



HHPH 385: CURRENT ISSUES IN HEALTH

COURSE SYLLABUS: SPRING 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Rahmatu Kassimu, Adjunct Professor

Office Location: Online

Office Hours: By Appointment

Office Phone: 903-886-5349

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University Email Address: Rahmatu.Kassimu@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **Email; Scheduled appointments**

Communication Response Time: 48 business hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Value: Three (3) Credit Hours

Course Location/Time:

- 81B– Bi-Weekly sessions (TBD)
- 01W – Online

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required Weill, B., & Burke, L. D. (2024). *Public Health and Society: Current Issues* (1st ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning

IA version will be available on D2L on first day of class – this is more affordable than hard copy

Optional Texts and/or Materials: All course written assignments are to be submitted in APA format style unless otherwise noted in the assignment directions. All students are encouraged to have a current copy of the APA Publication Manual: *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, (7th ed.).

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

This project-based, application-focused course is designed to examine different current issues in health worldwide. Epidemiological, historical, and cultural factors will also be considered. Throughout the semester, students will select a specific health issue or population and apply weekly concepts to that focus. Additional projects and assignments pertain to students' career interests and community-engaged service learning.

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)

1. **List** biological, psychological, historical, and cultural factors that influence a particular health issue.
2. **Explore** current health issues across various regions globally and culturally.
3. **Articulate** their role as engaged citizens within an interconnected and diverse world.
4. **Scientifically research** current issues in health domestically and internationally using credible sources.
5. **Present** on multiple health issues professionally and thoroughly, yet concisely, in written and/or oral formats.
6. **Judge** the validity of a source and correctly cite it using APA format (7th ed.).
7. **Represent** A&M-Commerce well in networking and community service projects.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students should have a basic knowledge of computer and internet skills to be successful in this course, including the ability to:

1. Understand basic terminology (e.g., browser, application, URL).
2. Perform computer operations (save, name, copy, move, backup, rename, delete files; check file properties).
3. Use the learning management system (D2L), Microsoft Word, and PowerPoint; access and navigate sites like YouTube.
4. Copy and paste, use spell check, save files in different formats, and send/download attachments.
5. Connect to the internet, use web browsers, and perform online research using search engines and library databases.
6. Use online communication tools (email, discussion boards, and, if applicable, virtual meeting tools).

Instructional Methods

This course is organized by weekly modules in D2L. Each module typically includes:

- Chapter learning objectives
- A short lecture or video and/or slides
- Required textbook reading
- An **applied assignment** (discussion or homework) that connects course concepts to a specific health issue or population chosen by each student
- Occasional community-engaged or career-focused tasks

Students will further their career aspirations by engaging with current public health issues, reflecting on their own professional interests, and, where feasible, participating in community-engaged service learning projects.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Self-motivated and independent learner

While aspects of the course offer flexibility (especially in online sections), they also require self-discipline and independence. You are expected to:

- Keep up with weekly modules and due dates.
- Start assignments early enough to ask questions if needed.
- Actively engage with lectures, readings, and applied tasks.

Time commitment

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- Expect to spend at least as much time on this course as you would for a face-to-face 3-credit course.
- Plan for weekly reading, video/lecture viewing, applied assignments, and periodic exams.

Active learner

- Ask questions if something is unclear—do not wait until the last minute.
- Participate in discussions by responding thoughtfully and engaging respectfully with peers.
- Take responsibility for your learning by “showing up” weekly in D2L, even in fully online formats.

GRADING

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

- A = 90%–100% → 630–700 points
- B = 80%–89% → 560–629 points
- C = 70%–79% → 490–559 points
- D = 60%–69% → 420–489 points
- F = 59% or below → 0–419 points

Total points possible: **700**

WEIGHTS OF THE ASSESSMENTS IN THE CALCULATION OF THE FINAL LETTER GRADE

- Syllabus Quiz – 10 points
- Introduction Video – 10 points
- **Applied Discussion Posts (6)** – $6 \times 35 = 210$ points
- **Applied Homework Assignments (4)** – $4 \times 30 = 120$ points
- End of Semester Bonus Lecture Topic Choice – 10 points
- **2 Short Papers/Reflections (Impact Paper + Final Review Paper)** – 115 points total
- Midterm Exam – 100 points
- Final Exam – 125 points

TOTAL: 700 points

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Assessments

Syllabus Quiz (10 points)

Short quiz on the syllabus and course expectations to ensure you understand how the class is structured.

Introduction Video (10 points)

A brief video introducing yourself, your academic/career interests, and a health issue or population you may be interested in exploring during the course.

Applied Discussion Posts (6 × 35 points = 210 points)

These are structured, application-based discussion tasks tied to weekly topics (e.g., social determinants of health, climate change, gun violence, mental health, COVID-19). You will:

- Connect course concepts to your chosen health issue or population.
- Post an original response and engage with peers as specified in D2L.

Applied Homework Assignments (4 × 30 points = 120 points)

Short written or multimedia assignments (≈300–500 words or 1 page) that deepen application of course content (e.g., local environmental snapshot, policy vs. public health comparison, life course analysis).

Short Papers / Reflections (115 points total)

- **Short Paper 1 – Impact Paper (1–2 pages):** Analyze how social determinants of health shape your chosen issue or population.
- **Short Paper 2 – Review Paper (3–4 pages):** A synthesis paper near the end of the semester that integrates multiple course topics and evidence-based interventions for your chosen issue/population.

Midterm Exam (100 points)

Covers Chapters 1–5 and related lectures/assignments. May include concept questions and short applied scenarios.

Final Exam (125 points)

Comprehensive exam covering all course material with emphasis on application, interpretation, and integration of course concepts. Due Thursday of Finals Week at 11:59 PM CST.

End of Semester Bonus Lecture Topic Choice (10 points)

A short survey where you vote on/choose the class-chosen topic for the bonus lecture and reflect on how it connects to your interests.

LATE WORK POLICY

Late work **is accepted** but will lose **10 points per day** past the due date, unless prior arrangements are made and approved in alignment with course and university policies.

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East 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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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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 backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These

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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

1. You are welcome to email your questions or concerns to me.
2. A reasonable response time to emailed questions is **24–48 business hours**.
3. Questions emailed on weekends may not receive a response until Monday.
4. I may answer emailed questions about assignments, tests, or discussion boards in a general class announcement if it benefits all students.
5. Please be courteous and professional in all interactions with classmates and the instructor.

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

How is the Course Organized?

- The course is organized by **weekly modules** in D2L.
- Each module generally includes:
 - Learning objectives
 - Readings and lectures/videos
 - An applied discussion or homework assignment
 - Occasional announcements and reminders

A tentative course schedule with due dates is listed in the **Course Outline/Calendar** at the end of this syllabus and in D2L.

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:

1. Thoroughly reviewing this syllabus in D2L.
2. Ensuring access to course materials (textbook/eBook and D2L).
3. Familiarizing themselves with the course layout (e.g., watching any welcome video posted).
4. Completing the **Syllabus Quiz**.
5. Submitting the **Introduction Video**.

How Should Students Proceed Each Week for Class Activities?

Each week, students should:

1. Access the weekly module content in D2L.
2. Review learning objectives and complete assigned readings/lectures.
3. Complete the **applied assignment** (discussion or homework) by the posted due date.
4. Check announcements and D2L messages regularly.

Course Specific Policies

1. For 81B students, weekly remote attendance on scheduled day/time is **required**.
 - a. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify me through email.
 - b. While in class, participation is strongly encouraged and includes:
 - i. actively prepare by reading the assigned materials,

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- ii. participate in discussion (ask and answer questions),
- iii. bring your notes and textbook,

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- iv. bring your ideas, and
 - v. come ready to engage
2. This class may have an “experiential learning” component that will require attendance and travel outside of class. For these activities/sessions, attendance is required as grades are contingent on participation. Those dates will be clearly outlined in the syllabus schedule.
3. For 01W, attendance counts as logging in, completing work weekly. a. Inclusive of active involvement in class discussions, assignments, quizzes and active participation in group activities.
4. 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 class work or assignments. If the absence is one of the reasons listed below, you will be able to make up the work. Please notify me ahead of time if you know you will be absent and once back, provide appropriate written documentation via email:
 - a. Participation in an activity appearing on the University’s authorized activity list.
 - b. Death or major illness in a student’s immediate family.
 - c. Illness of a dependent family member
 - d. Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student’s presence.
 - e. Religious Holy Day (please let instructor know at the beginning of the semester so as to discuss alternative accommodations as appropriate).
 - f. Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class (to be determined by Health Center or off campus physician).
 - g. Required participation in military duty
5. 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.

Make-up Work

Make-up of coursework will follow university protocols as listed above. Life circumstances do happen and in those instances, I encourage you to reach out as soon as possible so we can review and discuss potential make-up/extensions. In most cases:

- Send a notification 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).

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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.

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>.

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 [Procedures 13.99.99.R0.01](#)

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

Academic Integrity

Students at East 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>

Graduate Students Academic Integrity Policy and Form

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

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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

East 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:

[Student Disability Services](#)

<https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East 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.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East 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.

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 The

syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

903-886-5868 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

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.



<http://telusproduction.com/app/5108.html>

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AI use policy

East 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.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any

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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.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

***Course Specific AI Policies for HHPH 385**

- This course emphasizes **critical thinking, content understanding, and professional communication skills** in public health.
- **AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Bard) may not be used to generate full written assignments** that you then submit as your own work.
- You may use basic tools (e.g., spell-check, grammar-check, formatting help) and, if allowed by the assignment, AI for brainstorming or clarifying concepts—but the **ideas, structure, and final wording must be your own.**
- If you use AI in any way beyond basic grammar/spell checking (for example, to suggest an outline, summarize a complex source, or help brainstorm), you must:
 - Briefly **describe how you used AI** in a note at the end of your assignment (e.g., “AI Assistance: Used ChatGPT to help brainstorm possible subtopics; all writing and final organization are my own.”).

Students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of AI use. If AI-generated text misuses sources or plagiarizes, that is still the student’s responsibility under academic integrity policies.

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

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HHPH 385: CURRENT ISSUES IN HEALTH

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

COURSE OUTLINE: Spring 2025

Please note that this schedule is tentative and is subject to change.

Week #	Dates	Topics	Assigned Readings*	Assignments & Exams (Due Sunday @ 11:59 PM CST, unless noted)
Week 1	1/12–1/18	Introduction & Course Overview	Course material; Syllabus; D2L content	Syllabus Quiz; Introduction Video
Week 2	1/19–1/25	Social Determinants of Health	Chapter 1	Short Paper 1: Impact Paper (1–2 pages) – Identify your chosen health issue or population and analyze key social determinants of health that shape it.
Week 3	1/26–2/1	The Climate Crisis & Public Health	Chapter 2	Discussion 1 (Apply It: Climate Chain of Impact) – Explain one way the climate crisis affects your chosen issue/population using a cause → effect chain.
Week 4	2/2–2/8	Environmental Health	Chapter 3	Homework 1 (Apply It: Local Environmental Snapshot) – Locate a local environmental indicator related to your issue/population and interpret what it might mean for health outcomes.
Week 5	2/9–2/15	Emergence and Reemergence of Diseases	Chapter 4	Discussion 2 (Apply It: Mini-Outbreak Case) – Analyze risk factors and control strategies for an emerging/reemerging infectious disease connected to your issue/population.
Week 6	2/16–2/22	Drug Use & Society	Chapter 5	Homework 2 (Apply It: Policy vs. Public Health) – Compare a punishment-focused approach and a public health-oriented approach to substance use for your population and justify which you'd prioritize.
Week 7	2/23–3/1	Tobacco, Vaping & Alcohol	Chapter 6	Discussion 3 (Apply It: Ad Critique & Redesign) – Critique a real ad related to tobacco, vaping, or alcohol and propose a counter-message tailored to your population.
Week 8	3/2–3/8	Midterm Week	Review Chapters 1–5	Midterm Exam (Chapters 1–5); End of Semester Bonus Lecture Topic Choice (10-point survey)
Week 9	3/9–3/15	Spring Break – No Class	—	No new major assignments. Optional reflection/catch-up activities may be posted in D2L.
Week 10	3/16–3/22	Gun Violence and Suicide	Chapter 7	Discussion 4 (Apply It: Risk & Protective Factors Brief) – Identify risk and protective factors for gun violence or suicide in your population and propose one realistic strategy.

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Week 11	3/23– 3/29	Mental Health as a Public Health Issue	Chapter 8	Discussion 5 (Apply It: Systems Map Lite) – Outline how school, workplace, family, and policy factors interact to influence mental health for your population and identify a priority intervention point.
Week 12	3/30– 4/5	Chronic Disease as a Public Health Issue	Chapter 9	Homework 3 (Apply It: Life Course Snapshot) – Describe how one chronic disease relevant to your population is shaped across the life course and where intervention may be most impactful.
Week 13	4/6– 4/12	COVID-19	Chapter 10	Discussion 6 (Apply It: COVID-19 & Your Issue) – Explain how COVID-19 worsened or changed your chosen issue/population and identify one lesson from the COVID response to apply going forward.
Week 14	4/13– 4/19	Class-Chosen Topic Lecture	TBA (posted in D2L)	Homework 4 (Apply It: 1-Page Community Brief) – Create a concise issue brief or mini policy/practice recommendation related to the class-chosen topic and your population.
Week 15	4/20– 4/26	Course Synthesis	Review prior chapters & notes	Short Paper 2: Review Paper (3–4 pages) – Synthesize what you have learned about your chosen health issue/population, including SDOH, environmental/structural contributors, intersections with other public health issues, and evidence-informed interventions.
Week 16	4/27– 5/3	Final Exam	Comprehensive	Final Exam – Opens during university Finals Week. DUE THURSDAY, 5/7 @ 11:59 PM CST.

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