**Contemporary Health Issues**

# INTS 410

# Robinson B203

# Thursdays 4:30 – 7:10

4 Credits (1 credit EL embedded)

Revised October 6, 2019

Susan Howard, MPH, PhD Candidate,

Term Faculty - Medicine, Health & Society, School of Integrative Studies

Office Location and Hours: **Enterprise Hall Room 427 Thursdays 1:30-4:00pm Please make an appointment.** *You may drop in but best to email first* [showar16@gmu.edu](mailto:showar16@gmu.edu)

Contact information: 703-993-9365

I am also available for phone appointments during the weekdays and weekends with advance notice.

**INTS 410 Contemporary Health Issues**

This course is designed for students to explore today’s important health-related topics and issues. Using current events and evolving research, emphasis is on behavior change, drawing on principles of choice architecture and ‘nudges’, human-centered design, and social marketing approaches to influence positive health outcomes. Issues will vary based on current events and may include ‘lifestyle’ issues including drug and nicotine use, including e-cigarettes; sexual health; stress, anxiety and depression; the rising incidents of campus violence; the unique health needs of ethnic and sexual minorities; nutrition—with a look at extremes, from food deserts and food insecurity to abundance and the rising obesity epidemic; and decisions related to death and dying. The course will introduce social marketing, the consumer-buying process, and other more traditional behavior change tools to encourage students to assess and possibly change their own health behaviors and practices. The professor will use examples from her own global health work as case studies to supplement the textbook and readings.

**Learning Objectives:  After taking this course, you should be able to:**

1. Identify today’s important health related topics and issues and be able to identify and explain the multifaceted causes from a social, economic, political, environmental and behavioral perspective.
2. Explain key behavior change theories, principles, and models, how they are applied as well as their limitations given the health challenge you are trying to influence.
3. Apply your understanding of health challenges, and their multifaceted causes and be able to communicate and advocate through a podcast or video, your position or angle on how and why this issue needs to be solved at a level beyond ‘health’ and why, with interviews from people impacted or affected, and professionals who share your perspective.

**Class Design and Learning Principles**:

The course will be designed based on the instructor’s teaching philosophy that applies *game-design* principles, which is the focus of her research interests:

Engage: Activate the motivation and desire to learn

Explore: Learn through exploration and discovery

Reflection and Feedback: Write and converse about the﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿ learning and receive feedback

Apply: Deepen the learning through application; problem solving

The design of the class will typically begin with an interactive presentation that serves to activate and **engage** students in the topic or issue for the class followed by class discussions and small group exercises to allow for **exploration and reflection** on the topic or ideas.

* The class is highly interactive and requires reading of the assigned text book, supplementary media articles and reports, as well as viewing of Ted Talks, documentaries and other videos in addition to writing exercises and group activities.
* The class also will encourage analysis and critique of the readings in order to **apply your learning** and develop your critical thinking skills.
* **This requires that you do the reading in advance of class with the class time devoted to applying the reading through discussions and group work and exercises.**
* Most classes will have paired group activities that will require you to be prepared in order to participate in the in class activity.
* **Participation in small group activities and large group discussions will factor to in to your participation grade.**
* If you miss a class due to an unexcused absence, you may not make up the in-class assignment.

## Experiential Learning:

INTS 410 students will earn one experiential learning credit by completing 20 hours of REQUIRED ‘field work’ that will include: interviewing people facing the health challenge that you are researching, meeting with stakeholders working to solve the health challenge that you are researching and visiting sites where interventions are being done. Given that this class emphasizes a multisector approach to health, I encourage you to meet with and interview people not only in health but outside of the sector. You will be asked to keep a time sheet with the names or initials of people that you interview with video or audio recordings of them. The experiential learning is self-directed and the sites that you visit must be identified and the visit planned on your own. It is best to access what is right under your nose, like the GMU health center, the Student Services and Advocacy Centers, CAPS (counseling and psychological services), etc. I have many contacts in the health field and am happy to help identify people and places to interview/visit. **You must complete the Experiential Learning requirement to earn a passing grade for this course**.

**GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS -**

#### Required Text: The required text is: Housman, J., & Odum, M. (2019). Alters & Schiff essential concepts for healthy living. See information and Coupon Code Below. YOU MUST GET THE 2019 VERSION

## 

**Grading Scale:**   
94-100%= A        63-67%=D  
90- 93 %= A-       60-62%=D-  
87- 89 %= B+      59% or below =      F  
83- 86 %= B        Plagiarism=Potential F on assignment or course  
80- 82 %= B-  
78- 79 %= C+  
73- 77 %= C  
70- 72 %= C-  
68- 69 %= D

**GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:**

**Paperless Classroom**

We will use the Blackboard online course management system to minimize paper use. Please only upload and submit assignments through the Assignment Link on BlackBoard. The link will close after the ‘date due’ has passed. Please DO NOT email assignments as attachments or hand in hard copies—they will not be accepted, nor graded. Assignments uploaded with file extensions that I cannot open or corrupted files will be given a 0.

## Late Work, Time Management and Student Coaching

Papers and other assignments are to be submitted on the date indicated on the Course Schedule. **No work will be accepted late**, without a doctor’s note or note of death in the family. Once you graduate, and those of you who are already working, know that everything is now submitted on-line -- job applications, graduate school applications, grant applications, etc. Extensions are not an option. Please begin now to learn how to plan and budget your time weighing competing priorities, interests, family, friends, fun and also anticipating what could come up. Below is information for FREE time management/academic coaching services that several of my former students have utilized and they report that it has transformed their college experience. Planning out each week, and ideally your academic semester, will also reduce anxiety that can come with feeling overwhelmed.

GMU offers FREE academic coaching and time management. **These services are free and part of your tuition.** <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/academic-coach/>

**Writing Center**

The GMU Writing Center (http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/) provides **free** one-on-one sessions in which you can get expert feedback on drafts of writing assignments. While the tutors will not fix your papers for you, they will work with you to identify and correct rough areas in your submission help you build your writing, proofreading, and editing skills. This is a service available to **all** students. Students who need ESL Support can be given on-going support. MAKE A NOTE OF THE WRITING DEADLINES IN THIS SYLLABUS AND MAKE AN APPOINTMENT IN ADVANCE OF THE DEADLINE FOR THE WRITING CENTER TO REVIEW YOUR SUBMISSION. THEY FILL UP QUICKLY AND NOT GETTING AN APPTOINTMENT IS NOT AN EXCUSE FOR NOT HAVING YOUR DOCUMENT REVIEWED. **The service is provided by student tutors and the approach to helping you is very low-key.**

## The lecturer expects that all required written assignments be prepared using grammatically correct business English, prepared without spelling mistakes and follows the rubric provided, and appropriately notes citations using APA format if applicable. If you do not know how to format using the APA style of citations, please visit the Writing Center or refer to the Quick Guides on APA Formatting or the PURDUE OWL Website. Failure to properly cite references can be grounds for plagiarism

## Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are to be used during in-class group activities only. Use of laptops, tablets or phones for taking notes during lectures/presentations are NOT to be used. Summarizing, paraphrasing, and ‘concept mapping’ (which you will do a LOT of in this class) are encouraged to be done by hand in a dedicated notebook or sketchbook (ideally from recycled paper). Research validates that students learn and retain information better when writing by hand than by attempting to write notes verbatim. Also, lectures/presentations will be available to students. <https://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>.

In the way that research validates handwritten notes to help learners retain information, research also proves that even a short “digital distraction” results not only in distraction for the short time that a learner disengages from the classroom, BUT, takes them almost 30 minutes to refocus and fully refocus, not to mention the ‘second hand’ distraction that is inflicted upon other students.

## MASON POLICIES -

## Honor Code

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for an assignment, you will perform that assignment. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that assignment, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form (for this class using APA citations). Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

*Work created for previously taken classes cannot be turned in for credit in this course, however, may be adapted or built upon after speaking to the instructor.*

**Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence** George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/) speaks to the specifics of Mason’s process, the resources, and the options available to students.

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking**: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to [Mason’s Title IX Coordinator](https://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix/what-title-ix) per University [Policy 1412](https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/reporting-of-clery-act-crimes-andor-prohibited-sexual-conduct/). You may seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator, Jennifer Hammat, by calling 703-993-8730 or email [cde@gmu.edu](mailto:cde@gmu.edu). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center](https://ssac.gmu.edu/faculty-and-staff/) (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or [Counseling and Psychology Services](https://caps.gmu.edu/) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. The 24-hour Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line for Mason is 703-380-1434.

**Privacy**

[Student privacy](http://registrar.gmu.edu/facultystaff/student-privacy/) is governed by the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) and is an essential aspect of any course.   Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.

## Diversity Statement

The School of Integrative Studies is an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and strives to have faculty, staff and students that reflect the diversity of our plural society. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, class, linguistic background, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or physical ability.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the instructors and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Faculty Contact (presenting me with your accommodations form) must be made during the first two weeks of class. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

## Blackboard

To access blackboard, type courses.gmu.edu into the URL address bar of the web browser of your choice. Enter the username and password from your GMU email account. The use of Blackboard is essential in this course, so if you have technical problems, please contact the IT department (email address can be found on Blackboard’s homepage) as soon as possible.

Each class will have an associated Module with a folder for all readings and assignments. All assignments will be uploaded through the Assignment Link within the Module for that week. The link will be closed after the due date has passed.

**Assignment Deadlines and Percentages**

(Please note these deadlines in your phone or calendar as reminders will not be given)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment:** | **% of Final Grade** | **Date Due** |
| **In-class paired or small group activity (10%):**  **1. In class activity 9/5**  **2. In class activity 9/12**  **3. In class activity 9/19**  **4. In class activity 10/3**  **6. Field Work Time Sheets 12/5 (Required to pass the class)** | 2.5%  2.5%  2.5%  2.5% |  |
| **Podcast/Video Production on Health Issue with a Position/Angle- Pre-production (33%)**   1. Draft health issue/topic 9/26 2. Annotation of 5 authoritative sources on the issue 10/3 3. Thesis statement/position/angle on health issue and draft script/outline (clock) for podcast/video 10/10 4. List of stakeholders/list of site visits and questions 10/17 5. TBD 10/24 6. TBD 10/31 7. Revised ‘clock’ for production 11/7 | 3%  5%  5%  5%  5%  5%  5% |  |
| **Quizzes (32%)**   1. **QUIZ Chapter 1 and Chapter 16 (9/5)** 2. **QUIZ Chapters 2, 3 & 4 (9/12)** 3. **QUIZ Chapters 5 & 6 (9/19)** 4. **QUIZ Chapter 9 (10/10)** 5. **QUIZ Chapters 10, 11 & 12 (10/17)** 6. **QUIZ Chapters 13 & 14 (10/24)** 7. **QUIZ Chapter 7 and 8 (10/31)** 8. **QUIZ Chapter 15 (11/21)** | 4%  4%  4%  4%  4%  4%  4%  4% |  |
| **Final Podcast/Video (15%)**  **(individual grades based on group evaluations)** | 15% |  |
| **Participation (5%)** | 5% | Based on engagement in class. |
| Experiential Learning Participation | Required to pass the class | Submit timesheets |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topics/Assigned Readings/Homework** | **Major Assignments and Deadlines** |
| 8/29 | Introduction to Contemporary Health Issues:  Paired exercise to introduce yourself using Motivational Interviewing Techniques that highlights something about you that you would like to change or improve. Motivational Interview process includes: **Desire**, “I want, I wish”; **Ability**: “I can”; **Reason**: “If I can, then I can…”; **Need:** “I have to in order to….”; **Can**: “I will, I can”.  Review Syllabus, Assignments, Due Dates | **8/29** |
| 9/5 | Read Chapter 1- **Health: The Foundation for Life** pp. 2 – 34 and  Chapter 16 - **Environmental Health**, pp. 546 - 567  Instructor’s presentation: *The Connection between Health and the Environment* | **DUE BEFORE CLASS: QUIZ Chapter 1 and Chapter 16**  **In-class exercise:**  **Due 9/5 11:59pm** |
| 9/12 | Read Chapter 2 – **Psychological Health** pp. 38 – 68; Chapter 3 – **Stress and Its Management** pp. 72 – 95; Chapter 4 – **Violence and Abuse** pp. 98 – 120  *Student Services Guest Talk* | **DUE BEFORE CLASS: QUIZ Chapters 2, 3 & 4**  **In-class exercise:**  **Due 9/12 11:59pm** |
| 9/19 | Read Chapter 5 – **Reproductive Health** pp. 124 – 165 and Chapter 6 – **Romantic Relationships and Sexuality** pp. 168 – 200  Instructor’s presentation: *Behavior Change in Reproductive Health - Social Marketing examples from around the world*  *Social marketing exercise based on a sexual and reproductive health behavior.* | **DUE BEFORE CLASS: QUIZ Chapters 5 & 6**  **In-class exercise:**  **Due 9/19 11:59 pm** |
| 9/26 | Library session to research your chosen health topic | **NO QUIZ**  **Health Topic-Bring to class due before class 9/26** |
| 10/3 | Refine your ‘driving question’—form groups. Complete group exercise to refine ‘driving question’. | **Annotations of 5 authoritative sources with perspectives on the cause of the proposed health issue.**  **Due before class**  **In-class exercise-refine your driving question: Due 10/3 11:59 pm** |
| 10/10 | Read Chapter 9 – **Nutrition** pp. 278 - 316  Instructor’s presentation: *Hunger, Beyond Food, Lessons from Ethiopia*  *Sharing of video vignettes. Feedback from class on key message, use of sound, interviews, visuals, etc.* | **DUE BEFORE CLASS: QUIZ Chapter 9**  **Home task: Driving question/position on health issue and draft script outline – do not turn in; work in your groups and turn in a collaborative ‘clock’ (to be provided) for podcast/video blog.**  **Due 10/3 11:59pm** |
| 10/17 | Read Chapters 10,11 and 12– **Body Weight and Its Management** pp. 320-347/ Chapter 11 **Physical Fitness** pp. 350- 384, Read Chapter 12 – **Cardiovascular Health**, pp. 388-418  Sharing of sample podcast on self-image/body weight and management, etc.  Feedback on samples.  Home task and Group work: Things to consider in developing your list of people to interview and questions.  What is the driving question that you are exploring through this interview?  What are some unique perspectives you’d like to hear related to your ‘driving question’?  Think about the people you’re about to talk with. What are the basic questions you’d ask to get to know them?  Write questions to understand their current behaviors and beliefs around this health behavior.  Craft a question that would be answered with a story—“tell me a time when…”  Craft some questions related to your ‘driving question’—remember the example of multigenerational abuse and keeping the content on point. | **DUE BEFORE CLASS QUIZ Chapters 10, 11 & 12**  **Home task: List of stakeholders/site visits and possible questions (see considerations in column to left.)**  **Submit: In class work that consolidates your individual list. Upload group list.**  **Due 10/17 11:59pm** |
| 10/24 | Read Chapter 13 **Cancer**, pp. 422 – 460; Read Chapter 14 **Infection, Immunity and Non-infectious Diseases**, pp. 464 – 508  Part I. Mandatory training on video production/podcast content and overview of “capture”. Room location will be posted.  Special guest will be calling in from California. The former Washington Editor of NPR, and my former colleague, Ben Davis.  Also, Jim McClean of the IT department at GMU will be giving a session on the technical production of a video or podcast. | **DUE BEFORE CLASS QUIZ Chapters 13 & 14**  **Assignment given by Ben Davis/Jim McClean Due date TBD** |
| 10/31 | Read Chapters 7 and 8– **Drug Use and Abuse/ Alcohol and Tobacco** pp. 204 -274  Mandatory Part II training with Jim McClean. How to use podcast/video tools. | **DUE BEFORE CLASS: QUIZ Chapters 7 & 8**  **Assignment given by Jim McClean**  **Due date TBD** |
| 11/7 | Mandatory Part III training - Editing, Post Production training/guidance – Jim McClean | **Revised “clock” *before class* 11/7; bring to class** |
| 11/14 | Read Chapter 15 **Aging, Dying, and Death**, pp. 512 - 542  *Podcasts/Video Blog examples.*  Rough cut critique and feedback. | **DUE BEFORE CLASS QUIZ Chapters 15**  ***Work on productions in class*** |
| 11/21 | Student/group presentations | ***Work on productions in class*** |
| 11/28 | Happy Thanksgiving | NO CLASS |
| 12/5 | Student/group presentations | Final Podcast/Video presentations |
|  |  |  |