



PBHL 6355 Integrative Learning Experience (ILE) Capstone Course

Term: *Spring 2026*

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Office Hours: Office Hours are fulfilled by mandatory 1-on-1 sessions, and by scheduling additional 1-on-1 sessions. You may also schedule a meeting at any other date/time in person face-to-face, or via Zoom.

Course Dates: January 12, 2026 – May 2, 2026

Course Times: Synchronous/Asynchronous with 5 individually scheduled 1-on-1 meetings with faculty

Classroom: CANVAS/Zoom

Course Overview

The ILE is the culminating experience for MPH students and is a requirement for graduation in the MPH program. The capstone is typically completed in the last term of the program.

The ILE Capstone course is an opportunity for students to synthesize, integrate, and apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies developed throughout the MPH degree program. The final deliverable will be an evidence-based assessment of population health challenges for a three-county region of varying rurality, evidence-based strategies addressing one or more challenges, and a final recommendation for improving population health. The final deliverable includes a professional presentation appropriate for a town-hall gathering of county commissioners and members of the community, and a final detailed report to the county commissioners and local population/public health entities.

Prerequisite: All core MPH courses or permission of the instructor of record and program director. **Co-requisite** (n/a).

Student Learning Outcomes. After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Critically analyze population health challenges and opportunities for a defined population of varying rurality with respect to 3 types of population health evidence:
 - a. Type 1 Evidence – that which suggests “something needs to be done”
 - b. Type 2 Evidence – that which suggests “these are strategies that might work”
 - c. Type 3 Evidence – that which suggests “this would probably work best in this population”
2. Communicate evidence-based findings and recommendation via:
 - a. A formal written report prepared for legislative officials and population/public health professionals, and
 - b. An oral presentation (for example, a Townhall meeting) to laypersons
3. Self-assess your comprehension of and ability to perform the following MPH competencies:
 - a. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice.
 - b. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design, implementation, or critique of public health policies or programs.
 - c. Design a population-based policy, program, project, or intervention.
 - d. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.
 - e. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation.
 - f. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health.
 - g. Analyze health outcomes across varying levels of rurality.
 - h. Develop intervention recommendations based on the health profile of a rural community.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- **Primary Textbook:** none
- **Assigned Readings:** Throughout the semester, you will encounter insightful readings assigned and posted on Canvas, such as:

- Brownson, Ross C., Jonathan E. Fielding, and Christopher M. Maylahn. "Evidence-based public health: a fundamental concept for public health practice." *Annual review of public health* 30.1 (2009): 175-201.
- Others as provided via CANVAS Modules.

Recommended Resources (Optional):

- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps website: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- RWJF Initiative: <https://www.rwjf.org/en/grants/grantee-stories/programs/county-health-ranking-roadmap.html>
- Other resources may be suggested throughout the semester.

Course Structure

The course is administered asynchronously online via the CANVAS platform. A timeline is provided that allows you to develop your final deliverable incrementally. In order to ensure you “remain on-time,” you will schedule 1-on-1 meetings with your instructor (online, or in-person if you wish) at a date/time amenable to both, within designate weeks of the semester (see course calendar). There are weeks that have been designated as time to focus on your final (and interim) deliverables (see course calendar).

Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask me questions, and talk about the course content with your classmates. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and professor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
2. **Manage your time.** I get it—students usually juggle a lot, and I know you've got commitments beyond this class. Still, doing your best often means carving out enough dedicated time for coursework. Try scheduling specific blocks of time and ensure you have enough room to finish assignments, allowing extra space for any tech issues that might pop up.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to Canvas several times a week to view announcements, discussion posts and replies to your posts.
4. **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous class content. If you feel you are starting to fall behind, check in with the instructor as soon as possible so we can troubleshoot together. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind in the pre-work or post-work.
5. **Use Canvas notification settings.** Pro tip! Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable notifications to be sent instantly or daily. ([Canvas Notification Guide](#))
6. **Ask for help if needed.** If you are struggling with a course concept, reach out to me and your classmates for support.

Graded Course Requirements Information

Weekly Assignments

Week Assigned	Assignment	Point Value	Date Due*
1	1. Pick 3 counties	3	Jan 16

	2. Competency Pre Self-Assessment	5	Jan 18
2	3. Acknowledge receipt of 3-county region	2	Jan 19
	4. Schedule 1st 1-on-1 meeting (for Week 3)	1	Jan 23
	5. Part 1a Evidence Report draft (report & slides)	5	*
3	6. Schedule 2nd 1-on-1 meeting (for Week 5)	1	Feb 6
	7. Part 1b Evidence Report draft (report & slides)	5	*
6	8. Schedule 3rd 1-on-1 meeting (for Week 8)	1	Feb 27
	9. Part 2 Evidence Report draft (report & slides)	5	*
9	10. Schedule 4th 1-on-1 meeting (for Week 13)	1	Mar 20
	11. Part 3 Evidence Report draft (report & slides)	5	*
10	12. Schedule 5th 1-on-1 meeting (for Week 8)	1	Mar 27
12	13. Draft Final ILE Project (report & slides)	10	*
13	14. Competency Post Self-Assessment	5	Apr 17
14	15. ILE Presentation	15	tbd
15	16. ILE Final Project (report & slides)	35	May 2
	*At least 1 day prior to scheduled 1-on-1 meeting		

Course Grade: This is a Credit/No Credit course; you must receive “Credit” to graduate from the MPH Program. An “incomplete” is not permitted. Should you receive “No Credit”, you will have to repeat the course. A “Credit” grade is earned by achieving an overall point value of 80 out of 100 (as detailed in the assignment list above). A summary of the type of assignments is provided below:

<u>Assignment Group</u>	<u>Assignment Group Percent Value</u>
Schedule Five 1-on-1 Meetings	5%
Set up 3-County Region	5%
Two Self-Assessments	10%
Type 1a Evidence Draft Report*	5%
Type 1b Evidence Draft Report*	5%
Type 2 Evidence Draft Report*	5%
Type 3 Evidence Draft Report*	5%
ILE Final Evidence Draft Report*	10%
ILE Presentation	15%
ILE Final Evidence Report*	<u>35%</u>
	100%

*Includes written draft report & power point slides

Late Work and Make-Up Exams:

Late work is automatically reduced by 50% of stated percent value (see above list of individual items) unless reason for lateness is for a verifiable emergency situation (what constitutes an emergency and what suffices as verifiable determined by instructor on a case-by-case basis).

Attendance Policy:

Attendance at all 1-on-1 sessions and Presentation are mandatory. Failure to schedule/attend any 1-on-1 session results in a 2% penalty on overall course grade, for each session missed. Failure to attend presentation will result in a 5% penalty of course grade (unless due to verifiable emergency); if a missed presentation is not “made up”, the remainder of the presentation value (15%) will be penalized to overall course grade.

University Policies & Student Resources:

University policies and student resources are available on the University website and in Canvas under “Syllabus”. (You may copy or print the following information to include in your syllabus or use the links provided below.)

- [University Policy](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

Note: Course week begins on Monday and ends on Sunday; all due dates mean “by midnight”

Module / Week # Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignment(s)	Due Date	What we hope to accomplish this week
1 12-18 Jan Synchronous Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ILE Project ILE Competencies Assessments RWJF Healthy County Roadmap Website ILE Competencies Pick 3 county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Explore RWJF website 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pick 3 counties Competency Pre Self-Assessment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 16 Jan 18 	<p>Gain a thorough understanding of how the course is structured and what you must achieve to complete the ILE – which is essential to earn your MPH degree!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We also want to assess your current level of competence on a specific set of MPH competencies & identify 3 counties (preferably in Texas) that you will use as your ILE Region
2 19-25 Jan Synchronous Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-Informed v Evidence-Based Public Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type 1a Evidence Basic epidemiology & biostatistics review 3-county region “Top 10” Regional Public Health Problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brownson 2009 EBPH Concept RWJF Website 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge receipt of 3-county region Request preferred date/time for 1st 1-on-1 session (week 3) Draft “Part 1a” of ILE Project (report & power point slides) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jan 19 Jan 23 At least 1 day prior to 1st 1-on-1 session 	<p>Gain a thorough understanding of how “evidence-informed” and “evidence-based” public health differ.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We also want to review some basic epidemiology and biostatistics that you will need to use to complete a draft of “Part 1” of the ILE Project. We want to schedule your first 1-on-1 session (week 3)
3 26 Jan – 1 Feb 1st 1-on-1 Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Top 10” Regional Public Health Problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RWJF Website Your draft “Part 1a” 			<p>You will share with me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your region’s “Top 10” public health problems Why do YOU consider these the “Top 10”?

Module / Week # Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignment(s)	Due Date	What we hope to accomplish this week
4 2-8 Feb Asynchronous Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type 1b Evidence • “Top 5-6” Regional Public Health Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownson 2009 EBPH Concept • RWJF Website 	6. Request preferred date/time for 2nd 1-on-1 session (week 5) 7. Draft “Part 1b” of ILE Project (report & power point slides)	6. Feb 6 7. At least 1 day prior to 2nd 1-on-1 session	<p>We will discuss the differences between a “public health problem” and a “public health opportunity” – where an “opportunity” relates to feasible decisions at the county level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to schedule your second 1-on-1 session (week 5)
5 9-15 Feb 2nd 1-on-1 Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Top 6” Regional Public Health Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RWJF Website • Your draft “Part 1b” 			<p>You will share with me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your region’s “Top 5-6” public health opportunities • Why do YOU consider these the “Top 5”?
6 16-22 Feb Asynchronous Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type 2 Evidence – strategies that have been shown to be effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brownson 2009 EBPH Concept • RWJF Website 	8. Request preferred date/time for 3rd 1-on-1 session (week 8) 9. Draft “Part 2” of ILE Project (report & power point slides)	8. Feb 27 9. At least 1 day prior to 3rd 1-on-1 session	<p>We will discuss how to search and select RWJF for evidence-based strategies that might be used to address 1 or more of your “Top 5-6” opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to schedule your third 1-on-1 session (week 8) - NOTE: this is 2 weeks from now, as Week 7 is an independent work week
7 23 Feb – 1 Mar Independent Work Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use this time to continue working on your ILE Project • If you want an additional 1-on-1 session with me, just let me know 				

Module / Week # Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignment(s)	Due Date	What we hope to accomplish this week
8 2-8 Mar 3rd 1-on-1 Session	• “Top 3-4” Regional Public Health Evidence-based Strategies	• RWJF Website • Your draft “Part 2”			You will share with me: • What is your region’s “Top 3-4” public health strategies • Why do YOU consider these the “Top 3”?
Spring Break 9-15 Mar					
9 16-22 Mar Asynchronous Session 3	• “Top 1-2” Regional Public Health Recommendations	• Brownson 2009 EBPH Concept • RWJF Website? • Other sources?	10. Request preferred date/time for 4th 1-on-1 session (week 11) 11. Draft “Part 3” of ILE Project (report & power point slides)	10. Mar 20 11. At least 1 day prior to 4th 1-on-1 session	We will discuss where to search and how to identify other county evidence beyond RWJF that you might use to develop “Top 1-2” recommendations. We want to schedule your fourth 1-on-1 session (week 11) - NOTE: this is 2 weeks from now, as Week 10 is an independent work week
10 23-29 Mar Independent Work Week 2	• Use this time to continue working on your ILE Project • If you want an additional 1-on-1 session with me, just let me know	•	12. Request preferred date/time for 5th (and last) 1-on-1 session (week 13)	12. Mar 27	We want to schedule your fifth (and last) 1-on-1 session (week 13) – this will be a “dry run” presentation of your ILE Project Presentation
11 30 Mar – 5 Apr 4th 1-on-1 Session	• “Top 1-2” Regional Public Health Recommendations	• RWJF Website • Your draft “Part 3”			You will share with me: • What is your region’s “Top 1-2” public health recommendations • Why do YOU consider these the “Top 1-2”?

Module / Week # Dates	Topic(s)	Readings	Assignment(s)	Due Date	What we hope to accomplish this week
12 23-29 Mar Independent Work Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use this time to continue working on your ILE Project • If you want an additional 1-on-1 session with me, just let me know 	•	13. Draft “Final ILE Project” of ILE Project (report & power point slides)	13. At least 1 day prior to 5th 1-on-1 session	
13 13-19 Apr 5th (and last) 1-on-1 Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation Dry Run 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RWJF Website • Your draft “Final Report” 	14. Competency post self-assessment		This is your opportunity to practice your presentation as a dry run. You will only have 30 minutes!
14 20-26 Apr ILE Project Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILE Project Presentation 	•	15. ILE Presentation		
15 27 Apr – 2 May Last week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILE Project Final Report & Final Power Point Slide Set due this week 	•	16. Final Written Report & Final Power Point Slide Set is due	14. May 2 (sooner if you can)	Submit both via Canvas and in an email to me at Gilbert.Ramirez@uttyler.edu

Note: While this course calendar is “final,” it may be subject to changes as necessary as we move through the semester. Monitor your CANVAS notifications/email communications from me on a regular (at least weekly) basis.