

# Principles of Epidemiology (HS261)

Fall 2008

## Distance Program

San Jose State University  
Health Science Department

**Description:** Introduction to epidemiologic concepts and methods with applications to public health practice for students intending to engage in, collaborate in, and interpret epidemiologic studies in the appraisal of public health. (Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health and disease in populations, and application of these studies to the control of health problems.)

Website: The course is run primarily through the main website [www.sjsu.edu/faculty/gerstman/hs261](http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/gerstman/hs261) and the associated Bb site.

Meetings: Elluminate meeting occur Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Professor: Bud Gerstman

Email: Please use the Bb e-mail tool for course communications. As a backup e-mail address, and for correspondence following the course, use [B.B.Gerstman@sjsu.edu](mailto:B.B.Gerstman@sjsu.edu).

Phone: (408) 924-2978

Office: MacQuarrie Hall 514

Office hours: Tu & Th 12:45 – 2:30 (via phone); Elluminate Office Saturday by arrangement (usually 11:00 – noon)

Required text: Gerstman, B.B. (2003). *Epidemiology Kept Simple* (2nd ed.) New York: Wiley-Liss.

Calculator: Texas Instrument 30XIIS or TI83

Optional text: Last, J. M. (Ed.) (2001). *A Dictionary of Epidemiology* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford. (ISBN: 0195141695)

The course calendar and assignments are posted online.

## Objectives

The following essential objectives meet CEPH accreditation expectations:

1. To explain the importance of epidemiology for *informing* scientific, ethical, economic and political discussion of health problems; to define basic *epidemiologic terms*; to *describe* patterns of disease and disease determinants by person, place, and time.
2. To apply epidemiologic concepts of *cause* in the prevention of morbidity and mortality.
3. To apply epidemiologic principles of *screening* for disease and risk factors in the routine and special collection of population-based morbidity and mortality data and community diagnosis.
4. To calculate and interpret basic *epidemiologic measures of disease frequency*.
5. To calculate and interpret basic *epidemiologic measures of association and potential impact*.
6. To draw *appropriate inferences* from ecological, cross-sectional, cohort, and case-control studies; to comprehend basic *ethical and legal principals* involved in the study of human subjects.
7. To identify and assess *systematic errors* in epidemiologic research.
8. To *communicate* epidemiologic information to professional and lay audiences.

**Grades:** Your course grade is based on a weighted average of quizzes, lab assignments, and one exam. Grade cutoffs are as follows:

100-97%	A+	89-87%	B+	79-77%	C+	69-67%	D+	Below 60%	F
96-93%	A	86-83%	B	76-73%	C	66-63%	D		
92-90%	A-	82-80%	B-	72-70%	C-	62-60%	D-		

**Academic integrity.** Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor. Students are not permitted to use consult with students who have already taken an. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the academic integrity policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development (S04-12).

**Rules for collaborating** (based in part on rules established for UNC course EPID600, Prof. Vic Schoenbach).

HS 261 encourages collaboration and group work on *selected* items. In some of my courses in the past, students have gone beyond permissible collaboration and suffered serious consequences. I truly believe that when anyone breaks these rules, the entire class suffers. The belief that others are not obeying the rules erodes confidence in the ability to trust and introduces anxieties that those who do follow the rules will be disadvantaged. Having to investigate possible cheating incidents takes instructor time away from helping students learn the material. Therefore, I want to make clear these basic rules for collaboration in this course:

1. **Exams and quizzes:** You may *not* use published (print or web) materials when working on exams or quizzes. You may *not* communicate about the examination materials, even indirectly, with anyone other than an instructor.
2. **Odd-numbered exercises:** You may collaborate freely on odd-numbered exercises.
3. **Even-numbered exercises:** You may use published (print or web) materials when working on even-numbered exercises. You may communicate about even-numbered exercises BUT ONLY via public discussion boards under instructor supervision.
4. **Research reports:** You may use published (print or web) materials when working on reports. You may consult with experts on specific issues but you must write your report entirely by yourself. Information received from any expert must be properly cited and must constitute no more than 25% of the paper's content.
5. **Lab reports:** Collaboration should be restricted to the Bb Discussion tool.

**Do you have a question? Please ask!**

**Why do we devote so much attention to the rules and ethics for collaborating on course work?** Despite the fact that intellectual honesty is essential to human learning, cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are widespread in schools and universities. For example, a recent article ("Fuqua students may face expulsion", *Durham Herald-Sun*, 4/28/2007, A1,A4) reported on 37 Duke business students accused of cheating on a take-home exam. The article also mentioned a Center for Academic Integrity 2002-2004 survey of American MBA students in which 56% reported having cheated.

**Disability:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.