is involved in competition this semester you will need to provide me with official documentation from your coach or the athletic department of your schedule and any class sessions that you may miss on my form (Web Campus). You MUST provide me with this documentation by the second week of class. You are responsible for all course requirements and for any materials, information, or assignments that you may miss due to competition. There will be no late assignments. This means you will need to turn in assignments ahead of time if necessary and attend office hours to view movies or lecture material.

**Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or [www.unr.edu/mathcenter/](http://www.unr.edu/mathcenter/)), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or [www.unr.edu/tutoring/](http://www.unr.edu/tutoring/)), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or [http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/](http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/)). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Class Policy/Rules:** This class involves participation in discussions and activities. We each have different experiences that influence our perspective of the world. You may feel uncomfortable or disagree with certain ideas or opinions expressed by others or with certain topics in this class. You may also find you share perspectives or experiences with others. The classroom should be a lively, interactive, and comfortable place where information is shared, ideas tested, and issues debated. We (students and instructor) will strive to create an open, respectful, and trusting environment in this course. At minimum, the following rules will be practiced:

- **If you arrive late, you must enter through north-east door and wait at front until instructor tells you to go to your seat** as to not interrupt other students.
- **If you arrive > 5 minutes late or leave early, and there is a quiz or assignment, you must schedule an appointment with the instructor for a make-up within two weeks.**
- **If you miss a class, you must schedule an appointment with the instructor for make up within two weeks.**
- **If you must leave early, please inform the instructor.**
Sarcastic comments or noises, insulting complaints or intimidation (towards classmates or instructor) will not be tolerated and you may be asked to leave class.

Conversations between students during lecture will not be tolerated and you may be asked to leave class.

**If other students are talking or otherwise interrupting your learning experience, please let me know (anonymously if you prefer by dropping a note). I will make every attempt to address the issue effectively for all involved.**

Cell phones and pagers will be turned off before entering the classroom. If you answer a phone or pager, or if you are texting, during class you may be asked to leave the classroom. Do not check messages or text message during class.

Studying for other classes will not be conducted in this classroom.

Avoid making assumptions, generalizations, or stereotypes.

Recognize that opinions are just that.

Always listen carefully, with an open mind, to the contributions of others.

Ask for clarification when you do not understand a point someone has made.

If you are offended or hurt by my or another person’s remarks, please let me know (anonymously if you prefer by dropping a note). I will make every attempt to address the issue effectively for all involved.

---

**E. Due dates:** the team nature of this class requires you to be in class and to do your part as a member of your Team. If you will be absent, you must notify me by email before class begins and arrange to complete the assignment. If I don’t hear from you by email (jsmithgagen@unr.edu), **BEFORE** the class meets, you cannot make up the assignments. All approved make-up work must be turned in no later than 2 days after the missed assignment.

**Grading**

If you think you have chosen to do well in this course, but it is not happening, please make an appointment and meet with me.

**The grade you receive is your choice.** The word “learn” is a verb and the subject of this verb is you. Learning is an action that you choose to do, it is not something that happens to you. **It is my job to present materials and situations to help you learn, but it is ultimately your choice to learn.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% of total grade</th>
<th>Grading scale:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed and returned MOU</td>
<td></td>
<td>A (94% and above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returned index cards after each class (Participation)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>A (90-93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation filling out questions in Course Reader (participation)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B+ (87-89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Questions for Reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>B (84-86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Final</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>B- (80-83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation on Medical Myth</td>
<td></td>
<td>C+ (77-79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>C (74-76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C- (70-73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D (60-69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>F (&lt; 60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>