

# SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (SBHD)

## **SBHD 501. Topics in Cancer Disparities. 1 Hour.**

Semester course; 1 lecture hour (delivered online). 1 credit. This course will provide an overview of cancer health topics to students from diverse disciplines, including the humanities and sciences, where they will learn more about the continuum of cancer research and various cancer topics. The course will be highly interactive, with emphasis placed on engaging the learner with the course materials. Students will meet every other week to attend a zoom session where they will hear from a guest lecturer about a cancer topic. All other assignments will be completed online.

## **SBHD 502. Principles of Community-engaged Research. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online). 3 credits. This course will provide an introduction to the principles of community-engaged research to students from diverse disciplines. Students will be introduced to key community-engaged research competencies, including the fundamental principles, identifying key stakeholders and developing a basic understanding of collaborations with community partners relevant to social and behavioral sciences. Students will complete the course with the skills necessary to identify the key concepts, barriers and opportunities to engage different stakeholders and to communicate with different audiences for health education and promotion purposes. This course will be highly interactive, and students will participate in online discussion groups and complete various assignments, which will provide ample opportunities for the practical application of the key principles in community-engaged research with relevance to public health and health promotion efforts. Students will have the opportunity to use technology to create an interactive learning environment and apply concepts to the various community-based scenarios to demonstrate an understanding of the material. Importantly, students will have the opportunity to learn from and with community members to further inform their understanding of community-engaged research within the context of social and behavioral sciences.

## **SBHD 605. Introduction to Social and Behavioral Sciences. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The course addresses the influence of social and behavioral factors impacting public health, covering both historical perspectives and current issues. Topics covered include the theoretical foundations of social and behavioral sciences; the sociocultural context of health, health promotion, and disease prevention interventions; and special populations and topics.

## **SBHD 606. Practical Communication Strategies for Public Health. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. The course explores how to communicate about public health to nonacademic audiences. Students will learn strategic public health communication principles for designing messages to effectively communicate the impact and mission of public health, build support for public health issues and advocate for health equity.

## **SBHD 607. Media, Health and Policy. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. The course explores how media impact public health decision-making across levels of the social ecological model, from individual health behaviors to societal-level policy decisions. Major components of the course include (1) foundational theories of media effects and how they intersect with theories of health behavior and policy; (2) common methodological approaches for examining media content; and (3) case studies of media effects on health areas such as sexual behavior, violence, cancer, chronic disease and health care policy.

## **SBHD 608. Health Communication. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Basic course for students in public health with limited experience conducting public health research. Focuses on the history and theories of health communication, social marketing and media advocacy, audience research and segmentation, entertainment education, e-health, provider/patient communication, technology transfer to service providers, media relations and media monitoring, emergency risk communication, and evaluating communication campaigns. Students plan an entire social marketing campaign.

## **SBHD 609. Research Methods in Social and Behavioral Sciences I. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students. Recommended preparation: SBHD 605. A didactic and experiential course that provides an introduction to applying social and behavioral science qualitative, quantitative and evaluation research methods to public health issues.

## **SBHD 610. Behavioral Measurement. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Recommended preparation: SBHD 605. Introduces students to theories and applications of measuring constructs in social and behavioral sciences. Examines test theories, processes involved in developing tests and the standards against which tests are compared.

## **SBHD 611. Health Literacy. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Designed to provide doctoral students an overview of health literacy and its relationship to health outcomes and health disparities. Class material will cover the research and theories in contemporary literature in health literacy.

## **SBHD 612. Disparities Across the Cancer Care Continuum. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students. The course is designed to provide students with training and skills development focused on the fundamentals of cancer prevention and control, with an emphasis on addressing cancer disparities using a multidisciplinary approach. The course will discuss the distribution of several types of cancer from local to global settings and how to identify their underlying causes and risk factors. Students will learn about the national and international systems of cancer surveillance, and how these sources of data drive research across multiple levels from patient-facing clinical settings to communities to those that inform policy-making. The course will also highlight the gaps in the current surveillance infrastructure and the limits of the data they produce as well as opportunities to improve their impact on the health of persons diagnosed with cancer. Students will learn how to identify compelling research questions with real-world implications for improving public health outcomes, particularly for those facing a high burden of cancer.

**SBHD 613. Community-engaged Research and Cancer Disparities. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online). 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students. This course is designed to engage students from diverse disciplines, including social sciences, public health and basic sciences, to learn more about community-engaged research as a viable approach to address cancer health disparities. The course provides an overview of community-engaged research, of cancer health disparities and of understanding the significant role of social determinants as a contributing factor – as well as a viable conceptual framework to addressing – cancer disparities. The focus of this class is on learning to apply community-engaged research approaches to address cancer disparities. Community-engaged research is framed as an evidentiary approach that strongly aligns with the translational research continuum. This course will be highly interactive with a strong emphasis placed on engaging the learner with the course materials. Students will use VoiceThread (freely available to VCU students), a web-based application that allows them to use images, slides, videos and documents to create presentations that will allow others to view and respond as part of an asynchronous conversation. As part of their engaged experience, students will interview two cancer survivors to learn more about their experiences and to obtain their input on areas of improvement along the continuum of cancer prevention and control. Finally, students will develop a cancer research plan that provides the opportunity to apply their community-engaged research knowledge to address a cancer disparity of their choice.

**SBHD 619. Research Methods in Social and Behavioral Sciences II. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: SBHD 609. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students. Advanced application of social and behavioral science qualitative, quantitative, intervention and evaluation research methods to public health issues.

**SBHD 628. Public Health Program Planning and Evaluation. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students in the Master of Public Health program or graduate students with permission of the instructor and program administrator. The course provides an overview of the process of public health program planning, including assessment, design, planning, implementation and evaluation. Students examine the methods frequently used to determine whether health-related programs are achieving their objectives. Students will gain practical experiences through a series of in-class and team-based exercises and will leave the course with an understanding of how to implement public health programs and evaluate their effectiveness.

**SBHD 630. Theoretical Foundations of Social and Behavioral Sciences. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The course addresses the theoretical foundations of social and behavioral sciences, discussing both classic and emergent theories. The course begins with an overview of theoretical concepts, constructs and variables; how to construct theoretical statements; and how to evaluate social science theories. The majority of the course is spent describing theories and models at the individual, interpersonal and community level and evaluating their utility in changing health behavior. The course concludes with a discussion of the state of the discipline and future directions in health behavior change theory and research.

**SBHD 631. Disseminating, Adopting and Adapting Evidence-based Prevention Programs. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Preventive interventions that have been evaluated and found to be effective should serve as the standard for community-based public health practice. This advanced seminar will examine theories relevant to the diffusion of these evidence-based interventions (EBI), EBI dissemination procedures and policy, and evaluation of EBI adoption, fidelity monitoring and adaptation.

**SBHD 632. Systems, Power, and Health. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. The seminar is designed to provide students with an understanding of the concept of health disparities, reasons for disparities and how social factors contribute to disparities in health care and outcomes. The material will cover the research and theories in contemporary medical, epidemiologic and social sciences literature.

**SBHD 633. Structural Equation Modeling. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Introduces students to principles and applications of structural equation modeling for testing theories in social and behavioral sciences. Examines latent variables with continuous and discrete distributions, multimethod measurement modeling under the latent variable framework, latent variable modeling of longitudinal measurement designs and testing mediation and moderation using structural equation modeling.

**SBHD 634. Patient-Provider Interaction. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the social and behavioral sciences or healthcare policy and research Ph.D. programs or by permission of the instructor. The course will cover theories, principles and applications used to produce high quality research in patient-provider communication. The course will educate students on communication theories that support this research, practical applications of these theories and different methodologies to guide research. Students will have the opportunity to analyze published research as well as develop their own plans for a research project.

**SBHD 635. Anthropology and Public Health. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to doctoral or M.P.H. students or by permission of the instructor. Provides students with an advanced introduction to anthropology as a means for exploring public health. Through ethnographic case studies (articles, books and films), the course examines cultural dimensions of illness experience and diverse models of healing and treatment, paying particular attention to political, economic, spiritual and other cultural factors that influence health, treatment and health behaviors. Students will be asked to think critically about the ways that anthropological methods can contribute to public health practice.

**SBHD 636. Community-based Participatory Research. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: doctoral student in social and behavioral health or permission of instructor. This seminar provides students with an understanding of the theories, principles and strategies of conducting CBPR. This class will meet once a week for approximately three hours. Although some lectures will be presented, the main format for the class will reflect the participatory as well as critical reflectiveness required to conduct CBPR. Co-learning will be emphasized against a backdrop of health research. The second major component of this class will be an interactive and hands-on field experience where students will experience the context and learn the methods to use when conducting participatory research for health. Students will work closely with a community partner and will use participatory research methods to address a community partner need.

**SBHD 637. Program Evaluation. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to students admitted to the doctoral program in social and behavioral sciences or with permission of the instructor. This course examines the evaluation methods used to determine whether – and how – health-related programs are achieving their objectives. Several types of evaluations will be covered, with a focus on process and outcome evaluations. Topics relevant to evaluation practice, including evaluation design and result dissemination, will be addressed. Students will learn how to judge the quality of evaluation designs, distinguish appropriate from inappropriate evaluations and be given the opportunity to apply the principles and techniques of evaluation science to the creation of a detailed evaluation plan. Materials will be presented in several ways, including lectures, guest lectures, in-class exercises, student presentations, classroom discussions and written assignments.

**SBHD 638. Applications in Qualitative Research Methods. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: doctoral student in social and behavioral health or permission of instructor. This course will cover theories, principles and applications to enable high quality research using qualitative research methods. This course will educate students on theories of qualitative research, different methodologies used to gather qualitative data and practical applications of these theories and methods to guide research development in this area. Students will be given the opportunity to analyze published research, conduct qualitative analyses using previously collected data, code and quantify qualitative data, and develop their own plans for a research project.

**SBHD 639. Intervention Development and Implementation. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: doctoral-level course work in research methods and health behavior theory; permission of instructor. The goal of this course is to provide students with knowledge and applied skills in the development and implementation of behavioral interventions to promote health and prevent disease. Students will receive training in evidence-based behavioral medicine approaches and best practice methods for effectively promoting behavior change in individuals and families. The course takes a sequential and hands-on approach in which students will learn about each step of the intervention development and implementation process and will gain experience applying what they learn to the development of their own intervention. Relevant methodological issues will be covered, with an emphasis on design and methods for randomized controlled trials testing individual-level behavioral interventions across settings. Students will learn to think critically about how to balance theory, empirically supported strategies and pragmatic considerations in the development and execution of intervention trials, with an emphasis on achieving maximum impact in their work. Course objectives will be achieved through lectures, experiential in-class activities, informal Q&A with PIs about their experiences developing and implementing intervention trials, student presentations, classroom discussion and written assignments that map on to key sections of a grant proposal.

**SBHD 640. Seminar in Mixed Methods Research. 1 Hour.**

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Prerequisites: SBHD 609, SBHD 619 and SBHD 638, or permission of instructor. This course provides an overview of best practices in mixed methods research in the social and behavioral sciences and serves as a methods capstone course for SBS doctoral students who have completed the foundational research methods and applications in qualitative research methods courses.

**SBHD 690. Departmental Seminar. 1 Hour.**

Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Students and faculty meet weekly to discuss new research and literature in the field of social and behavioral health. Talks given by students and faculty will cover recent articles and trends in the field. Graded as S/U/F.

**SBHD 691. Special Topics. 0.5-4 Hours.**

Semester course; 0.5-4 lecture hours. 0.5-4 credits. Lectures, tutorial, workshops and/or library assignments in selected areas of advanced study which are not available in other courses or as part of the research training. Graded as S/U/F.

**SBHD 692. Special Topics. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. This letter-graded course will include lectures and other activities in areas of advanced study which are not available in other courses or as part of research training.

**SBHD 693. SBHD Internship. 1-3 Hours.**

Semester course. variable hours (60 hours per credit). 1-3 credits. Students will spend 60 to 180 hours in a planned, supervised experience with a community agency. Such agencies might include a local free clinic or other nonprofit organization, such as the American Cancer Society, or a local, state or federal public health agency. Graded as S/U/F.

**SBHD 694. MPH Project. 1-6 Hours.**

Semester course; variable hours. 1-6 credits. Each student will complete a research project that demonstrates the application of the knowledge acquired in the M.P.H. program. The student will answer one or more relevant research questions. The final product is a scholarly written report of publishable quality. A proposal must be submitted for approval and credits are assigned commensurate with the complexity of the project. Arrangements are made directly with the faculty adviser. Graded as S/U/F.

**SBHD 695. Independent Study. 1-3 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-3 independent study hours. 1-3 credits. Provides the opportunity for students to explore a special topic of interest under the direction of a faculty member. A proposal for a course of study must be submitted to and approved by the program director of the social and behavioral science doctorate; credits will be assigned commensurate with the complexity of the project. Arrangements are made directly with the appropriate faculty member and the program director. Graded as S/U/F.

**SBHD 697. Directed Research in Social and Behavioral Sciences. 1-15 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-15 research hours. 1-15 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 15 credits. Requires students to conduct and prepare a written dissertation under the guidance of a faculty committee. The dissertation is written in traditional academic style and must be orally defended. Students must be continually enrolled in the course until successfully completed and approved. A minimum of nine credits of the course must be taken to complete the degree. Graded as satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

**SBHD 898. Directed Research in Social and Behavioral Sciences. 1-9 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-9 research hours. 1-9 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of nine credits. Enrollment is restricted to students in the Ph.D. in Social and Behavioral Sciences program who have successfully completed a written comprehensive examination and oral dissertation proposal exam and are on funded assistantships or fellowships. Students must be continually enrolled in this course until successful completion and approval. A minimum of nine credits of this course must be taken to complete the degree. Graded as satisfactory/unsatisfactory.