



**HHPH 385 – 01W: Current Issues in Health**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS: Winter Mini 2025**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Katharine (Katie) Halfacre, PhD

**Office Location:** Nursing and Health Science

**Office Hours:** By Appt

**University Email Address:** [Katharine.Halfacre@tamuc.edu](mailto:Katharine.Halfacre@tamuc.edu)

**Preferred Form of Communication:** Email

**Communication Response Time:** 24 – 48 hours

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Value:** Three (3) Credit Hours

**Course Location:** Online

**Course Time** Online

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

Burke, L.D. & Weill, B. (2024). *Public Health and Society: Current Issues* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) Jones & Bartlett Learning

Purchase access to text [here](#).

**Course Description**

The course is a discussion and analysis of social problems from a public health perspective. Some of the major issues that will be discussed include inequality, the opioid epidemic, the climate crisis, gun violence, and COVID-19. These issues impact individual human beings in their everyday lives. In each of these areas challenging issues regarding opposing views will be discussed. Students will be able to view themselves as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the social determinants of health.
2. Understand the impact of poverty and inequality, education, income, homelessness, rural living, race, and mass incarceration on physical and mental health.
3. Discuss climate change and its effects on public health
4. Describe and discuss environmental health issues such as pollution, foodborne and waterborne illness, workplace safety, and traffic safety within the context of environmental justice.
5. Define and discuss substance use disorder which includes drug use, dependence, and addiction.
6. Define and discuss the relevant history as well as current social, economic, and health costs associated with tobacco and alcohol.
7. Discuss and analyze violence in society with a focus on gun violence and suicide.
8. Define and discuss mental health and mental illness.
9. Define and discuss major chronic diseases and their relationship with mental health
10. Discuss and analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public health and society.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Ability to utilize D2L, word processing, presentation, and database software; ability to utilize university email

### **Instructional Methods**

We will review various nutritional topics and the role of nutrition in health and human performance. Instructional activities will include discussions, knowledge application activities, quizzes, and exams.

### **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

This is a college, junior-level course which will require students to be disciplined, motivated, and professional. Attendance, attentiveness, and quality of work should reflect that students are in professional preparation. You should plan to dedicate about nine hours of effort each week to succeed in this course. This time will be committed to reading the course text, attending lectures, and completing assignments. You are expected to read the course material so that you are prepared to have detailed discussions in forums on D2L

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**Attendance:**

You are expected to participate in class activities. Attendance will not be awarded credit. However, it is necessary to complete graded assignments. Given the online format of this course, attendance is evaluated according to completed work and participation in discussion forums. For more information regarding TAMUC attendance policies, view the resources listed later in this document.

**Strong reading and writing skills:**

- Most of the material in the online environment will come from your textbooks, discussions, lectures, and videos; therefore, strong reading, writing and critical thinking skills are very important for success in an online course.
- Success in this class will come from independent reading of textbook chapters as well as other assigned material.

**Self-motivated and independent learner:**

- While online courses can offer more flexibility in scheduling, they require more self-discipline and independence than on-campus courses.
- In the online environment, you have to be able to start and to work on tasks on your own, without someone keeping you focused, and you have to be self-disciplined in order to follow the class schedule and meet deadlines.

**Time commitment:**

- Online classes take as much time as regular on-campus classes. You need to set aside sufficient time for study. Plan to spend at least as much time working on the assignments and studying as you would with a traditional course.
- Even though you may not have to "be" in class on some specific day and time, you still have to follow the **course schedule** provided. Remember that online classes are not independent study courses; you are still required to "show up" and participate actively (e.g. regularly logging into the course website, actively participating and turning in assignments on time).

**Active Learner:**

- Online students must be active learners, self-starters who are not shy or afraid to ask questions when they do not understand. Remember that you are in control of your learning process.

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- Since I cannot see you, you need to "speak up" right away if you have problems and be as explicit as possible; otherwise, there is no way I will know that something is wrong.

## GRADING

Please see a listing and description of all assignment grading criteria within the Course Grading Rubric document.

Syllabus Quiz	50 points
Discussions (5)	100 points
Assignments	100 points
Quizzes (10)	400 points
Exams (2)	250 points
Current Issue Project	100 points
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>1,000 points</b>

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades:

A = 900 – 1,000 Points

B = 800 – 899 Points

C = 700 – 799 Points

D = 600 – 699 Points

F = < 600 Points

## ASSESSMENTS

### **Quizzes:**

Quizzes will be conducted to assess knowledge of the chapters in the text.

### **Exams:**

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Four exams will be conducted during this course to assess knowledge of topics covered during the semester. The final exam will not be comprehensive. Specific details will be provided during the semester in D2L.

**Discussions** (5 Discussions at 40 points = 200 points)

Five discussions will take place during the term. You should post a **minimum of 5 posts per discussion thread**: one initial post answering the question (by 11:59pm Wednesday of the week it is assigned) and four response posts to your fellow classmates that further the discussion. All answers should be “backed up” with documentation. **Be sure to cite your references in APA format.** Each initial post should be a minimum of 150 words, and each response post should be a minimum of 75 words. Responses should follow the 3CQ Model (Compliment-Connect-Comment-Question).

Grade Earned	Discussion Rubric: Evaluation Criteria	Points Awarded
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates with the required number of on-topic postings of required length (150 and 75-word minimum). Initial response plus at least four additional response posts.</li> <li>• Initial post was posted by 11:59pm Wednesday of the week it is assigned.</li> <li>• Posts contribute to the discussion by answering the initial question and then furthering the discussions of other students.</li> <li>• Consistently uses Standard American English with rare misspellings.</li> <li>• Frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion by asking questions (related to initial discussion question) that further the discussion.</li> <li>• Accurately cites accurate information in APA format (including in-text citations).</li> <li>• Provides reputable outside references (that support discussion material) as well as the book in APA format at the end of each post.</li> </ul>	90-100%
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates with the required number of on-topic postings of required length</li> <li>• Posts contribute to the discussion by answering the initial question and then furthering the discussions of other students.</li> <li>• Postings reflect the reading and some outside source material but may not be accurately cited.</li> <li>• Consistently uses Standard American English with rare misspellings</li> <li>• Comments are logical and reflect critical thinking</li> <li>• Provides outside references (that support discussion material) as well as the book in APA format at the end of each post</li> </ul>	80-89%

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C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participates with the required number of on-topic postings of required length</li> <li>• Participates, but does not further the discussion by asking other questions related to discussion question.</li> <li>• Minimal grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts</li> <li>• Opinions and ideas are stated clearly</li> <li>• Provides references (that support discussion material) as well as the book at the end of most posts</li> </ul>	70-79%
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May participate with the required number of on-topic postings</li> <li>• Significant errors in spelling and/or grammar</li> <li>• Occasionally posts off topic</li> <li>• Posts do not meet length requirements</li> <li>• Provides references that support discussion material</li> </ul>	60-69%
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not meet the required number of posts</li> <li>• Poor spelling and grammar appear in most posts</li> <li>• Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content</li> <li>• Postings may have inaccurate information</li> <li>• Did not provide references</li> </ul>	<60%

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### **Current Issue Project**

The final project is the culminating product (learning and application) to be completed by the end of the semester.

Each student will choose one topic discussed this semester (**due by December 22nd via SignUp Genius which will be sent out via email**). Students will answer provided questions and provide a discussion of their topic. Students will submit this as a video presentation, including script. This submission should clearly demonstrate the knowledge you gained on this issue. **Submit your script and video link as a word document to the Current Issue discussion board**. Please remember to keep the link public so we can access your work. **Specifically, students will be evaluated on the quality of the presentation and their participation in the discussion board, which will include:**

- 1.** Choose 5 videos that others in class submitted. Each one should be on a different topic. (You should not use your own video OR a video with your topic.)
- 2.** Type a 200 – 400 word response to each of the five (5) videos. This should follow the 3CQ Model (Compliment-Connect-Comment-Question).

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

### **LMS**

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/enus/articles/115007031107-Basic-SystemRequirements>

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

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**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students can expect a response to contact (email preferred) within 48 hours. Generally, the instructor will attempt to respond to contact as soon as possible. Assignments will be graded and posted in a timely manner. Office hours are posted and appointments should be scheduled during those times.

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Course Specific Procedures/Policies

**Electronic Devices & Acceptable Use Policy:** Cell phones and other electronic devices should be silenced and put away upon entry into the classroom. This practice ensures that your electronic devices will not be a distraction. You should only use electronic devices to take notes or for relevant class activities. There will be no penalty for utilizing your cell phone or other electronic devices in a manner that does not impact the learning environment for others. Students who negatively impact the learning environment may be asked to leave the classroom, if necessary, and will not receive credit for missed work. Photos, video, or any other type of recording may not be taken in class without prior expressed written consent of every individual who may appear in such recordings. With respect to online activities, the use of cell phones and other electronic devices is strictly prohibited during quizzes and exams.

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## **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

## **University Specific Procedures**

### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

### **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

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[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

### **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Mental Health and Well-Being**

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



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### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&MCommerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url: <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&MCommerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

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<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assignments</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
graded item	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Alcohol Gun Violence</b>	<b>1/5</b>
	<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Mental Health Awareness Campaign</b>	<b>1/5</b>
	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>Ch. 6 Quiz Ch. 7 Quiz Ch. 8 Quiz</b>	<b>1/5</b>
<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Activities &amp; Assignments</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
<b>4</b>	Read	Chapter 9 Chapter 10	
	View	Chapter 9 Lecture Chapter 10 Lecture Course Review Lecture	
	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Connecting to Current Issues</b>  <b>Current Issue Project</b>	<b>1/10</b>
	<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Current Issue Project (video submission and discussion)</b>	<b>1/10</b>
	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>Ch. 9 Quiz Ch. 10 Quiz Final Exam</b>	<b>1/10</b>
<b>*Bonus Credit</b>			

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