



HHPH 597 Special Topics course
Emerging Trends and Innovations in Public Health
 COURSE SYLLABUS: WINTER MINI 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Wachira, Assistant Professor
 Office Location: Dallas Northpark Site (Room 1935)
 Office Hours: Virtual -- Scheduled Appointments*
 Office Phone: 903-886-5349
 Office Fax: 903-886-5365
 University Email Address: Elizabeth.Wachira@tamuc.edu
 Preferred Form of Communication: **Email; Scheduled appointments**
 Communication Response Time: 48 business hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Value:	Three (3) Credit Hours
Course Location:	Online
Course Time	Online

REQUIRED TEXT: NONE

All readings will be provided on D2L course shell

Course Description

This course examines emerging trends and innovations in public health, equipping students with the skills needed to tackle complex health challenges through innovation. Emphasis is placed on exploring impactful technological advancements, including artificial intelligence, and assessing their roles in public health. A systems thinking approach will guide students in analyzing the causes, interconnections, and influences of health issues, leading to the development of evidence-based strategies. Students will gain practical experience in validating innovations and communicating public health solutions effectively to diverse audiences.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify and analyze a public health issue within a global or societal context.
2. Investigate recent innovations and technologies impacting various public health topics, evaluating their potential and challenges.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

3. Assess the role of AI in public health and evaluate its effectiveness and limitations.
4. Apply systems thinking principles to understand the integration of innovation into public health practice.
5. Create deliverables that effectively communicate their findings and evidence-based strategies to a broader audience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using the learning management system, using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel, using university email, and using Google Docs / Slides.

Instructional Methods

The course is organized by modules. Each module will be formatted similarly including module learning objectives, readings and assignments and will be outlined in the syllabus schedule on D2L. The instructor has the right to modify the outline of the course.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Reading is crucial:

- Most of the material in the online environment will come from online articles/portals; 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 assigned material and resources provided

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. You should plan to spend approximately 5 hours study time per week to accomplish your readings and various module assignments.

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- As the semester progresses, more time may be required to complete the components of the final/ written assignment(s).
- I encourage you to be proactive and budget your time wisely. Spend the first day of each module reviewing what the workload entails and budget your time wisely. Some students may require more time. You know your study habits and abilities, so encourage you to be wise so all work is completed by the due date.
- **Late Work Policy for select individual assignments (except quizzes/exams/final project)**
 - **0-24 hours late: 50% credit possible**
 - **24+ hours late: No credit possible**
- **01W students:** 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).

For assignments, it is highly recommended that students do not wait until the last minute to complete assignments. Communication is important! If you have questions, concerns, are struggling with understanding material, will be missing class, etc. please notify the instructor.

GRADING

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 = 402-450 points | B = 357-401 points | C = 312-356 points |
| D = 267-311 points | F = 266 points or below | |

Details on assignments grading on D2L

- It is your responsibility to regularly monitor your points in the D2LGrade Center. If you notice a discrepancy, contact me immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester to question your grades.
- **If you drop the class, and you are not passing the course, the grade assigned will be "Dropped Failing".**

Please see a listing and description of all assignment grading criteria. Rubrics for major assignments can be found on D2L.

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- Assignment 0: Course Orientation 50 points
- Assignment 1: Health Issue Overview 100 points
- Assignment 2: Innovations Showcase Poster 100 points
- Assignment 3: Final Project 200 points

Total Points 450 points

Assessments

ALL coursework/ assignments (unless otherwise stated) need to be written and formatted per APA Publication Manual (7th Ed).

The student will be responsible for obtaining all materials presented online and assigned readings. All class assignments must be turned in online. No emailed work will be accepted.

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due ONLINE by 11:59pm on the specified due date. No late work accepted for quizzes, exams and project submissions.

See late work policy above for select assignments.

See D2L for details on all course assignments.

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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.

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

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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

E-mail strategy: You are welcome to email your questions or concerns to me. There are, however, some caveats associated with email that you must remember:

1. A reasonable response time to emailed questions is 24 - 48 business hours.
2. Questions emailed on weekends may not receive a response until the work week begins.
3. As the instructor, I reserve the right to answer emailed questions regarding assignments, in a direct email/announcement post to everyone for the benefit of all students.
4. Please be courteous and professional in all of your interactions with fellow classmates and instructor.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

The course is organized by modules, each formatted very similarly with a 4-7 day duration (except for Module 0 & 4). Each module will include module learning objectives, printable power point slides, additional reading materials and module assignments. A tentative course schedule with due dates is listed at the bottom of the syllabus on D2L. You will be responsible for managing your time to complete readings, post your written assignments. All assignments should be submitted in the respective assignment link.

Attendance:

- Time spent on coursework is at your leisure (except for due dates).
- You can work at your own pace (except that due dates are absolute).
- Due dates are when coursework **MUST** be completed. You can work ahead, but you cannot get behind.

What Should Students Do First? Students should begin by:

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- Thoroughly reviewing the syllabus
- Obtain materials (readings etc)
- Familiarizing oneself with the course layout (watch welcome video)
- Introduce yourself in the introduction discussion
- Review the major assignments information

How Should Students Proceed Each Week for Class Activities?

The student will access and follow all course instructions found in the module content areas.

- The student will read associated module readings and lecture/videos
- The student will then complete all module assignments

Course Specific Policies

1. For 01W, attendance counts as logging in, completing work weekly.
 - i. It will be very difficult for you to do well in this class if you miss submitting coursework. Please be aware that class participation goes beyond simply logging into this class. Just because you are logged in to the class, does not mean you are participating. It means active involvement in class discussions, assignments, and active participation in group activities (if any).
2. An “excused absence” is defined as a documented university approved activity. The instructor reserves the right to change the content or format of all make-up work. The student is responsible for making up missed work. If the absence is one of the reasons listed below, you will be able to make up the work. To reserve this right, you **MUST** provide written documentation on the day of your return to class (a copy that I can keep). Please notify me ahead of time if you know you will be absent.
 - i. Participation in an activity appearing on the University’s authorized activity list.
 - ii. Death or major illness in a student’s immediate family.
 - iii. Illness of a dependent family member
 - v. Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student’s presence.
 - vi. Religious Holy Day (please let instructor know at the beginning of the semester so as to discuss alternative accommodations as appropriate)
 - vii. Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class (to be determined by Health Center or off campus physician).
 - viii. Required participation in military duty
3. Any student *missing a quiz or exam* without prior arrangement per the make-up policy will receive a *score of zero*.
4. You **MUST** be familiar with D2L; familiarize yourself with the online portion of the class.
5. You **MUST** check your e-mail regularly in case I need to communicate with you. I will not e-mail you junk, and I request that you do the same for me.
6. **NO PROFANITY**. No inappropriate or offensive language or gestures. No inappropriate or offensive clothing. This will not be tolerated and you will be asked to leave and it will be considered an unexcused absence for the day.

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Make-up Work

Make-up of coursework will only be given in very rare circumstances: serious illness with a note from your physician, a death in your family with appropriate documentation, or if you have an officially excused absence while representing the university. If any of these situations occur you **MUST** email me **48 business hours prior to said excused absence**.

1. Make-ups will only be given if I have been notified at least 48 hours business hours prior to the end of the course week a particular assignment is due in order to verify your reason for missing coursework (rare circumstances and/or excused absences). All missed coursework not meeting the criteria for a make-up will be given a grade of 0.
2. No extra credit is given in the class

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).

<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](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx).

<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:

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Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form

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

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10.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

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

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

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&M-Commerce 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.

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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&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

ETAMU 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

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.



AI Use Policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. (See Course Specific AI Policies)*

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.10 [Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty](#)

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***Course Specific AI Policies**

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace and ensure you are learning foundational knowledge. This foundational knowledge is what equips you with theoretical knowledge that can help you accurately assess the credibility and validity of any content related work you come across (publications, websites or AI generated responses). This policy ensures that students are actively engaging with the material and honing their own skills rather than relying on automated tools to generate writing that requires content specific knowledge to help develop critical thinking skills

- Therefore, in this class, AI use for generating writing is prohibited. This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do any of the writing of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and using artificial intelligence tools like Copilot, ChatGPT and Google Bard.
- **If any editing platforms including AI or Grammarly are used to help revise and edit your original work, you are required to submit two separate versions to the written assignment link**
- (1) your original un-edited work and (2) the final version that includes the revised grammar corrected AI generated writing/text. If these two versions are different in regards to content, it will be assumed that AI was used for content generation and the graduate school policies and procedures for academic dishonesty will be followed (13.99.99.R0.10 [Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty](#))

*Edited from IOWA Office of Teaching, Learning and Technology.