University of Florida  
College of Public Health & Health Professions Syllabus  
PHC 7017: Advanced Epidemiologic Methods III (3 credit hours)  
Spring 2018  
Delivery Format: On-Campus (HPNP G-105), Friday 9:35 to 12:35

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Phone: (352) 294-5945  
Email: jimax.chen@ufl.edu  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Preferred course communications: Email, office hours

Prerequisites  
PHC 6000 Epidemiology Research Methods I, PHC 6011 Epidemiology Research Methods II, or consent of instructor

PURPOSE AND OUTCOME

Course Overview  
To expand students' methodology inventory in epidemiology by introducing a set of novel and advanced analytical and modeling methods involving measurement, descriptive, comparative, associative and causal relationship analysis. The main contents include advanced measurement modeling, developmental trajectory analysis, mixed effect modeling and generalized mixed effect modeling, age-period-cohort modeling and hierarchical age-period-cohort modeling, probabilistic discrete event systems modeling, and cusp catastrophe modeling. This course will focus on theories and principles, method selection and application through lectures, hands-on data analysis, short assays, and student presentations.

Course Objectives and/or Goals
1. Strengthening the significance of methods and methodologies in epidemiology; the concepts of data and information; tailoring the contents to meet students’ need for different methods through in-class assessment (1 session)
2. Mastering the measurement modeling methods/techniques capable of converting subjective data into objective through theoretical analysis, scale development and evaluation (2 sessions)
3. Utilizing three advanced modeling methods with focus on descriptive epidemiology, including (a) developmental trajectory analysis, (b) age-period-cohort modeling analysis, and (c) probabilistic discrete event system analysis (6 sessions)
4. Employing mixed effect modeling methods, including the generalized mixed effect modeling methods in associative, causal and randomized controlled trial analysis, particularly cluster-randomized trials (2 sessions)
5. Exploring cusp catastrophe modeling methods in analyzing epidemiologic data to quantify nonlinear complex quantum associative/causal relationships (2 sessions)

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT

Course Schedule  
Session One: Introduction (January 12)  
Starting with discussion about the concept of data and information, significance of methodologies, followed by a self-assessment of the methods already learned or familiar with, and ending with an introduction to the
methods to be covered in this class and potential changes to meet the need of the majority of the class. By the end of the class, each student selects one method he or she likes the most, and will serve as the lead discussant for each session that covers the corresponding method later.

Homework (1) due by session two: Write a one-page essay (with 1 inch’s margin, double-spaced, time new roman font size 12) to describe the significance of analytical methodologies in epidemiology, a list of all the methods already learned, and identify the methods want learn the most.

Readings:

Session Two: Measurement Errors and Measurement Modeling (I) (January 19)

Latest time to turn homework (1) in
Introduction to the basic concept of measurement errors, the need for measurement tools to objectively assess beliefs and behaviors that are subjective, the five-step measurement modeling approach, concept mapping for scale item development and measurement modeling, advanced measurement modeling methods, SAS program for measurement modeling analysis.

Homework (2): (a) Conduct measurement modeling analysis of the Brief Sensation Seeking Scale with provided data (leading discussant prepare to report and discuss results in the next session); (b) Conduct a critical review, in writing of no more than one page, of one published scale with the idea of “concept mapping”, item responses, internal consistency, reliability and validity (due by session four).

Readings:

Session Three: Measurement Errors and Measurement Modeling (II) (January 26)

Student’s report of the results from the critical review/measurement modeling analysis, discussion; recap of the contents covered in the previous session, old and new questions, answers and discussion.

Readings:

Session Four: Developmental trajectory analysis I (February 2)

Patterns and process of development, heterogeneity of study populations, principles of group-based modeling, applications with examples, and SAS programming PROC TRAJ

Homework (3): Conduct developmental trajectory analysis of your own data or data provided by class (due before session five); and write a one-page essay to demonstrate the need for developmental trajectory analysis (due before session six).

Readings:


**Session Five: Developmental trajectory analysis II (February 2)**

Student's report of results from the developmental trajectory analysis using the PROC TRAJ in SAS or STATA, recap of the contents covered in the previous session, old and new questions, answers and discussion.

**Readings:**

**Session Six: Mixed effect modeling analysis I (February 9)**

Complex sampling design and longitudinal data; the concept of fixed, mixed, and random effects; hierarchical modeling, mixed and generalized mixed effect models; and the application of PROC MIX and PROC GLIMMIX.

**Homework (4):** Conduct a mixed effect modeling analysis using either PROC MIX or PROX GLIMMIX with your own data or data provided by class (due before session seven), and write a one-page essay indicating the when a mixed effect modeling method is needed (due before session eight).

**Readings:**

**Session Seven: Mixed effect modeling analysis II (February 16)**

Student's report of the results from the homework, recap of the contents covered in the previous session, old and new questions, answers and discussion.

**Readings:**

**Session Eight: Age-Period-Cohort (APC) Modeling Analysis I (February 23)**

Concept of age-period-cohort (APC) modeling, utility in exploring history of disease epidemiology using current data, history of the method development, challenge to solving non-identifiable and new progress, approaches for analysis, regression approach using SAS or other related programs, intrinsic estimate using STATA, generalized inverse matrix methods through R.

**Homework (5):** Locate dataset or use data provided by the class to conduct an APC modeling analysis (due before session nine), and write a one-page essay describing the utility of APC modeling in research (due before session ten).

**Readings:**


**Session Nine: Age-Period-Cohort (APC) Modeling Analysis II (March 9)**

Student report of the results from the homework, recap of the contents covered in the previous session, old and new questions, answers and discussion.

**Readings:**

**Session Ten: Cusp Catastrophe Modeling of Quantum Change I (March 16)**

Methodological challenges for analyzing epidemiologic data for etiological research, concept of nonlinear quantum dynamics of outcome variables, cusp catastrophic modeling, methods to solve a cusp models, analytical software and programming with SAS and R.

**Homework:** (7) Try to conduct a cusp modeling analysis with data provided by class or of your own (no due date).

**Readings:**

**Session Eleven: Cusp Catastrophe Modeling of Quantum Change II (March 23)**

Student report the CUSP modeling results, recap of the contents covered in the previous session, old and new questions, answers and discussion.

**Session Twelve: Probabilistic Discrete Event Systems (PDES) Modeling I (March 30)**

Concept of dynamic changes and system modeling, continuous and discrete change, longitudinal and cross-sectional design, PDES modeling, challenges to solving non-identifiable PDES models and solutions, solutions with generalized inverse matrix methods through R.

**Homework:** (6): Conduct PDES modeling with data provided by class or of your own (due by session eleven).

**Readings:**

**Session Thirteen: Probabilistic Discrete Event Systems (PDES) Modeling II (April 13)**
Student report of the PDES modeling results, recap of the contents covered in the previous session, old and new questions, answers and discussion.

Readings:

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Textbooks
No one single textbook meets the need of this class. The following books are recommended:

Assignments and Grading
Grades will be based on points accumulated for class attendance and participation, assignments, exams and final project. Total points earned will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>70%</td>
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</tbody>
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(1) Attendance will be graded based on absence from classes. One percent point will be deducted for each absence of a class session without notifying the instructor of any excusable reason. (2) Participation will be assessed based on required presentation made in class and participation in classroom discussion. Fail to make presentation will lost the total 20% point; points will also be deducted according to the quality of the work presented in class and active in participating classroom discussion. (3) There are seven homework assignments for this class. Students earn up to 10% points per assignment. Turning homework on time with quality work will ensure full marks. Points will be deducted for delayed submission and poor quality of work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homework #</th>
<th>Assigned during</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HW (1)</td>
<td>Session I</td>
<td>Short essay</td>
<td>By session II</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW(2)</td>
<td>Session II</td>
<td>Measurement modeling analysis</td>
<td>By session III</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW(3)</td>
<td>Session IV</td>
<td>Trajectory analysis</td>
<td>By session V</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW(4)</td>
<td>Session VI</td>
<td>Short essay</td>
<td>By Session VI</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW(5)</td>
<td>Session VIII</td>
<td>Mixed effect modeling analysis</td>
<td>By session VII</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW(6)</td>
<td>Session X</td>
<td>Short essay</td>
<td>By Session VIII</td>
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<tr>
<td>HW(7)</td>
<td>Session XII</td>
<td>Age-period-cohort analysis</td>
<td>By Session X</td>
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<td>PDES modeling analysis</td>
<td>By Session XI</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Cusp modeling analysis</td>
<td>By Session XIII</td>
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Point System

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<tr>
<th>Point earned</th>
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<th>83-86</th>
<th>80-82</th>
<th>77-79</th>
<th>73-76</th>
<th>70-72</th>
<th>67-69</th>
<th>63-66</th>
<th>60-62</th>
<th>&lt;60</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter grade</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>E</td>
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<td>Grade points</td>
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For greater detail on the meaning of letter grades and university policies related to them, see the Registrar’s Grade Policy regulations at: [http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx](http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx)

Exam Policy

Policy Related to Make up Exams or Other Work

Please note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail me within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Policy Related to Required Class Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory. Excused absences follow the criteria of the UF Graduate Catalogue (e.g., illness, serious family emergency, military obligations, religious holidays), and should be communicated to the instructor prior to the missed class day when possible. UF rules require attendance during the first two course sessions. Missing more than two scheduled sessions without excuse (each session is about 4 hours of instruction) will result in a failure. Students are responsible for all material presented in class and meeting the scheduled due dates for class assignments.

All faculty are bound by the UF policy for excused absences. For information regarding the UF Attendance Policy see the Registrar website for additional details: [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx)

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, ROLES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

Expectations Regarding Course Behavior

Please come to class on time and be prepared to stay until the time scheduled as the end of class. We think your investment in the degree is worth maximizing your in-class experience, and we expect to provide materials that utilize the full, scheduled class times. The use of cell phones is not permitted. Please turn them off or, if you expect urgent calls, set them to vibrate.

Communication Guidelines

Assistance with course material is available during scheduled office hours or by appointment. Emailed questions are also welcome, and we aim to address all such inquiries within 24 hours of receipt (or on Monday if the email was sent on Friday). Please do not re-send the same question until the appropriate time frame has elapsed (24 hours or end of day Monday for emails sent on Friday). Student success and understanding is of the utmost importance, so each email receives careful consideration. Because the number of students in the course is not small, substantial time may be spent by the instructor and TA on emailed concerns; your patience and understanding is appreciated. When emailing a question, please also copy the TA, as this may increase your chances of getting a quick reply!

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”
It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sscr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/ http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is an unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

**Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at [https://evaluations.ufl.edu](https://evaluations.ufl.edu). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at [https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/](https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/).

It is very important to me that you are able to develop a set of epidemiologic tools in this course that you will find useful in your career. Naturally, the presentation of some tools may be stronger than others. Your feedback on this issue is extremely valuable. Please feel free to comment on what strategies worked and which might be improved. Your input will be essential for us to modify future versions of this course to leverage such knowledge of strengths and weaknesses. As an additional consideration, these evaluations are also useful at the University level, as they are examined in the context of faculty tenure and promotion procedures.

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**SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, you must register with the Dean of Students Office [http://www.dso.ufl.edu](http://www.dso.ufl.edu) within the first week of class. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation of accommodations to you, which you then give to me as the instructor of the course to receive accommodations. Please make sure you provide this letter to me by the end of the second week of the course. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

**Counseling and Student Health**

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- The Counseling and Wellness Center 352-392-1575 offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information: [http://www.counseling.ufl.edu](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu). On line and in person assistance is available.

- You Matter We Care website: [http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/](http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/). If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.

- The Student Health Care Center at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at: [https://shcc.ufl.edu/](https://shcc.ufl.edu/)

- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from: Alachua County Crisis Center (352) 264-6789 [http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx](http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx)

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.