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Sample Syllabus Summary:

The assignments and readings are from the Quarter listed. They will most likely change – use as an example ONLY.

**Extended MPH Degree Program
School of Public Health and Community Medicine
Department of Epidemiology
University of Washington**

**Epidemiology 521
The Epidemiology of Maternal and Child Health Problems
Winter / Spring, 2008**

Instructor:
Marcia F. Williams, PhD, MPH

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the second of two courses offered in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) pathway of the Extended MPH Degree Program. Together the courses are designed to provide the student with an understanding of the many factors that affect the health and welfare of families and children in the United States.

This course addresses maternal and child health issues from an epidemiological perspective. The course focuses on three distinct periods of growth and development: 1) the *prenatal* period, including the etiology of pregnancy outcomes, prenatal care, and maternal complications; 2) the *perinatal/neonatal* period, addressing preterm birth and low birth weight infants, fetal, neonatal and infant mortality, and congenital malformations; and 3) *childhood*, in which we will examine three specific epidemiologic problems: the infant and child consequences of prenatal substance exposure, developmental disabilities, and injury. This course will not attempt to provide a comprehensive review of each of the topic areas, but will focus on the epidemiological issues and challenges, as well as significant epidemiological achievements, in these various areas.

Beyond a basic introduction to epidemiological issues associated with maternal and child health, two current themes of discussion and debate will be incorporated into the syllabus and assignments throughout the course. These are: 1) the role of socio-economic factors in determining the pregnancy and childhood outcomes of at-risk populations; 2) understanding the relationship between racial / ethnic identity and disparities in maternal and child health.

I. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students completing this course will be able to:

- Identify the recent secular trends in major problems of maternal and child health, e.g. low birth weight / prematurity; infant, child and maternal mortality and morbidity; congenital malformations.
- Analyze the sociodemographic risk factors, and the underlying biological, social and behavioral mechanisms, of the major problems of maternal and child health.
- Recognize the relative importance of intrinsic (i.e. host) factors and extrinsic factors (e.g. infections, drugs, environmental and/or cultural influences) in primary maternal and child health problems.
- Identify major controversies in the epidemiology of maternal and child health issues.
- Use the knowledge and skills necessary for critical analysis of a published research article in order to determine its validity and clinical relevance.

III. COURSE ORGANIZATION

A. Time period and credit hours

This course is offered for 3 credits during the Winter & Spring Quarters of each academic year. If a student is unable to fulfill the course requirements within the stated schedule, the student must contact the instructor to establish a new deadline. Credits will be granted upon completion of all assignments.

B. Course content and materials

There is no assigned text for this course. The course materials are derived from journal articles, text books and data sources. While an effort has been made to include current information, some of the readings represent older literature in order to provide an historical perspective, or to expose the students to "classic" works in the field.

C. Assignments

Completion of 10 written assignments is required for this course. The assignments are of two different types:

- 1) Data-based: Some of the assignments require analysis and interpretation of data. The data is provided in tables, figures, or graphs. The student is asked to use the data to determine etiologies of MCH conditions and/or to formulate policies for interventions.
- 2) Analytical: Using the assigned reading materials, the student will critically assess and synthesize the information in order to respond to a question regarding policy, program, or procedure.

IV. About the instructor

Dr. Williams is a Senior Lecturer in the Departments of Epidemiology and Rehabilitation Medicine (Adjunct). She is a member of the faculty of the Maternal and Child Health Program (MCHP) in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. Dr. Williams's primary research interests include: early identification of neuromotor disability in high-risk infants; etiology of cerebral palsy in low birthweight infants; developmental consequences of *in utero* exposure to cocaine and/or methamphetamines; pediatric injury prevention. She has a clinical background in pediatric physical therapy and currently provides diagnostic assessment and clinical teaching within the High Risk Infant Follow-up Clinic at the Center on Human Development and Disability (CHDD).

The most immediate and reliable method of communication is email, currently marwill@u.washington.edu. If you want to telephone, the best number to use is my MCH office: (206) 685-0481; alternatively, at the CHDD: (206) 543-2206.