



OEHS 5340: Public Health in Rural Populations

Credit Hours: 3

Semester: Fall

Class Location: Online

Modules open on Mondays at 7 am and close one-week later Sundays at 11:59 pm.

All times are US CST.

Instructor	J. Edward Dotherow, DrPH
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Office Hours	by appointment

Prerequisite: None

Course Description: This course provides an overview of public health issues in rural populations and is designed to give students an understanding of the influence of rurality on health. Topics covered include rural health disparities, policy directions in rural health, and models of rural health service delivery. Practical public health strategies that lessen the severity of impact on rural populations related to lack of access to care, substance abuse, mental health, farm safety and unintentional injuries will be explored.

Student Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the population distribution and other demographic differences between rural and non-rural areas.
2. Understand how geographic location intersects with various social determinants of health.
3. Identify interventions that address barriers to care for rural or urban populations.
4. Engage in critical scholarship of the impact of “rurality” on health (including disease prevalence, access to/availability of care, health outcomes).

CEPH Foundational Learning Domains and Competencies:

MPH Concentration Competencies

1. **Analyze health outcomes across varying levels of rurality.**
2. **Develop intervention recommendations based on the health profile of a rural community.**

Required textbook:

There are no required textbooks for this course.

Readings:

Readings and materials specific to each lecture will be posted as needed. Make sure to follow instructions for assignment completion posted within each module. You are responsible for reading any additional materials provided, so please check Canvas regularly.

Course Assessment / Methods of Evaluation

Point allocation

Task	Points per item	Number	Potential Points	% of Grade
SEM Assignment	100	1	100	15%
Article Analysis and Summary	100	4	400	15%
Town Hall Report and Presentation	100	1	100	30%
Rurality and Health Outcomes	100	1	100	20%
Discussion Boards	10	10	100	10%
AI Assignment	100	1	100	10%
Total Points			900	100%

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = below 60%

Late Work:

If you are unable to submit an assignment by the deadline, a late submission will be arranged ONLY if the reason is deemed legitimate by the instructor, AND if the instructor is notified IN ADVANCE (a minimum of 24 hours unless it is an emergency), either by phone or email. Students who fail to make appropriate arrangements will receive a grade of "0" for the assignment missed. There will be no exceptions.

LATE DISCUSSION BOARD POSTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. If you submit your initial or follow-up response after Thurs/Sun at 11:59pm, you will receive a score of 0.

Assignments:*Social Ecological Model (SEM)*

For the SEM assignment, you will analyze a public health issue/disparity through the lens of the Social Ecological Model. You will identify the causes (determinants, mediators, moderators), public health implications, and potential solutions/recommendations/interventions at each level of the SEM.

Article Analysis and Summary (AA)

There are 4 Article Analysis and Summary Assignments in this course. For each AA, you will analyze and summarize (250-500 words, single-spaced) an academic journal article. Using layman's terms, you describe the background, aims/objectives, methods, results, and conclusion of the study. You are responsible for finding the article and must submit it alongside your summary (PDFs only, no links). Additional details for AA assignments are as follows:

- AA 1- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article that either discusses, evaluates/assesses, or features the Social Ecological Model.
- AA 2- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article related to rural health.
- AA 3- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article related to rural health. In addition to the summary, you will make a 2-3 video in which you present your summary. You may prepare **1** PowerPoint slide to provide the article title/authors and key information, but **DO NOT** make this a presentation. Present this information as though you are telling a co-worker or friend about an article you just read. Post your video to the AA 3 Video Submission discussion board and comment on at least two (2) of your classmates' videos.
- AA 4- for this assignment, you will analyze and summarize an article related to rural health. You will make a 2–3-minute video summarizing your study. This time, focus on more on why we should care about article. In other words, focus on what it means to everyday people and their lives. **Power Point slides ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Post your video to the AA 4 Video Submission discussion board and comment on at least two (2) of your classmates' videos.

AI Validation (AI)

For this assignment, you will ask an AI tool to provide information pertaining to a specific rural health issue. You will then validate the information provided based on certain criteria.

Rurality and Health Outcomes

This assignment explores the impact of rurality on health outcomes. You will identify and compare three health outcomes across rural, small metro, and large urban metro

communities. Using multiple data sources, you will describe the similarities and differences between these communities, as well as how they compare to the state and national averages.

Town Hall Report and Presentation

This course examines the impact of rurality on the health. The culminating exercise for this course is the Town Hall Report and Presentation. Students will investigate a current rural health issue facing a community of their choosing. The report will provide a background of the issue, the public health implications at multiple levels of the Social Ecological Model, and potential evidence-based solutions. Students will present their issue and findings. The final product will be a report approximately 6-8 pages in length (minimum 10 references, APA formatting).

A 10-15-minute oral presentation is a required component of this assignment. You will present your findings as though you are speaking at a town hall event, meaning:

- Use layman's terms
- Use minimal PowerPoint slides
 - Keep them simple (language and terminology)
 - Don't fill them with information (key points)
- Don't present your entire paper

Discussion Board posts (DB)

Forums are asynchronous discussions which you will use to process and synthesize course content. In each forum, I will provide you with a newspaper or magazine article, brief video or audio recording, or prompt related to Rural Public Health issues. After reading, watching or listening, it is expected that you will engage in an online discussion board with other members of the class. Leading questions will be posted with each discussion board. It is expected that you give your initial impressions in your first post and then engage your classmates in subsequent posts. Your initial post will always be due by Thursday, 11:59pm. You are expected to respond to two other posts; your follow-up posts are due by Sunday, 11:59pm.

Extra Credit: Students who completed a course evaluation survey at the end of the semester and submit their screenshot on canvas (no need to submit your answers, but your completion message on screen). I will replace your lowest in-class activity grade with maximum points. For example, if you received 6 points for the module 6 discussion, I would add 4 points to give you the maximum number of points (10) for the assignment.

Student Responsibilities/Expectations

Class etiquette dictates that you will:

1. Be active in class, please. Your participation will make the course more enjoyable for everyone.

2. Submit required assignments on time per requirement by the instructor. If there is any reason that may prevent a student from doing so, the student must inform the professor ahead of time and not make any excuses for failing to do so. I

Email Correspondence: All email correspondence will be through the UT-Tyler email system. Personal email accounts will not be used for any class related matters (ex. assignments, absence notifications, grades, etc.). All students are responsible for checking their UT-Tyler email accounts regularly. Also, we will utilize “Chat” function in Canvas.

AI use policy: AI will be used in class, but it is only allowed at the direction of the instructor and for very specific assignments. The use of AI in nonauthorized assignments will result in the grade of “0” points.

Course schedule

Module	Lecture	Writing Assignment	Discussion Board	Live Conference
1	Course Introduction and Expectations		✓	
2	AI in research	✓ (AI)		✓
3	Public Health and Ecological Perspectives	✓ (SEM)		
4	Urbanization and Social Determinants of Health	✓ (AA 1)		
5	Defining Rurality and Social Determinants of Health		✓	
6	Geographic Variations in Health	✓		✓
7	Health and the Environment	✓ (HOC)	✓	
8	One Health		✓	
9	Migrant Workers	✓ (AA 2)		
10	Research Week	✓ (AA 3)		✓
11	Obesity/Diabetes and Physical Activity/Nutrition	✓ (AA 4)		
12	Substance misuse		✓	✓
13	TBD		✓	
14	Thanksgiving Break			
15	Final Project and Presentations	✓	✓	

Student Resources:

Faculty can update student resources to provide additional supports appropriate for each course.

Resources to assist you in the course

- [UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource \(SAR\) Office](#) (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#)
- [The Mathematics Learning Center](#)
- [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction](#)
- [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas](#)
- [Robert Muntz Library](#) and [Library Liaison](#)
- [Canvas 101](#) (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
- Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
- LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
- [The Career Success Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Testing Center](#)
- [Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab](#)

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (available to all students)
- [MySSP App](#) (24/7 access to Student Support Program counseling through phone or chat and online wellness resources available in a variety of languages)
- [Student Assistance and Advocacy Center](#)
- [Military and Veterans Success Center](#) (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- [UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry](#)
- [UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [UT Tyler Student Business Services](#) (pay or set up payment plans, etc.)
- [UT Tyler Registrar's Office](#)
- [Office of International Programs](#)
- [Title IX Reporting](#)
- [Patriots Engage](#) (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information**Withdrawing from Class**

Students may [withdraw](#) (drop) from this course using the [Withdrawal Portal](#). Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email enroll@uttyler.edu to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully [read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions](#) on using the [Withdrawal portal](#).

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. **CAUTION #1:** Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule](#). **CAUTION #2:** All international students must check with the [Office of International Programs](#) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. **CAUTION #3:** All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. **CAUTION #4:** All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the [Military and Veterans Success Center](#).

* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

Artificial Intelligence Statement

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).

Final Exam Policy

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

Incomplete Grade Policy

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a grade *only when **all of the following conditions are met:*** (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

Grade Appeal Policy

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.utt Tyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email saroffice@utt Tyler.edu, or call 903.566.7079."

Military Affiliated Students

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates



disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

Students on an F-1 Visa

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.
- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

FERPA

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

Absence for Official University Events or Activities

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

Absence for Religious Holidays

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog](#).

Absence for Pregnant Students

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at parents@uttyler.edu and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.