

**SSCI 601b, Population, Health & Place Research
Practicum**

Syllabus (Provisional – Subject to Change)

Units: 2

Term—Day—Time: Summer 2018 (Session 050) –
Tuesdays and Thursdays – 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., PT

Location: WPH 603

Instructor: Robert O. Vos, Ph.D.

Office: AHF B57B

Regular Office Hours: Thursdays, 9 to 10 a.m., PT.
Also available by appointment via email.

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Library Help: Andy Rutkowski

Office: VKC 36B

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Thursdays,
4:30 to 5:30 p.m., PT.

Contact Info: arutkows@usc.edu, 213-740-6390,
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Office Hours: By appointment.

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Course Description

The overarching goal of this course is to support Ph.D. students in Population, Health and Place (PHP) in developing leadership skills for interdisciplinary research. The Research Practicum is taken over consecutive summers (i.e., this course follows SSCI 601a taken in the preceding summer). In general, the practicum sequence targets the development of research skills by: (1) providing research experience through participation in one or more supervised research projects prior to the dissertation; (2) involving students in conducting research early in their doctoral studies; (3) increasing the students' research skills; and (4) developing skills in communicating with an interdisciplinary audience – in writing journal articles, conference papers, extended abstracts, thesis proposals, grant proposals, and speaking at professional meetings. For SSCI 601b, the emphasis is on taking the lead in rapidly developing the germ of a research idea into a manuscript submitted for publication at journal or a report presented to a professional agency.

Learning Objectives

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Lead in formulating and executing a collaborative research project using data and methods from population, health, and place.
- Quickly identify a precise research gap in existing literature or need in professional practice of public health and narrowly scope a collaborative research project to respond to such a gap or need.
- Write a publishable quality manuscript on research findings that includes stating a problem and research question, identifying relevant literature, detailing a methodology, reporting results, and reaching conclusions.
- Coordinate with a guidance committee in establishing a framework and standards for a dissertation proposal at the intersection of population, health, and place.
- Describe your dissertation proposal clearly and succinctly, in written and oral forms, to faculty, mentors, and potential sponsors.

Prerequisite(s): SSCI 601a

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: Students must be enrolled in the USC PHP PhD program and have formed a PHP PhD guidance committee.

Course Notes

This course is intended to help students along their research trajectories, not primarily to add to the student's store of knowledge. Therefore, relative to other courses in the PHP program, there are almost no required reading assignments. Instead, the course will be devoted to two major goals. The first is a collaborative project led by each student chosen from a list of research ideas

provided by and discussed with the instructor prior to the start of the course. The second is the development of the student's dissertation proposal.

This course will run in parallel with SSCI 601a during the summer term, which also includes the likely employment of undergraduate research assistants. Thus, the design is for students in SSCI 601b to take a leadership role in a collaborative project which will include a small team consisting of first year PHP Ph.D. students from SSCI 601a and potentially undergraduate research assistants as well. Each student in SSCI 601b will decide with the instructor's approval on the topic of the collaborative project that he or she will lead no later than the first day of the course. Teams will be formed during the first session of the SSCI 601a class following presentations from the SSCI 601b students. In conjunction with the instructor, a final deliverable for the collaborative project that appropriately matches the nature of the topic selected will be identified early in the planning process (e.g., a manuscript submission to a journal, a professional report delivered to a public health agency).

The second half of the summer will afford students concentrated time to focus on preparing the dissertation proposal. To aid in development of the dissertation proposal, the instructor will make available substantial time to assist students as a sounding board in working with their guidance committees. The student and the instructor will review the learning contract from SSCI 601a to see what may have changed in the intervening academic year. Students will develop an amended plan to guide their time through the summer and until the anticipated oral defense of the dissertation proposal.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

The modeling software and geospatial data required for research projects will be accessed using computing resources provided by the Spatial Sciences Institute.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The following book on leadership is required for this class; it is available from online outlets such as Amazon:

1. Sample, S.B. 2003. *The Contrarian's Guide to Leadership*. San Francisco, CA, Jossey-Bass.

The above book will be supplemented with the various articles or book chapters indicated below that will be incorporated in the first assignment of the course and used to generate the collaborative research topics. Beyond this, each student will read what is required for collaborative project research and/or development of his or her dissertation proposal.

Arcaya, M., Tucker Seeley, R., Kim, R., Schnake-Mahl, A., So, M. and Subramanian, S.V. 2016. Research on Neighborhood Effects on Health in the United States: A Systematic Review of Study Characteristics. *Social Science and Medicine* 168: 16-29.

Case, A. and Deaton, A. 2017. Mortality and morbidity in the 21st century. *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*: 397-476.

Hamilton, D. 2015. "Chapter 6, Outbreak Investigation." In Guest, G. and Name, E.E.(editors) *Public health research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc

Description and Assessment of Assignments

As needed, students must meet with and lead by example with their research teams. They must also meet their guidance committee as a whole or with individual members and the SSCI 601b instructor as needed to establish a plan for the dissertation proposal.

Team Organization and Participation – 10 pts. A class participation grade for the semester will be assigned based upon how actively students engage with the collaborative project and organize their teams.

Seminar Discussion – 5 pts. Each student will read Steven Sample's contrarian guide to leadership and participate in a seminar discussion about leadership in the field of geospatial health.

Initial Collaborative Project Presentation – 10 pts. Each student will present the collaborative project topic chosen in coordination with the instructor at the first meeting of SSCI 601a class. This will be a brief slide presentation of 15-20 minutes aiming to recruit team members and lay out the initial research gap and steps for investigating the topic.

First Collaborative Project Presentation – 5 pts. With help from his or her team, each student will present the results of a rapid yet deep survey of the literature for the collaborative project topic. The presentation will conclude with a carefully formulated research question or problem statement. The form of the final written deliverable will be discussed and agreed to at this class meeting or shortly thereafter.

Second Collaborative Project Presentation – 5 pts. With help from his or her team, each student will present on data and methods that will be brought to bear to answer the research question or achieve the project objectives.

Third Collaborative Project Presentation – 5 pts. With help from his or her team, each student will present an initial report of results for the project.

Final Collaborative Project Presentation – 10 pts. With help from his or her team, each student will deliver a slide presentation on the overall project the conclusion of the semester.

Collaborative Project Written Deliverable – 30 pts. With co-authors from his or her team, each student will produce a written deliverable in the form and format agreed to in the first week of the course.

Dissertation Proposal Plan (Draft) – 10 pts. By no later than the mid-point of the summer semester, students will provide the instructor with a plan that indicates what the dissertation proposal will consist of and what the guidance committee will require for the format. There will also be an initial plan consisting of discrete research and writing tasks that lead up to an anticipated date for the oral defense of the proposal.

Dissertation Proposal Plan (Final) – 10 pts. At the end SSCI 601b course, students will revise the draft plan to reflect more specific tasks, changes in direction, and any other updates.

Dissertation Proposal (Draft) – 0 pts. Students will provide a written draft of the dissertation proposal to their guidance committee by the end of the SSI summer term.

Grading Breakdown

The following table summarizes the SSCI 601a course assignments and their point distribution:

| Assessment | Number | Points Each | Total Points |
|--|--------|-------------|--------------|
| General Assignments | | | |
| Team Organization and Participation | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Seminar Discussion | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Collaborative Research Project Components | | | |
| Initial Collaborative Project Presentation | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| 1 st Collaborative Project Presentation | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 2 nd Collaborative Project Presentation | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| 3 rd Collaborative Project Presentation | 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Final Collaborative Project Presentation | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Collaborative Project Written Report | 1 | 30 | 30 |
| Dissertation Proposal Development | | | |
| Dissertation Proposal Plan (Draft) | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Dissertation Proposal Plan (Final) | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| Dissertation Proposal (Draft) | 1 | N/A | N/A |
| | | | |
| Total | 11 | - | 100 |

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be submitted for grading via Blackboard using the dates specified in the Course Schedule below.

Additional Policies

Students are expected to attend and participate in each class session where indicated in the schedule below and to complete and upload all assignments before the deadlines detailed in the Course Schedule. Late work will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day and zero grades will be assigned for work that is more than one week late.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

| | Topic | Readings and Assignments | Deliverables/Due Dates |
|--|--|---|--|
| Week 1 5/17 | Topic Preparation: Consult with instructor and prepare your initial collaborative project presentation (<i>No regular class meeting</i>) | | |
| Week 2 5/22* *Meet from 10 a.m.-12 noon to join SSCI 601a | Team Formation: Attend the first session of SSCI 601a to present the collaborative project you will lead and recruit team members. | Case and Deaton (2017) Arcaya et al. (2016) Guest and Namey Chapter 6 | Initial Collaborative Project Presentation |
| Week 2 5/24 | Research Team Meeting: Meet with the research team and/or the instructor as needed. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | . |
| Week 3 5/29 | Leadership discussion: A brief discussion of leadership in the field of population, health, and place and leadership strategies built around a common reading | Sample (2003) | |
| Week 3 5/31 | Research Team Meeting and Presentations: Deliver first collaborative project presentations. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | First Collaborative Project Presentation |
| Week 4 6/5 | Research Team Meeting: Meet with the research team and/or the instructor as needed. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | Dissertation Proposal Plan (Draft) |
| Week 4 6/7 | Research Team Meeting and Presentations: Deliver second collaborative project presentations. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | Second Collaborative Project Presentation |
| Week 5 6/12 | Research Team Meeting: Meet with the research team and/or the instructor as needed. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | |

| | Topic | Readings and Assignments | Deliverables/Due Dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 5 6/14 | Research Team Meeting and Presentations: Deliver second collaborative project presentations. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | Third Collaborative Project Presentation |
| Week 6 6/19 | Research Team Meeting: Meet with the research team and/or the instructor as needed. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | |
| Week 6 6/21 | Research Team Meeting: Meet with the research team and/or the instructor as needed. | TBD as required for collaborative project and dissertation proposal | |
| Final Class 6/26* *3 hours, join SSCI 601 a from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m. | Research Team Presentations: Final presentations of the collaborative projects. | | Final Collaborative Project Presentation Dissertation Proposal Plan (Final) Collaborative Project Written Deliverable |
| End of Summer Term for SSI 8/10 | | | Deliverable According to Guidance Committee and Plan |

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.
<https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC –

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu