

College of Public Health and Health Professions  
College of Medicine  
Department of Epidemiology

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College of Public Health & Health Professions  
College of Medicine  
Epidemiology Writing Circle  
PHC 7902-1 credit – Section 02G5  
Spring, 2015  
2 hours on Mondays (4:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.)  
Dates of classes vary, see dates listed below

### **Instructor Information**

Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH

Dean's Professor of Epidemiology; Chair, Department of Epidemiology  
College of Public Health and Health Professions and College of Medicine  
352-273-5468

[lbcottler@ufl.edu](mailto:lbcottler@ufl.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment; email Erica Boyd at [ericalboyd@ufl.edu](mailto:ericalboyd@ufl.edu) to schedule.

### **Course Overview**

The principal goals of this Epidemiology Writing Circle are to:

- 1) improve student's own academic writing style
- 2) write, complete, and submit papers – with at least one as a first author
- 3) edit colleague's manuscripts, regardless of topic area

This course will prepare students to perform peer-review and to think critically. In weekly class discussion sessions, students will review each other's work, bring work to edit here and share. Feedback will be given by student peers and course master.

### **Course Objectives and/or Goals**

As a result of this course, students will:

- 1) Learn “best practices” for reviewing and critiquing scientific articles in public health and medicine research journals.
- 2) Critically review scientific literature, analyze and summarize strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations for improvement.
- 3) Discuss broad issues in Epidemiologic methods and content.
- 4) Write articles for dissemination to the field.
- 5) Improve your CV.

## Course Materials

Course information, grades, and some readings are available on Sakai at <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> . You must have a Gatorlink account to log on. To use the system, please make sure to:

- Disable pop-up blockers. Sakai takes advantage of pop-up windows to deliver content.
- Make sure that the Java system on your computer is from Sun Microsystems. Sakai does not use Java from Microsoft. Without Java, certain tools in Sakai will not function correctly. You can do a check on your Java status from the main page under “Sakai Resources.”
- Have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed.

## Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course. Students may wish to read:

Zeiger, M. (2000). Essentials of Biomedical Research Papers (2nd ed.)

Hall, G.M (2003). How to Write a Paper (3rd ed.)

## Course Requirements

Each student will be required to:

Bring a paper they are working on each week. Students will take turns presenting either to the whole class or in pairs. Topics that we will work on each week will include:

Intro/Methods/Results/Discussion—depending on what part of the paper students are working on. Classmates will offer editing feedback, conceptual feedback and ideas for improving the paper/concepts.

Presentations will be variable each week, but can include:

- 10 minutes, or more each week, per person.
- Pairing up with another student who may or may not know about your topic
- Students will be graded on participation in class, on the submission of a paper to a journal, and bringing new material to each class

## Evaluation/Grading

This course will be graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory following the policies described here <http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=762#grades>.

As noted above in this syllabus, students are required to present their work each week. The overall grade will be based on written materials brought to each class (40%), instructor assessment of student contributions to their peers (20%), and submitting at least 1 manuscript for publication by the end of class (40%). Failure to submit a paper will result in an unsatisfactory grade. Manuscripts must show progress through presentations each week. Presentations will be edited for quality, clarity, brevity, professional delivery, coverage of all needed information, attractiveness of tables etc. Presentations that fall below an instructor assessment of 70/100 will be considered to be unsatisfactory. Students are also required to provide assistance to their peers in writing each week. The instructor will make the rounds to make sure students are contributing to each other’s work. Students must turn in proof of manuscript submission for at least one first authored publication during the semester.

All deadlines must be met. Grades will not be assigned unless proof of submission is provided. Grades will also include attendance, and how collaborative the student was in giving feedback to others.

**Course Dates:****January 12: no class****January 19: no class****January 26****February 2****February 16****March 2: no class****March 16****March 30****April 13****April 20**

However, because of Dr. Cottler's schedule, it is possible classes may have to be rescheduled. Student schedules will be accommodated.

**Statement of University's Honesty Policy****University of Florida Academic Honesty Statements**

"I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree and adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

"All faculty, staff and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate."

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

**Citations and Plagiarism**

The two key purposes of citation are to: 1) give appropriate credit to the authors of information, research findings, and/or ideas (and avoid plagiarism), and 2) facilitate access by your readers to the sources you use in your research.

**Quotations:** When directly quoting an outside source, the borrowed text, regardless of the amount, must be surrounded by quotation marks or block quoted. Quoted text over two lines in length should be single-spaced and indented beyond the normal margins. Every quote must include a source—the author, title, volume, page numbers, etc.—whether an internal reference, footnote, or endnote is used in conjunction with a bibliography page.

**Paraphrasing or Citing an Idea:** When summarizing an outside source in your own words or citing another person's ideas, quotation marks are not necessary, but the source must be included. This includes, but is not confined to, personal communications from other students, faculty members, experts in the field, summarized ideas from published or unpublished resource,

and primary methods derived from published or unpublished sources. Use the general concept of “when in doubt – cite.”

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the academic honesty policy of the College. If a student plagiarizes others’ material or ideas, he or she may receive an “E” in the course. The faculty member may also recommend further sanctions to the Dean, per College disciplinary action policy. Generally speaking, the three keys of acceptable citation practice are: 1) thoroughness, 2) accuracy, and 3) consistency. In other words, be sure to fully cite all sources used (thoroughness), be accurate in the citation information provided, and be consistent in the citation style you adopt. All references should include the following elements: 1) last names along with first and middle initials; 2) full title of reference; 3) name of journal or book; 4) publication city, publisher, volume, and date; and 5) page numbers referenced. When citing information from the Internet, include the www address at the end, with the “access date” (i.e., when you obtained the information), just as you would list the document number and date for all public documents. When citing ideas or words from an individual that are not published, you can write “personal communication” along with the person’s name and date of communication.

#### **Policy Related to Class Attendance**

Absences must be conveyed to Dr. Cottler in advance, or on the day of the absence for illness, via email.

#### **Policy Related to Make-up Exams or Other Work**

Students are expected to attend and be prepared to participate in all class sessions. Personal issues with respect to class attendance or fulfillment of course requirements will be handled on an individual basis. Unexcused absences will result in a missed presentation, reducing the final grade.

#### **Statement Related to Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, you must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to you, which you then give to the instructor when requesting accommodation. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

#### **Counseling and Student Health**

Students may occasionally have personal issues that arise in the course of pursuing higher education or that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing problems affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and to seek confidential assistance at the UF Counseling & Wellness Center, 352-392-1575. Visit their web site for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>.

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, including primary care, women's health care, immunizations, mental health care, and pharmacy 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: [www.health.ufl.edu/shcc](http://www.health.ufl.edu/shcc).

Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from:  
Alachua County Crisis Center: (352) 264-6789.

BUT – 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.