

Name:

Class Year: 2023

Cumulative GPA:

Local Address:

Phone Number:

Faculty Members Sponsoring Proposal: Jennifer McDonald, Peter von Allmen

Title of Self-Determined Major: Public Health

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2. Rationale

More than 100,000 Americans each year die of heart attacks, strokes and other illnesses caused by air pollution spewed from factories, motor vehicles and bucolic-seeming farmland.¹ Foodborne illness sickens one in six Americans each year and results in 3,000 deaths.² Approximately 88,000 deaths per year in the United States are attributed to excessive alcohol consumption.³ The CDC reports that deaths from prescription opioids like oxycodone and hydrocodone have quadrupled since 1999.⁴ These examples are just a small handful of the many pressing public health issues that impact the United States every day. Although some of these issues are unavoidable, many of them can be solved or reduced through initiatives to promote public safety and education. “Make the World a Better Place” is a motto that I genuinely believe is attainable and important in today’s world. If every human being is willing to care about or participate in a public health initiative, it could enormously impact the world and shape it into a better place to live.

In contrast to clinical health care providers such as physicians or dentists who focus on the health of a specific individual, public health professionals specialize in many areas to help promote and optimize community health outcomes. From many of the volunteering assignments I have been involved in, I learned that some phenomenal programs and innovative initiatives often got derailed due to lack of funding or organizational changes in nursing homes and hospitals. I have gained first-hand experience from a Music and Memory program that I was

¹ Neuhauser, *100,000 Americans Die from Air Pollution, Study Finds* (Washington: U.S. News, 2019), 1.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Burden of Foodborne Illnesses* (Atlanta: CDC, 2018), 3.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Alcohol-Attributable Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost* (Atlanta: CDC, 2014), 2.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Opioid Data Analysis and Resources* (Atlanta: CDC, 2018), 1.

involved in to assist Alzheimer's and dementia patients. The program had made significant progress in helping elderly patients with their illness, but unfortunately it ended abruptly due to discontinued funding from the state. My experiences have taught me that our current health care system in the United States is far from perfect. Consumer experiences, cost, and transparency needs are longstanding issues that continue to impact citizens and their health. The current pandemic outbreak and efforts for vaccine distribution have also clearly portrayed a need for public health professionals and for a more sustainable healthcare system that needs to be more accessible to vulnerable populations and our nation as a whole.

I believe that public health professionals will be the ones to bridge the gap between healthcare providers and policy makers. By pursuing a Public Health degree at Skidmore, I will be provided with fundamental knowledge about current and past issues that impact the health of the general population along with insight of the procedural steps taken to enact policy within our current healthcare system. The collaborations that I have received from my peers and professors have no doubt helped me form a creative and strategic mindset to develop solutions and brainstorm preventative public health measures for pressing issues. The knowledge that I will continue to gain from a public health curriculum will also help me develop the ability to analyze data and identify factors that have the greatest significance on population health.

The current pandemic has further enthralled me in wanting to understand the prominence of environmental health, epidemiology, health economics, health inequality, the significance of disease prevention, the effects of global health, public policy, and the role of behavioral and cultural issues. Most importantly, I know that a Public Health education will give me the knowledge to help evaluate and manage preventative programs that address widespread health threats in our future. With adequate preparation for further education and hence a career in public

health, I strive to become a citizen who can help make a difference in making the world a safer and better place.

Bibliography

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Burden of Foodborne Illnesses*. Atlanta: CDC, 2018.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Alcohol-Attributable Deaths and Years of Potential Life Lost*. Atlanta: CDC, 2014.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Opioid Data Analysis and Resources*. Atlanta: CDC, 2018.

Alan Neuhauser. *100,000 Americans Die from Air Pollution, Study Finds*. Washington: U.S. News, 2019.

3. Public Health Major Core Classes

3.1 Foundation

Course Number	Department	Title of Course/Credits
HP 131	Human Physiological Sciences	Intro to Public Health (3)
SO 101	Sociology	Sociological Perspectives (3)
HF 215	Honors Forum	Peer Health Education (3)
MB 224	Management and Business	Foundations of Organizational Behavior (3)

3.2 Methodology

Course Number	Department	Title of Course/Credits
HF 315	Honors Forum	Advanced Peer Health Education (1)
SO 227R	Sociology	Social Research Methods (4)
SO 226	Sociology	Statistics for the Social Sciences (4)
MB 338	Management and Business	Foundations of Finance (4)

3.3 Theory

Course Number	Department	Title of Course/Credits
HP 351C	Human Physiological Sciences	Public Health-Global Perspective (3)
SO 351D	Sociology	Health and Inequalities (4)
HI 251D	History	Plagues and Contagion: A Cultural History (4)
EC 283	Economics	Economics of Health and Healthcare (3)

3.4 Capstone

Course Number	Department	Title of Course/Credits
ID 351A	Interdisciplinary Studies	SDM Prep Seminar (1)
ID 372	Interdisciplinary Studies	Interdisciplinary Independent Study (4)

4. Breadth Requirements

Title of Course/Credits	Departments
HP 131 Intro to Public Health (3)	Human Physiological Sciences
SO 101 Sociological Perspectives (3)	Sociology
MB 224 Foundational Organizational Behavior (3)	Management and Business
HF 215 Peer Health Education (3)	Honors Forum
HP 351C Public Health-Global Perspective (3)	Human Physiological Sciences

5. Depth Requirements

HP 131 Intro to Public Health → HP 351C Public Health-Global Perspective

HF 215 Peer Health Education → HF 315 Advanced Peer Health Education

SO 101 Sociological Perspectives → SO 226 Statistics for the Social Sciences —
 > SO 227R Social Research Methods → SO 351D Health and Inequalities

6. Proposed Electives

Course Number	Department	Title of Course/Credits
EN 105	English	Imagining Earth in the 21 st Century (4)
MB107	Management and Business	Business and Organizational Management (4)

7. Academic Semester Outline

Academic Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
First Year (2019-2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP 100 Endurance: Running • MB 107 Business and Organizational Management • HP 131 Intro to Public Health • EN 105 Imagining Earth in 21st Century (15 Credits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC 104 Intro to Microeconomics • MB 234 Found Financial Accounting • MB 224 Foundations of Organizational Behavior • HP 351C Public Health Global Perspective (14 Credits)
Second Year (2020-2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO 101 Sociological Perspectives • MP 191 Class Study of Piano 1 • MB 235 Found Managerial Accounting • MB 214 Foundations of Marketing • EC 103 Intro to Macroeconomics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SO 227R Social Research Methods • SO 351D Health and Inequalities • HI 251D Plagues and Contagion: A Cultural History • SO 226 Statistics for the Social Sciences (16 Credits)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AS 101 Intro to Asian Studies <p>(18 Credits)</p>	
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Academic Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Third Year (2021-2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS 101 Elementary Spanish I HF 215 Peer Health Education MB 306 Foundations of Business in the International Environment Honors Forum Class or Level 300 Business Class (3 credits) Physical Activity EC 283 Economics of Health and Healthcare <p>(18 credits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WLS 103 Alternative Second Semester Spanish Science with Lab MB 338 Finance Level 300 Business Class or Honors Forum Class (3 credits) HF 315 Advanced Peer Health Education <p>(15 or 16 Credits)</p>
Fourth Year (2022-2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MB 349 Business Strategy MB 240 Coaching, Mentoring, and Teamwork 300 Level Business Class (3 or 4 credits) HF 315 Advanced Peer Health Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ID 372 Independent Study Level 300 Business Class (3 or 4 credits) HF 315 Advanced Peer Health Education 4 credit class <p>(12 or 13 Credits)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID 351A SDM Prep Seminar • 3 credit class • Physical Activity <p>(15 or 16 Credits)</p>	
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8. Catalog Description of Courses

HP 131 Introduction to Public Health

Credits: 3

Introduction to the principles and practices of public health, emphasizing the prevention of disease and promotion of health and well-being. Using a case-study framework, students will explore both the historical and current roles of public health, and will investigate basic epidemiological concepts including study design, rates, causation, and surveillance.

Environmental, behavioral, biological, and socioeconomic determinants of health will be explored, and students will study both health issues that impact larger society and those that threaten vulnerable populations.

This course will provide me with a basic foundation of the principles and fundamental purpose of public health. It will help me further understand and analyze current public health problems through the use of epidemiological concepts.

SO 101 Sociological Perspectives

Credits: 3

Sociological Perspectives - The basic concepts and principles of major sociological perspectives. Attention is given to how these perspectives have been developed and used by social scientists to explain social phenomena. Recommended as an introduction to the discipline.

This course will help me understand the impact of society on people's actions and behaviors, including their health and wellness decisions. Being able to analyze the behaviors and habits of different people is crucial to developing successful public health initiatives to improve the health of our society.

HF 215 Peer Health Education

Credits: 3

Peer Health Education - An introduction to the concepts, principles, theory, and practice of health education, health promotion, and peer-based education. Students will engage with a variety of topics surrounding health, wellness, community health promotion, theories of behavioral change and leadership skill building through readings, class discussions, and opportunities for experiential learning. Throughout the semester students will research, plan, execute, and evaluate educational outreach materials and programs on various health and wellness topics relevant to college-aged students. Not for liberal arts credit.

This course will provide me with a foundation of the basic concepts of health promotion and outreach. Throughout the course, I will experience the importance of planning and successfully implementing educational outreach methods related to the public health sector.

HF 315 Advanced Peer Health Education

Credits: 1

Advanced Peer Health Education - An expansion of concepts covered in Peer Health Education by allowing students to fine-tune their health promotion and peer counseling skills. Students will select specific areas of interest and will work closely with other Peer Health Educators and the instructor to plan, implement, and rigorously evaluate outreach programs on campus. The course will focus on building leadership and communication skills and on deepening the expertise of the students on college health-related issues. Prerequisites: HF 215 and permission of instructor. Not for liberal arts credit. May be repeated for credit.

This class will provide me the opportunity to further expand the health promotion and peer counseling skills that I have learned from HF 215 (Peer Health Education). I will gain most first-hand experiences of solving problems through the implementation of health policies. I will also further my leadership and communication skills that are crucial to becoming a health educator.

SO 227R Social Research Methods

Credits: 4

Examination of methods employed in the investigation of sociological problems. This course analyzes the research process as an integral whole including political and ethical issues in conducting research. Topics include conceptualization, measurement approaches, design of surveys, and methods of interviewing and observation. Students design studies using various methodological techniques. Prerequisites: Two courses in the social sciences or permission of instructor. Note(s): Letter grade only.

This course covers qualitative and quantitative data and methods of collection used in public health research. Learning about different collection methods is necessary for designing public health research projects.

S0 226 Statistics for the Social Sciences

Credits: 4

Statistics for the Social Sciences - Examination of quantitative analysis in the social research process. This course involves the study and application of statistics for solving problems in the social sciences. Students use computers as tools for social research as they analyze sociological data sets. Prerequisites: QR 1 or placement at the AQR level or completion of an FQR course and two courses in the social sciences or permission of the instructor. Letter grade only. (Fulfills AQR and QR2 requirement.)

This course will help me examine social statistics to implement in solving problems in public health. The utilization of statistical resources and data sets are useful skills for public health research and analysis.

HP 351C Public Health Global Perspective

Credits: 3

A variety of topics at the advanced level, available to students with an interest in health and physiology. Specific choice of topics will depend on student interest and background. The course may be offered with or without a lab.

This course will help me analyze global public health problems through the use of epidemiological methods. It helped me learn more about the causes of different global health problems and gave me the opportunity to develop public health plans to reduce death and injuries in different countries around the globe.

SO 351D Health and Inequalities

Credits: 4

An examination of health disparities in the United States from an intersectional perspective. Special attention will be given to marginalized communities, including but not limited to women, non-gender binary people, the uninsured, differently able individuals, as well as different racial and ethnic communities, and households in varied class positions. This course will explore the links between macro-level structures, such as health institutions, and micro-level experiences, such as interactions with practitioners. Central topics will include pandemics and epidemics (e.g., early history plagues, flu, AIDS, and COVID 19), gender and health, mental health, and

alternative/holistic medicine. Students will read regularly assigned texts, complete several writing assignments and exams, participate in group discussions, and take a turn leading class discussion.

This course will help me examine health disparities around the United States and how they are linked to macro and micro level structures and experiences. Public health topics ranging from mental/physical health to pandemics and epidemics will further my public health knowledge.

MB 224 Foundations of Organizational Behavior

Credits: 3

The study of human behavior in the organizational context. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of topics in the area of organizational behavior through three levels of analysis (individual, group, and organizational). Topics covered may include organizational theory; managing diversity; personality, values, and work attitudes; perception; decision making; motivation and goal setting; teamwork; conflict and negotiation; leadership, power, and influence tactics; organizational structure; organizational change; and organizational culture. This course incorporates the following dimensions for studying management and business in context: I, II, III, IV, V, VI. Coverage of the dimensions may vary per instructor.

This course will provide me with an in-depth understanding of the importance of organizational behavior in a professional setting. Understanding individual, group, and organizational behaviors and cultures is a necessity when working in a leadership position within the public health sector.

HI 251D Plagues and Contagion: A Cultural History

Credits: 4

This course is a cultural history of plagues and contagion, with an emphasis on understanding how people reacted to, dealt with, politicized, remembered, and learned from (or not) pandemics in the past. We will also be examining the economic, social, and political fallout (or opportunities) that occurred in the wake of past pandemics. The aim is to help us understand our current situation.

This course will give me a knowledge of past pandemics and how to combat future pandemics. Learning about past pandemics is a foundational concept of public health education and gaining an understanding of our current situation will help form the basis of my public health career.

EN 105 Imagining Earth in the 21st Century

Credits: 4

This seminar immerses students in the process of producing finished analytical essays informed by critical reading and careful reasoning. Special attention is given to developing ideas, writing from sources, organizing material, and revising drafts. Additional emphasis is on grammar, style, and formal conventions of writing. Students respond to one another's work in workshops or peer critique sessions. Weekly informal writing complements assignments of longer finished papers. (This course fulfills the all-college requirement in expository writing.)

This course informed me about current environmental and socioeconomic class concerns that are affecting the health of different communities throughout the United States. A person's environment affects their lifestyle and habits, thus playing a large role in their current and future health conditions. Pollution, chemical release, and poor sanitation are major environmental concerns that have a huge impact on people's health and the development of medical illnesses. The class also addresses the health disparities that affect people of lower socioeconomic class which has been a growing medical concern in the United States.

MB 107 Business and Organizational Management

Credits: 4

A broadly based introduction to the field of business that can serve either as the first course in the departmental sequence or as an only course for a student desiring an overview of business and organization management. Topics include strategy, accounting and finance, industry and environmental analysis, company/internal analysis, marketing, ethics, social responsibility, sustainability, and work team dynamics. Students present individual written analyses and engage in group oral presentations. This course covers the following dimensions for studying management and business in context: I, II, III, IV, V, VI.

This class taught me about the importance of team dynamics and strategy in a work setting. It has provided me with basic skills on research and analysis, giving group presentations, and creating strategies which will be useful for my future career in public health and health care administration. I learned how to manage organizations in an strategical and ethical manner which will be useful for a future managerial job in public health.

EC 283 Economics of Health and Healthcare

Credits: 3

This course examines the issues of health and healthcare from an economic perspective. Specific issues discussed are the relationship between health and healthcare consumption; demand under conditions of uncertainty; the production and distribution of health services; the role of risk, uncertainty and insurance; and the government as insurer and

provider. We will also study several of the various sub-markets such as the pharmaceutical market and the market for physician services. As a bridge course, it will have significant focus on the availability of individuals across the economic spectrum to access healthcare resources as well as unequal outcomes across income group, race and ethnicity. As part of this work, students will compare outcomes of the United States system of healthcare provision to other systems in developed and developing world.

This class will give me a better understanding of the healthcare system in the United States, especially fundamental concepts such as insurance and marketing. Learning about the economics behind healthcare will be an essential skill for my future career in healthcare administration. It will teach me about health disparities and other problems in the economic side of healthcare that I can solve as a future leader in the healthcare industry.

MB 338 Foundations of Finance

Credits: 3

An examination of the fundamentals of business finance as influenced by political, cultural, economic, and physical environmental forces. Attention is given to the implications of entrepreneurial and international activities on financial activities. Students study the implications of entrepreneurial and international activities on financial decisions. Topics include an overview of the financial environment including investments, capital markets and institutions, corporate financial theory, asset pricing, financial analysis and planning, corporate capital structure and costs, and corporate investment decisions. This course covers the following dimensions for studying management and business in context: I, VI.

This class will provide me with knowledge on how to analyze and make smart financial decisions in a healthcare setting. It will better help me understand how different types of healthcare institutions (for-profit, non-profit, community, government controlled) set their prices and finance their activities. I will also learn about the financial basis of the health insurance system in the United States which is crucial for providing quality, affordable care to patients.

9. A Brief Description of Final Project

My final project is going to explore the health disparities that affect minorities and people of lower socioeconomic class in the United States. This has been an ongoing issue that has affected the healthcare of many Americans for decades. I will explore how differences in cultural backgrounds and belief affect patients' care as well as how limited access to healthcare in predominately minority and lower socioeconomic communities has contributed to the ongoing

health disparities in our nation. I would also like to create ideas for solutions to these problems as they would have a huge impact on the healthcare system in the United States.