



EPID 886: Public Health Professional Development

Course Syllabus Fall 2022 & Winter 2023

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| Course Instructor: | Bren Melles, Adjunct Faculty Lecturer and MPH Senior Program Officer |
| Contact Information: | bren.melles@queensu.ca; 613-533-6000 ext. 77099 |
| Class time and location: | Fridays 10:00 – 11:30 am, Carruthers 102 |
| Office Hours: | Carruthers Hall 206, Fridays 11:30 am – 12:30 pm Office hours appointments also welcome |

1. Course Description

The course helps prepare students for their practicum placement and equip them for ongoing work as a public health professional.

Its purpose is to assist students to lay the foundation for continuing professional development in public health practice. Students are introduced to the MPH Competency ePortfolio and coached to chart their progress in developing skills and competencies through a combination of participatory workshops, seminars and online learning modules. Guest lecturers come from a variety of contexts, both within and outside the MPH program.

2. Course Learning Outcomes

1. Identify your public health competency strengths and build strategies for competency development
2. Clarify and articulate your professional identity
3. Strengthen your ability to effectively demonstrate professional skills and competencies
4. Develop skills to effectively communicate, both verbally and in writing, to a range of audiences
5. Strengthen ability to search, assess and analyse public health evidence
6. Strengthen professional job-seeking skills to effectively secure a practicum placement and ongoing employment as a public health professional

3. Course Pre-requisites

All students must be enrolled as a full-time or part-time Master of Public Health (MPH) student. This is a required course for students in the Master of Public Health program (16-month).

4. Course Delivery and Technology

The course will be delivered on campus, in person. Some course content may be pre-recorded or online. Details on weekly class content and its mode of delivery is in the course schedule and on the course onQ site. By midweek each week, the instructor will upload a short “Welcome to the week” video in onQ with an introduction to the week’s content and how to participate.

The course will use two technology platforms, described below.

| Technology platform | Purpose | Details |
|---------------------|---|--|
| onQ | Short “welcome to the week” videos from instructor, course content, readings, weekly schedule, discussion boards, assignment submission, grades | onQ is the Queen’s Learning Management system Login with your net ID at onq.queensu.ca View “My Courses” and select “EPID 886” |
| Zoom | One-on-one virtual meetings with Bren for office hours (in person meetings are also available), virtual class meetings | Download zoom.us app to your device Here is the recurring link for EPID 886 related meetings: Join Zoom Meeting https://queensu.zoom.us/j/97172865770?pwd=TTBwK1lnTmNZTDZKM3RjWDBDbXgvZz09 Meeting ID: 971 7286 5770 Passcode: 956186 One tap mobile +17789072071,,97172865770#,,,,*956186# Canada +12042727920,,97172865770#,,,,*956186# Canada |

5. Assessment Plan

EPID 886 is graded on a PASS/FAIL basis.

To pass the course, you must complete all of the following required assignments, some of which are possible artifacts for your MPH Competency ePortfolio. Each required assignment is marked as complete or not complete and will be returned with instructor feedback. On rare occasions, when assignments are not submitted with sufficient quality, improvement and resubmission may be required for completion. Each required assignment, as well as each in-class practice task, is designed to help you demonstrate achievement of the course outcomes.

Details on required assignments are below.

| Required Assignment | Due Date, all 10 pm |
|---|---|
| 1. Meet your classmates personal video introduction (note: this is an ungraded assignment) | September 16, 2022 |
| 2. Initial competency assessment & reflection | September 23, 2022 |
| 3. Briefing note | November 18, 2022 |
| 4. Professional mission statement | December 2, 2022 |
| 5. Fall reflective practice narratives for ePortfolio | Two by December 16, 2022 |
| 6. Coded interview transcript | Part 1: Feb 17, 2023 Part 2: March 17, 2023 |
| 7. Winter reflective practice narratives for ePortfolio | Two by March 24, 2023 |
| 8. Working draft ePortfolio | Draft by March 24, 2023 for peer feedback Final due April 21, 2023 |
| 9. Final competency assessment and reflection | April 21, 2023 |

6. Detailed Assignment Descriptions and Instructions

1. Meet your classmates personal video introduction (Due Sept 16, 2022, 10 pm)

Note: This is an ungraded assignment.

Select an (everyday) object from your home that symbolizes why you have chosen to pursue studies in public health. Record a 1-3 minute video of yourself where you share your name (and what you like to be called) and how your object symbolizes your interest in public health. Also, share one interesting or fun fact about yourself. Post your introductory video in the “Meet your Classmates” Discussion Board.

2. Initial competency assessment and reflection tool (Due Sept 23, 2022, 10 pm)

Complete the Initial Competency Assessment & Reflection Tool, available on the class OnQ site. This tool is intended to help you identify your strengths and areas for growth and development in the core competencies of public health. The tool lists the 7 categories and 36 core competency statements from [Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-ppsp/ccph-cesp/pdfs/cc-manual-eng090407.pdf)¹ and asks you to rate yourself using a provided scale. For each competency category, you will identify the supporting evidence (include real-life examples) that supports your competency level rating. Using prompt questions, the tool invites you to write a short reflection to consider your strengths and areas for growth.

¹ <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-ppsp/ccph-cesp/pdfs/cc-manual-eng090407.pdf>

3. Briefing note (Due Nov 18, 2022, 10 pm)

You are a Research Officer at a local public health agency. You report to the Director of Health Promotion at that local health unit. (This Director has the job of providing the Board of Health with recommended actions to address social determinants of health and reduce health inequities among the region's residents.) Your Director has asked you to watch and review the proceedings of a recent Special Kingston City Council meeting held June 1, 2021, and summarize Council's discussion and decisions that may impact a (select one) determinant of health. **Write your Director a one-page briefing note.**

Video recordings of all Kingston City Council meetings, along with accompanying agendas, minutes, reports are found here: <https://www.cityofkingston.ca/city-hall/council-meetings>. Details for the Special City Council Meeting on June 1, 2021, including a 2 hour video of the meeting, are here: <https://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/city-calendar-events/-/calendar/QUmzuR567ExT/event/38776361>

Briefing Note Template

An outline for organizing your briefing note is below. The briefing note must be **no longer than one-page** (no smaller than 11 point font size, 1 inch margins). Use these headings.

Date:

Prepared by: (Your name and Job Title)

To: Director of Health Promotion

Purpose: Why are you writing this? One sentence.

Background: Describe the relevant context/background related to the health outcome and determinant at hand. (No outside research needed here. Use the available minutes/documents/reports.)

Findings: Describe and summarize Council discussion and decisions that may impact the social determinant of health. Highlight and interpret relevant data. Cite the motions so the Director can find them in the meeting minutes. Identify any partners or delegations mentioned or involved.

Implications: Explain how the Council decisions and actions relate to health outcomes using a social determinants of health lens.

Conclusion and next steps: Write a brief statement summarizing the Council decision and actions and their relevance to the determinant of health.

Assessment

Your briefing note will be assessed using the following categories as “Meets expectations” or “Below expectations”:

- **Audience and tone:** Is the document tailored to the audience, with appropriate professional language and neutral tone?
- **Clarity of purpose:** Is the purpose of the document clearly articulated?

- **Technical proficiency:** Does the document demonstrate understanding of key public health concepts? Is relevant data identified and interpreted?
- **Summary:** Does the document clearly and briefly summarize the main points?
- **Writing, grammar and mechanics:** Is the document smoothly written and error-free, including correct mechanics and grammar?

4. Professional Mission Statement (Due Dec 2, 2022, 10 pm)

A professional mission statement is a short statement of no more than one to two sentences (approximately 30 words) that conveys your unique professional purpose. Submit your carefully crafted and concise professional mission statement, applying knowledge and skills from the workshop.

5. Fall Reflective Practice Narratives (Two due Dec 16, 2022 10 pm)

The purpose of these reflections is to:

- Strengthen your ability to effectively demonstrate your professional skills and competencies.
- Help you clarify and articulate your professional identity
- Function as a talking points for a job interview for your practicum placement or other work
- Create text to set alongside artifacts in your Competency ePortfolio

Instructions:

- Select an artifact that you have collected for your MPH Competency ePortfolio
- At the top of your Reflective Practice Narrative submission, list one (or more) of the 7 public health competency categories and/or one (or more) of the 36 core competency statements that the artifact demonstrates.
- Write a short reflection (100-300 words) on the artifact using START as an organizing framework:
 - Situation — the context of what happened
 - Task — what you were supposed to do
 - Action — what you did to accomplish the task
 - Result — what you accomplished, how your accomplishment impacted others
 - Takeaway – the impact of the accomplishment on your own learning (knowledge, skills, attitudes); and the implications on your future work as a public health professional
- Post your reflection and the relevant artifact in onQ.

Tips for Reflective Practice:

- **Go deeper than description to purposeful critical analysis.** A good reflection goes beyond just reporting or describing what you did, and analyses the experience to determine its meaning and implications. Make it unique to you, written in first person using “I.”
- **Move beyond the present to the future.** Don’t just report on something you did, but reflect on the implications of what you learned for the future. What will you do differently as a result? Think about “what”, “so what”, “now what”.

- **Make connections** between the theory/concepts and your practice.
- **Consider multiple experiences together.** Consider referring to more than one artifact or experience to weave together a cohesive portrait of who you are as a public health professional.
- **Watch the length.** Text should be easy to scan on a screen, and easily spoken without losing the interest of your listener. You should be able to read your reflection aloud in 1-2 minutes. Longer is not necessarily better. Be clear, thoughtful, readable, and concise

6. Coded Key Informant Interview Transcript (Part 1 Due Feb 17, 2023 10 pm,; Part 2 Due Mar 17, 2023, 10 pm)

Note: This is a two-part assignment

Part 1 Key informant interview transcript:

In the topic area of “Graduate student wellness”:

- Define a research question related to this topic
- Create a semi-structured interview guide with at least three questions (not including probes)
- Conduct a short (5-7 mins) interview with a classmate. (Note: avoid working in pairs where both people interview each other)
- Transcribe your interview (2 pages minimum). Include at least two memos. Memos are comments about the interview experience that you would like to remember later, when it comes time to analyse the transcript
- Remove any personal identifiable information from transcript. Once you have transcribed the interview, erase the recording from all devices.
- Post your research question, interview guide and transcript to onQ. Transcripts will be viewed by the instructor alone.

Part 2 Coded key informant interview transcript:

- Analyse your interview transcript, using **one** of the qualitative coding methods you learned during the workshop.
- Create a first level code list and a list of categories. (You do not need to do the synthesis step or to write a report.)
- Post your transcript, with your research question, your first level code list and your list of categories.

7. Winter Reflective Practice Narratives (Two due Mar 24, 2023, 10 pm)

See #5 above for detailed instructions

8. Working Draft ePortfolio (Draft by Mar 24, 2023 for peer feedback clinic; Final due April 21, 2023 10 pm)

The MPH Competency ePortfolio is a purposeful collection of electronic evidence that demonstrates your learning and achievement in public health over time. Your eportfolio should include the following components:

- a. **Home page/intro section** – this may include a table of contents, a photo (if desired) and some short introductory text
- b. **Professional mission statement** – a short statement that expresses your professional mission and goals in public health (see course assignment #4)
- c. **Resume** – a high quality professional resume that includes your education, public health and other relevant work experience, honours and awards and special skills
- d. **Theme pages/folders (at least three) with artifacts and reflections** – A theme reflects your professional interest in a particular disease, population group, issue, analytical technique or a combination of the above. Each theme page/folder should include short narrative reflections (see course assignments #5 and #7) with links to artifacts that demonstrate your skills and competencies in that theme

The tone and content of your eportfolio should be geared to a potential public health employer. Your ePortfolio can be presented in the technology platform of your choice. Former students have used Wix, Weebly, Wordpress, LinkedIn, PowerPoint etc.

Further detail on the eportfolio – both process and product – may be found in the MPH Competency ePortfolio Handbook on the EPID 886 onQ site, and will also be discussed frequently in class.

9. Final Competency Assessment (and Reflection Due April 21, 2023 10 pm)

Complete the Final Competency Assessment & Reflection Tool, available on OnQ site. This second iteration of the Initial Competency Assessment and Reflection (see assignment #2) reflects on changes and progress from the first assessment, and focuses on opportunities for competency growth during the practicum placement.

7. Course Schedule

| Date | Topic | Instructor | Related Public Health Core Competency | Related Assignment | Due Date by 10 pm |
|------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| Fall 2022 | | | | | |
| Sept 9 | Course intro and core competencies of public health | Bren Melles | All | “Meet your Classmates” Personal Video Introduction (Ungraded) | Sep 9 2022 |
| | | | | Initial Competency Assessment & Reflection | Sep 23 2022 |
| Sept 16 | Introduction to MPH Competency ePortfolio | Bren Melles | All | Note: Draft of eportfolio needed for peer feedback April 1, 2022 | |
| Sept 23 | Demystifying the literature review process | Sandra McKeown | Assessment and Analysis | | |
| Sept 30 | Advanced database searching | Sandra McKeown | Assessment and Analysis | | |
| Oct 7 | Practicum Briefing 1 – Plus questions and answers with Panel of 2 nd Year Students | Lisa Brancaccio | All | | |
| Oct 14 | NO CLASS – FALL BREAK | | | | |
| Oct 21 | Professional communication, with a focus on reports and briefing notes | Bren Melles | Communication Assessment and Analysis | Briefing Note | Nov 18 2022 |
| Oct 28 | NO IN-PERSON CLASS. Complete online module, “Introduction to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion”. Then complete reflection survey (link to be provided by Bren) https://www.queensu.ca/hreo/education/introduction-equity-diversity-and-inclusion | Human Rights and Equity Office | All (with focus on Diversity and Inclusion) | Note: Login to training with your netID. You will receive a confirmation of completion email from HREO. On completion of online module, complete reflection survey at link provided by Bren. | |
| Nov 4 | This is Canada – Living Anti Racism | Jermaine Marshall | Partnerships, Collaboration and Advocacy; Diversity and Inclusiveness | Note: Complete 30-minute interactive eCourse in advance: “Call it Out: Racism, Racial Discrimination and Human Rights” | |

| Date | Topic | Instructor | Related Public Health Core Competency | Related Assignment | Due Date by 10 pm |
|--------|--|-------------|---|---|---------------------|
| Nov 11 | Professional resumes and cover letters | Miguel Hahn | Communication +job-seeking skills | Note: Draft resume and cover letter needed for Dec 2, 2022 | |
| Nov 18 | a. Professional Mission Statements b. Designing and delivering presentations for adult learning | Bren Melles | Communication | Professional Mission statement | Dec 2, 2021 |
| Nov 25 | Skills for community engagement & stakeholder analysis | Bren Melles | Partnerships, Collaboration and Advocacy, Communication | | |
| Dec 2 | Resume and cover letter peer feedback clinic; ePortfolio check-in; mid-term course evaluation | Bren Melles | Communication +job seeking skills | Reflective Practice Narratives | Two by Dec 16, 2022 |

| Date | Topic | Instructor | Related Public Health Core Competency | Related Assignment | Due Date by 10:00 pm |
|--------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|
| Winter 2023 | | | | | |
| Jan 13 | Winning job interviews for public health | Miguel Hahn, Career Services | Communication +job seeking skills | Note: Check onQ for list of potential job interview questions, and suggestions on how to prepare a strong response. | |
| Jan 20 | Professional email communication + Practicum Briefing 2 | Bren Melles Lisa Brancaccio | Communication, +job seeking skills | | |
| Jan 27 | Simulated job interview session | Bren Melles | Communication +job seeking skills | | |
| Feb 3 | Conducting a key informant interview | Bren Melles | Communication | Part 1: Interview transcript | Feb 17, 2023 |
| Feb 10 | Conducting a focus group | Bren Melles | Communication | | |
| Feb 17 | NO IN PERSON CLASS: Prerecorded lecture on Analysing an interview transcript | Colleen Davison (pre-recorded) | Assessment and Analysis, Communication | Part 2: Coded interview transcript | Mar 17, 2023 |
| Feb 24 | READING WEEK – NO CLASSES | | | | |
| Mar 3 | Focus groups and interviews in public health practice: Lessons from experience | Suzanne Biro, Ministry of Health | Assessment and Analysis, Communication | | |

| Date | Topic | Instructor | Related Public Health Core Competency | Related Assignment | Due Date by 10:00 pm |
|-------------|--|--------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|
| Mar 10 | Cultural safety and intercultural competency 1 | Lee Richard, QUIC | Diversity and inclusiveness | | |
| Mar 17 | Cultural safety and intercultural competency 2 | Lee Richard, QUIC | Diversity and inclusiveness | | |
| Mar 24 | Peer feedback clinic – MPH Competency ePortfolio | Bren Melles | | Reflective Practice Narratives Note: Bring draft eportfolio for feedback to this class | Two by Mar 24, 2023 |
| Mar 31 | Course synthesis + Practicum briefing session 3 | Bren Melles Lisa Brancaccio | All | Final Competency Assessment Working Draft ePortfolio | Apr 21, 2023 Apr 21, 2023 |
| Apr 7 | GOOD FRIDAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS | | | | |

8. Readings and Resources

Human Rights and Equity Office. Introduction to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

https://www.queensu.ca/equity/secure/iedi/complete_training.php

Ontario Human Rights Commission 30-minute interactive eCourse. [“Call it Out: Racism, Racial Discrimination and Human Rights”](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada. 2008. Core Competencies for Public Health in Canada. Release 1.0.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/php-ppsp/ccph-cesp/pdfs/cc-manual-eng090407.pdf>

Review of Core Competencies for Public Health - An Aboriginal Public Health Perspective. 2015,

<https://www.cnsa-nccah.ca/docs/context/RPT-CoreCompetenciesHealth-Hunt-EN.pdf>

Note that the [Queen’s Human Rights and Equity Office has a list of resources](#) to support inclusion as well as a series of [online education modules](#).

Other resources will be provided on a week by week basis. You will be able to find these resources on the course OnQ site.

9. Course and University Policies

Participation policy

Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism by being present and punctual, and by participating actively in all sessions. Participation in this course is important; most sessions have active learning and formative assessment tasks built into the session itself.

Students must inform the Instructor in advance if they will be absent from a session because of illness or other compassionate grounds. If a session is missed, it is up to the student to gather missed information from other students who were present in order to fulfill their assessment requirements.

Academic policy

All graduate programs are administered under the rules and regulations of the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs. Regulations are outlined more fully here:

<https://www.queensu.ca/academic-calendar/graduate-studies/general-regulations/> Additional information may be found on the Admission and Registration page here: <https://www.queensu.ca/grad-postdoc/faculty-staff/admission-registration>

These pages include information and procedures on many academic issues, including appealing an assigned grade, withdrawal on academic grounds and so on.

Student academic progress is monitored by the Director of the Master of Public Health program. Difficulties requiring departmental action will be brought to the attention of the Department's Education Coordinator.

Academic integrity

Queen's students, faculty, and staff have responsibilities to support and uphold the fundamental values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments and their behaviour conform to the principles of academic integrity. The complete policy on academic integrity is here: [Academic Integrity Policy < Queen's University \(queensu.ca\)](#)

Students are encouraged to consult their course instructors regarding appropriate use of materials if in doubt about how their use may relate to academic dishonesty. This helpful website outlines practical strategies to ensure you are able to avoid plagiarism and cheating, and are able to write things in your own words: <https://www.queensu.ca/academicintegrity/students/avoiding-plagiarismcheating>

Copyright of course materials

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's express consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Accommodation of graduate students with disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2016 (see <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/academic-accommodations-students-disabilities-policy>).

If you are a student with a disability and think you may need academic accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the **Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS)** and register as early

as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

Academic consideration for students with extenuating circumstances

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time. The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances is available here: [Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances Policy | University Secretariat and Legal Counsel \(queensu.ca\)](#)

Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Graduate students can find the Academic consideration information at <https://www.queensu.ca/grad-postdoc/wellness/accommodations-academic-considerations>

10. Helpful Resources Available to You

***Please consult the MPH Student Handbook for further information on professional development opportunities, services and supports:** <https://phs.queensu.ca/programs-courses/degree-programs/master-public-health>

Student Wellness Services

Student Wellness Services (SWS) supports the personal, academic, and social health development of students at Queen's University by providing a range of programs and services. Student Wellness aims to offer a welcoming, confidential, and integrated service that is responsive to students' health and wellness needs. For a full listing of services, including urgent help, medical and mental health appointments, information on COVID-19 tests and vaccines and more, visit the Student Wellness website here: <https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/>

Mental health services

While life at university is exciting and filled with new experiences, it can also be overwhelming. It is common for students to experience feelings of stress, anxiety, low mood and depression; all of which may have an impact on day-to-day activities and basic decision making. Student Wellness offers one-on-one appointments with our mental health professionals, groups, events and trainings, plus an online self-directed tool called Therapy Assistance Online (TAO).

More details on mental health services are available here: <https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/mental-health>

Accessibility services

Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS), as well as the entire Queen's University is committed to supporting students experiencing barriers related to functional impacts as they pursue their academic goals. QSAS supports students to level the playing field by implementing academic accommodations that remove barriers to a student's academics. More information on accessibility services, including how to register as a new student, is here: <https://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services>

Other counselling and wellness supports for graduate students

Graduate students also have access to a number of other wellness services and supports, including an embedded counsellor dedicated to graduate students, specialized advisors (for example, for women, for indigenous students, for survivors of sexual violence etc.). See this site for further information: [Counselling and Advising services for graduate students](#)

A group of [Graduate Inclusivity Fellows](#) have been identified to help create a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

[Peer Academic Advising](#) is available through the Society for Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS)

Career Services

Career Services is the central provider of career education and employment support services at Queen's. They offer a comprehensive range of [accessible services](#) to support and empower students in making informed decisions about their career, further education and employment goals including [events](#), [workshops](#), [job listings](#), [career counselling](#), [drop-in career advising](#), and [resources](#). See the Career Services website for a full description of services here: <http://careers.queensu.ca/>

Student Academic Success Services

Student Academic Success Services (SASS) comprises Learning Strategies and the Writing Centre. They offer academic support to students who wish to develop their skills in critical thinking, reading, learning, studying, writing, and self-management. Students can access individual appointments, workshops, and online resources. Further information is here: <http://sass.queensu.ca/>