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| Macintosh HD:Users:larrimore:Documents:visual identity and logos:Milken:gw_ci_misph2_2cs_pos.png | Department of Prevention and Community Health  PubH 6599 Fall 2024  Culture and Health  Wednesdays 6:10PM – 8PM  600A  Residential Graduate Course |

Instructor:

Mark Edberg, Ph.D., M.A.

Professor  
Department of Prevention and Community Health  
Milken Institute School of Public Health   
Secondary Appointments: Department of Anthropology and Elliott School of International Affairs  
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Office Hours: Thursday 12-2pm or by appointment (in person or via Zoom)

Course Description

The term *culture* has increasingly been used in the discourse of public health, for example, with respect to issues of health disparities in the U.S., the development and implementation of “culturally competent” or “culturally appropriate” programs, and in many other ways. What exactly *is* culture, however? The term is easily applied to all kinds of phenomena, without a critical look at the nature of, and role of culture as an aspect of human behavior. In this course we will examine what is meant by culture, the ways in which culture intersects with health issues, how public health efforts (domestic and global) can benefit by understanding and working with cultural processes, and we will take a brief look at research methods that are useful in identifying relationships between culture and health. During the course, we will examine several health issues in more depth regarding their cultural factors and implications: HIV/AIDS, youth violence (now viewed as a public health problem), obesity, *and the COVID-19 pandemic*. [We may also be able to hear a guest speaker from one or more of our multicultural research partners.]

**Course Prerequisite(s):** PubH 6007, Social and Behavioral Approaches to Public Health. NOTE: Students who successfully completed PH2113 at the undergraduate level should not enroll in this course.

Program competencies to be addressed:

1. Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations (Social/Behavioral Sciences).
2. Identify basic theories, concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines that are used in public health research and practice (Social/Behavioral Sciences).
3. Describe the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems (Social/Behavioral Sciences).
4. Describe the roles of, history, power, privilege and structural inequality in producing health disparities (Diversity and Culture).
5. Explain why cultural competence alone cannot address health disparity (Diversity and Culture).
6. Differentiate among availability, acceptability, and accessibility of health care across diverse populations (Diversity and Culture).
7. Differentiate between linguistic competence, cultural competency, and health literacy in public health practice (Diversity and Culture).
8. Cite examples of situations where consideration of culture-specific needs resulted in a more effective modification or adaptation of a health intervention (Diversity and Culture).
9. Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served (Diversity and Culture).

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| Course Learning Objectives/Learning Outcomes – Upon completion of the course, students will be able to: | Meets Competency Number |
| * Explain the concept of culture as one framework for human behavior, including health behavior.   . | #1, 2, 3 |
| * Explain specific domains where culture and health intersect: definitions of health/well-being; illness causation and treatment theories (ethnomedical systems); social constructions of illness and stigma; the role of social and political ecologies in shaping cultural responses; cross-cultural ideas about care and treatment; gender and health; different understandings about what is a “health risk”; and the issue of “cultural competency.” | #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| * Over a selection of cases and program examples, across several health issues, analyze the ways in which the highlighted health problems and health interventions were and are impacted by cultural factors. | #6, 8 |
| * Describe the kinds of research data needed to understand and incorporate cultural information in health promotion program planning and evaluation. | #9 |
| * Apply the knowledge gained in the course concerning the culture-health relationship to the design of a health promotion intervention (domestic or global). | #3, 6, 9 |

Required Texts

(Readings should be completed before coming to class!)

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| **Title** | **Author** | **Edition** |
| (2022). *Essentials of Health, Culture, Health and Diversity: Understanding People, Reducing Disparities*. Boston, MA: Jones & Bartlett. (2022) [This will be referred to as the course “text.”] | Edberg, M | 2nd  [NOTE: Get the second edition if you can; if not, the 1st edition will work.] |
| *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. (1997) | Fadiman, A |  |
| *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (California Series in Public Anthropology)*.* Berkeley: University of California Press. (2013) | Holmes, S |  |

**Recommended/Supplemental Texts**

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| **Title** | **Author** | **Edition** |
| TBD – articles as assigned. |  |  |

# **Methods of Instruction** (check all that apply)

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| --- | --- |
| Lectures X  Case Studies X  Required Readings/Textbook X  Recommended/Supplemental Readings X | Class and Small Group Discussions X  Student Presentations  Other [Specify]  Other [Specify] |

**Methods of Evaluation Percent of Grade**

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| --- | --- |
| Midterm Exam | 35% |
| Culture and Health Program Proposal (Paper) | 50% |
| Participation (as defined below) | 15% |

**Assignment Descriptions**

Midterm: The Midterm Exam is a take-home set of short essay questions completed during one week. The questions require an understanding of the set of perspectives (“tools”) introduced in the course to understand the interplay between culture and health. The focus will be on describing the basic elements of these tools, and then using them to respond to essay questions concerning broader themes surrounding the culture-health relationship.

Culture and Health Program Proposal: This assignment will substitute for the final exam and is due on the date of the scheduled final. The purpose of the Program Proposal is to synthesize what you have learned about the culture-health relationship and apply it by proposing a health promotion intervention that addresses a specific population and health issue, identifying key cultural issues involved and incorporating them in the program design. You have the option of addressing HIV/AIDS, obesity, youth violence or COVID-19 in a specific population (as we do in the class), or of selecting another health issue/population. The paper should be in the following format:

* *Health issue:* Health Issue, target population and epidemiology
* *Population and cultural issues:* Description of affected population, including cultural factors relevant to the impact of the health problem
* *Program:* Proposed program approach and components
* *Incorporation of cultural issues:* Explanation of cultural factors incorporated into program design and rationale for inclusion.

The paper should be approximately 12 to 16 pages, double-spaced. Make sure to include citations and references wherever necessary, and format the references in APA style (posted on Blackboard) and listed at the end of the report under the heading of “References”. The references should not be counted as within the 12-16 page text.

**Grading Scale and Standards**

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| A: 94-100% | C+: 77-79% |
| A-: 90-93% | C: 73-76% |
| B+: 87-89% | C-: 70-72% |
| B: 84-86% | F: Below 70% |
| B-: 80-83% |  |

**Workload:** In this course, you will be expected to spend XX hours per week in independent learning which can include reviewing assigned material, preparing for class discussions, working on assignments, studying for exams, and group work. In addition 2 hours per week will be spent in direct instruction.

**Class Policy: Expectations for individual contributions and acceptable levels of collaboration for assignments on which students may work together.** Although you may discuss case studies/assignments with other students, the written assignment you turn in must be your own work in your own words. If you copy another students assignment or let someone else copies yours, you are both cheating. Exams must be done independently, on your own. Your paper is solely the product of the individual student listed as author.

**Class Policy:** **Participation and Discussion.** For this class, participation refers to attendance at class, participation in discussions, and familiarity with readings during discussions.

**Class Policy: Late Work.** No late assignments will be accepted without advance permission. Under extenuating circumstances a student may ask the instructor for extended time to complete the assignment. It is the instructor’s choice to grant an extension or not. For work that is more than one class session late, 5% of the grade will be deducted each week.

**Class Policy: Make-up Exams.** Any student who experiences significant family or personal illness or emergency after the final withdrawal date and is unable to complete course work should ask the instructor for an incomplete for the course. Each case will be managed on an individual basis. The Incomplete Policy must be followed as outlined in the GWSPH Graduate Student Handbook.

**Blackboard**

Blackboard will be used for posting course files and assignments and for communicating with the class. You are already enrolled for this course on Blackboard if you have completed registration for the course. It is your responsibility to periodically check the course site (log in at [http://blackboard.gwu.edu/](about:blank) Using your gwu.edu address) for updates to the syllabus/readings.

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| **Session Outline** | | |
| **Session 1** | **August 28th** | |
| TOPIC: Course introduction and overview:   * Course mechanics * What is “culture”? General introduction to the concept. (Everyone is “cultural”) * For a humorous (though somewhat incomplete) look at the idea of culture, see YouTube [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2Bj8OCmxb4](about:blank)   TOPIC: Intersections – a preliminary exploration of the ways in which culture and health cross paths   * What do we mean when we refer to “health behavior”? How does this differ/not differ from the general domain of “human behavior”? * Extending the cultural roots of behavior to considerations of health behavior – a broader agenda than just being “culturally relevant” or “culturally competent.” * Disease vs. Illness: Understanding illness as a negative deviation from a socioculturally defined state of well-being   Assigned Readings: Text (Edberg) Chapter 1, Chapter 2 up to p. 15.  And, read the following article (on Blackboard, Session 1 folder):  - McMullin, J. 2005. “The Call to Life: Revitalizing a Healthy Hawaiian Identity.” *Social Science and Medicine* 61: 809-820.  Optional read: Photocopied chapter called “The Nature of Culture” (on Blackboard) | | |
| **Session 2** | | **September 4th** |
| TOPIC: Ethnomedical systems   * Defining deviations from a culturally defined state of well-being: creating the spaces for illness * Defining and categorizing illnesses, causes, treatments and treaters * Does an ethnomedical system of belief “cause” illness? The “Nocebo effect.”   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 3, and the following articles:  - Foster GM. 1976. “Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems.” *American Anthropologist* 78:773-82*.*  - Hahn R. 1997. “The Nocebo Phenomenon: Concept, Evidence and Implications for Public Health.” *Preventative Medicine* 26(5): 607-611.  - Kedia S. (2004). “Gahrwali Ethnomedical Systems.” In Ember CR, and Ember M, *The Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology* (pp. 664-673)*.* New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.  - Mathews HF. (1987). “Rootwork: Description of an Ethnomedical System in the American South.” *Southern Medical Journal* 80(7): 885-891. | | |
| **Session 3** | | **September 11th** |
| TOPIC: Ethnopsychiatric systems – culture, mental health and emotion   * Culture, the mind and psychology * “Culture-bound syndromes” * Culture and emotion (discussion of Catherine Lutz – since there is no reading for Lutz, use lecture notes for reference. Will be posted.)   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 4, and the following articles:  - Dominguez de Ramirez R, and Shapiro ES. 2005. “Effects of Student Ethnicity on Judgments of ADHD Symptoms among Hispanic and White Teachers.” *School Psychology Quarterly* 20(3): 268-287.  - Sotero, M. 2006. "A Conceptual Model of Historical Trauma: Implications for Public Health Practice and Research." *Journal of Health Disparities and Research Practice* 1(1): 93-108.  - Brooks BB. (2014). “Chucaque and Social Stress among Peruvian Highlanders.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 28(3): 419-439.  - Roldan-Chicano MT, Fernandez-Rufete J, Hueso-Montoro C, Garcia-Lopez MM, Rodriguez-Tello J, and Flores-Bienert, MD.(2017). “Culture-Bound Syndromes in Migratory Contexts: The Case of Bolivian Immigrants.” *Rev. Latino-Am. Enfermagem* 25: e2915.  - White R (2013). “The Globalisation of Mental Illness.” *The Psychologist* 26(3): 182-185.  - | | |
| **Session 4** | | **September 18th** |
| TOPICS: Culture, health and the moral dimension   * The relationship between cause (of an illness) and moral blame * Illness behavior, illness roles * Stigma: Illnesses that represent moral condemnation * Leprosy and AIDS as stigma archetypes   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 5, and the following articles:  - Farmer P and Kleinman A. 1989. “AIDS as Human Suffering.” *Daedalus* 118(2): 135-161.  - Thomas F. 2007. “’Our Families are Killing Us’: HIV/AIDS, Witchcraft and Social Tensions in the Caprivi Region, Namibia.” *Anthropology and Medicine* 14(3): 279-291.  - Obilade TT. (2015). “Ebola Virus Disease Stigmatization: The Role of Societal Attributes.” *International Archives of Medicine* 8(14):1-19.  - Hewlett BS and Amola RP. (2003). “Cultural Contexts of Ebola in Northern Uganda.” *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 9(10): 1242-1248. | | |
| **Session 5** | | **September 25th** |
| TOPIC: Culture and healing   * The social institutions of healing * Healers and healing practices -- in relation to ethnomedical systems * Shamans/shamanic practice * Non-biomedical healing in Western contests * Integrated healing   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 6, and the following articles:  - Brown PL. September 20, 2009. “A Doctor for Disease, a Shaman for the Soul.” *New York Times,* at [www.nytimes.com](about:blank).  - Tafur MM, Crowe TK, and Torres E. 2009. “A Review of *Curanderismo* and Healing Practices among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.” *Occupational Therapy International* 16(1): 82-88.  - Winkelman M. (2013). “Shamanism in Cross-Cultural Perspective.” *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* 31(2): 47-62.  FILM: “Eduardo the Healer” or documentary on Hmong Shaman | | |
| **Session 6** | | **October 2nd** |
| TOPIC: The Role of social-cultural ecologies in disease   * The creation of vulnerability * The reciprocal relationship – culture, environment, disease * Political ecology – health and its relationship to social stratification, wealth inequity, political and economic systems * Case study: Historical trauma and American Indian/Alaska Native peoples   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 7, and the following articles:  - Edberg M, Cleary S, and Vyas A. February 2010. “A Model for Understanding and Assessing Health Disparities in Immigrant/Refugee Communities.” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* DOI 10.1007/s10903-010-9337-5 (on line version).  - Shell-Duncan B and McDade T. 2006. “The Cultural Ecology of Iron Deficiency among Northern Kenyan Schoolchildren.” *Journal of Human Ecology* Special Issue 14: 107-116.  - Singer M and Clair S. 2003. “Syndemics and Public Health: Reconceptualizing Disease in Bio-Social Context.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 17(4): 423-441. | | |
| **Session 7** | | **October 9th** |
| TOPICS: Culture, subculture, and relative risk – Differences in perceptions of health risk   * The shaping of health risk * Subcultures and diverse social ecologies of risk * Case examples   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 8, and the following articles:  - Tansey J and O’Riordan T. (1999). “Cultural Theory and Risk: A Review.” *Health, Risk & Society* 1(1): 71-90.  - Edberg MC, Cohen MI, Gies SV, and May-Slater S. (2014). “Trajectories of Involvement in Commercial Sex Exploitation and Domestic Trafficking of Girls and Young Women: Selected Qualitative Results from an Evaluation Study.” *Journal of Ethnographic and Qualitative Research* 9: 89-110.  TAKE HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED – DUE IN ONE WEEK  STUDENTS DECIDE IF THEY WILL READ FADIMAN *OR* HOLMES BOOK | | |
| **Session 8** | | **October 16th** |
| TOPIC: Clash of cultures: the Hmong, epilepsy, and the Western medical system  Assigned Readings: Fadiman, entire book  MIDTERM DUE | | |
| **Session 9** | | **October 24th** |
| TOPIC: Culture, social ecology, and health determinants  Assigned Readings: Holmes, entire book | | |
| **Sessions 10-11** | | **October 29th**  **November 6th** |
| TOPIC: Case examples – four health issues (domestic and global)   * HIV/AIDS * Obesity and its consequences * Youth violence * COVID-19   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 9, and the following articles:   * Bhattacharya G (2004). “Sociocultural and Behavioral Contexts of Condom Use in Heterosexual Married Couples in India: Challenges to the HIV Prevention Program.” *Health Education & Behavior* 31(1): 101-117. * Sutterfield D, LeBruyn L, Santos M, Alonso L, and Frank M.(2016). “Health Promotion and Diabetes Prevention in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities – Traditional Foods Project, 2008-2014.” *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 65(1): 4-10. * Cohen A. (2017). “Youth Gangs, Violence and Local Culture in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 1-24, DOI: 10.1177/0891241617702196. * COVID-19 articles TBD.   Possible films on comparative/symbolic violence: “The Ax Fight” (Yanomamo), “The Fast Runner” (Inupiaq), or “Crips and Bloods: Made in America” (USA/gangs). | | |
| **Session 12** | | **November 13th** |
| TOPIC: Research needs and cultural data   * What kinds of data do you need? * Data collection strategies     Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 10, and CLASS EXERCISE | | |
| **Session 13** | | **November 20th** |
| TOPIC: Application -- Incorporating culture in health promotion interventions   * Program development and implementation * Program evaluation * Case examples   GUEST LECTURE ON APPLICATION OF CULTURAL INFORMATION  Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 11, and the following articles:  - Chavez LR, Hubbell FA, McMullin JM et al. 1995. Understanding Knowledge and Attitudes about Breast Cancer.” *Archives of Family Medicine* 4: 145-152.  - Dressler WA. 1980. “Ethnomedical Beliefs and Patient Adherence to a Treatment Regimen: A St. Lucian Example.” *Human Organization* 39: 88-91. [also appearing as Chapter 28, in PJ Brown and R Barrett (Eds), *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology (Second Edition).* Boston, MA: McGraw Hill 2010.]  **NO CLASS NOVEMBER 27th (WEDNESDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING)** | | |
| **Session 14** | | **December 4th** |
| TOPIC: Reflecting on cultural competency   * Defining cultural competence * Broad guidelines on cultural competence * Cultural competency in practice   Assigned Readings: Text Chapter 12, and the following articles:  - Abraído-Lanza AF, Flórez KR, and Aguirre AN. 2007. “*Fatalismo* Reconsidered: A Cautionary Note for Health-Related Research and Practice with Latino Populations.” Commentary. *Ethnicity and Disease* 17: 153-158.  - Kleinman A, Benson P. 2006. “Anthropology in the Clinic: The Problem of Cultural Competency and How to Fix it.” *PLoS Medicine* 3(10): e294. | | |

**FINAL PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11…HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

## DEI Statement

The Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH) at the George Washington University (GW) is committed to supporting the highest standards and practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our processes, systems and interactions throughout our community.  We embrace an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. We at the GWSPH will work in the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion not only to drive innovation and excellence throughout all our programs but also in honoring our commitment to social justice.  Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment. More information is available on our school website [here](about:blank).

## DEI Resources and Bias Reporting

Unfortunately, incidents of bias or discrimination do occur, whether intentional or unintentional. Resources available at the University to assist you include the following:

* GW maintains a website for reporting incidents of bias, [https://diversity.gwu.edu/report-bias-incident-online](about:blank). This site allows any university community member to report, including anonymously, incidents of bias and other forms of unwelcome conduct motivated by hatred based on race, color, religion, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin or any other factor.
* GW Office of Diversity Equity and Community Engagement:  [https://diversity.gwu.edu/](about:blank)

## Sexual Harassment (Title IX)

GW and its faculty and staff are committed to creating a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and stalking, please know that help and support are available. GW strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support, and report incidents of sexual harassment to the Title IX Office. You may contact the Title IX Office at 202-994-7434 or at [titleix@gwu.edu](about:blank) or learn more by visiting [titleix.gwu.edu](about:blank). Please be aware that faculty members are required to disclose information about suspected or alleged sexual harassment or other potential violations of the Title IX Sexual Harassment and Related Conduct Policy to the Title IX Office. If the Title IX Office receives information about an incident, they will reach out to offer information about resources, rights, and procedural options as a member of the campus community. Community members are not required to respond to this outreach.  If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact Counseling and Psychological Services through the Colonial Health Center 24/7 at 202-994-5300, or the Office Of Advocacy and Support at 202-994-0443 or at [oas@gwu.edu](about:blank).

# COURSE AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES

## Blackboard

Blackboard will be used for posting course files and assignments and for communicating with the class. You are already enrolled for this course on Blackboard if you have completed registration for the course. It is your responsibility to periodically check the course site (log in at [http://blackboard.gwu.edu/](about:blank) using your gwu.edu address) for updates to the syllabus/readings.

For additional support or navigating Blackboard, GW Information Technology Support Center is your point of contact for support: [Blackboard | GW Information Technology | The George Washington University (gwu.edu)](about:blank)

## 2GW (applicable for @GW online programs)

2GW will be used for online course activities, hosting weekly course content, the posting of course files and assignments and for communicating with the class. Students are already enrolled for this course on 2GW if registration has been completed for online courses, not residential coursework typically offered residentially. It is the student’s responsibility to periodically check the course site for updates to the syllabus/readings/schedules.

For additional online learning guidance, please see the University’s “Guide of Academic Integrity in Online Learning Environments” available at [studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity-online-learning-environments](about:blank).

## Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact Disability Support Services at [disabilitysupport.gwu.edu](about:blank) if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

## Academic Integrity Code

Academic integrity is an essential part of the educational process, and all members of the GW community take these matters very seriously. As the instructor of record for this course, my role is to provide clear expectations and uphold them in all assessments. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and otherwise violate the [Code of Academic Integrity](about:blank). If you have any questions about whether or not particular academic practices or resources are permitted, you should ask me for clarification. If you are reported for an academic integrity violation, you should contact Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) to learn more about your rights and options in the process. Consequences can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University and may include a transcript notation. For more information, please refer to the SRR website at [studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity](about:blank), email [rights@gwu.edu](about:blank), or call 202-994-6757.

## Academic Integrity Online Quiz

All Milken Institute School of Public Health students are required to complete an academic integrity online activity. The GW Academic Integrity activity must be completed within two weeks of starting your coursework at GWSPH. See more at:[publichealth.gwu.edu/integrity#sthash.FlIRdO5H.dpuf](about:blank#sthash.FlIRdO5H.dpuf)

## SafeAssign and TurnItIn

All GWSPH Faculty have access to the SafeAssign and TurnItIn plagiarism detection services.

Please be aware that the work products you submit for this course may be scanned by these tools for originality. Students found plagiarizing will be subject to penalties outlined in the GWSPH Student Handbook and GW Code of Academic Integrity.

# ACADEMIC SUPPORT

## Writing Center

GW’s Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online at [gwu.mywconline](about:blank).

## Academic Commons

Academic Commons provides tutoring and other academic support resources to students in many courses. Students can schedule virtual one-on-one appointments or attend virtual drop-in sessions. Students may schedule an appointment, review the tutoring schedule, access other academic support resources, or obtain assistance at [academiccommons.gwu.edu](about:blank).

## Student Success Coaching

The Student Success Coaching Program, offered through the Office for Student Success, is an academic support service available to all interested undergraduate students. Participating students work with Student Success Coaches (trained graduate students) in 1:1 sessions to build the foundation for a successful academic experience. Coaches help students to develop learning strategies, establish healthy study habits, build a GW support system, and other necessary skills for a fulfilling and successful undergraduate experience. See [studentsuccess.gwu.edu/academic-program-support](about:blank).

To learn more about what is offered through this program and access informational materials, please visit [https://studentsuccess.gwu.edu/student-success-coaching](about:blank) or email [studentuccess@gwu.edu](about:blank).

# SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

## Disability Support Services (DSS) 202-994-8250

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services at [disabilitysupport.gwu.edu](about:blank) to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

## Counseling and Psychological Services 202-994-5300

GW’s Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. [healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services](about:blank).

To reach the **National Suicide Helpline**, call or text 9-8-8 to be connected with an immediate resource.

# RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

## University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

Students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled in the course, or as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls within the first three weeks of class, the student must inform faculty in the first week of the semester. For details and policy, see “Religious Holidays” at [provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines](about:blank).

# SAFETY AND SECURITY

## General

* Monitor [GW Alerts](about:blank) and [Campus Advisories](about:blank) to [Stay Informed](about:blank) before and during an emergency event or situation
* In an emergency: call GWPD/EMeRG 202-994-6111 or 911
* For situation-specific actions: refer to GW's [Emergency Response Handbook](about:blank) and [Emergency Operations Plan](about:blank)
* In the event of an armed Intruder: Run. Hide. Fight.

## Adverse Weather/Class Cancellation

In the advent of inclement weather or any other emergency, the Milken Institute School of Public Health will follow the decision of the University. Call the University hotline at 202-994-5050 or check the Campus Status at [http://CampusAdvisories.gwu.edu](about:blank). In the event of inclement weather, instructors are encouraged to maintain instructional continuity. Your instructor will communicate directly with you regarding alternate modes of instruction as appropriate. Students are responsible to check email, blackboard, or other learning platforms used in class, for updates and be available if accommodations have been offered. In the event of class cancellation, we will email you about rescheduling, assignments due, etc. The University will continue to offer [make-up days](about:blank) in the event of a closure if no alternative remote class has been made available.

## Classroom Lockdown System

Most classrooms have been equipped with a classroom lockdown system (box with lid and internal button). If the classroom button is pushed, GWorld Card access to the room will be disabled and GW Dispatch will be alerted.  The door must be manually closed if it is not closed when the button is pushed.  Anyone in the classroom will be able to exit, but no one will be able to get in.  The system may only be reset by GW Dispatch.

## GW Alert

In case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If your building is affected, follow the evacuation procedures and seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location. GW Alert is the university’s notification system that sends emergency text message and email alerts to the GW community. Download the GW Personal Alarm Locator (GW PAL), a mobile safety and security application that allows users to alert GWPD of a crime, report crime tips anonymously, provide a safety profile, and identify their location in real time. For more safety and security information and tips, visit [https://safety.gwu.edu/](about:blank).

## Evacuation (if applicable)

An evacuation will be considered if the building we are in is affected or we must move to a location of greater safety. We will always evacuate if the fire alarm sounds. In the event of an evacuation, please gather your personal belongings quickly (purse, keys, GWorld card, etc.) and proceed to the nearest exit. Every classroom has a map at the door designating both the shortest egress and an alternate egress. Anyone who is physically unable to walk down the stairs should wait in the stairwell, *behind the closed doors*. First responders will check the stairwells upon entering the building.

Once you have evacuated the building, proceed to our primary rendezvous location: the court yard area between the GW Hospital and Ross Hall. In the event that this location is unavailable, we will meet on the ground level of the Visitors Parking Garage (I Street entrance, at 22nd Street). From our rendezvous location, we will await instructions to re-enter the School.

## GW PAL (Personal Alarm Locator) app

Download the GW PAL (Personal Alarm Locator) app to your iOS or Android smartphone. This mobile safety app allows users to quickly communication with GWPD (when off campus); users can send crime tips to GWPD; call for 4RIDE; check recent GW Alerts. More Information visit [https://safety.gwu.edu/](about:blank).