Course Description:

The Public Health Field Study (PHFS) course is required for all Master of Public Health (MPH) students. As part of the MPH Culminating Experience, the Field Study is a structured and practical experience in a professional public health setting which allows students to apply and integrate the knowledge and skills acquired during the didactic period into public health practice. Through the Field Study, students apply their academic knowledge to “real world” situations that address public health issues. Students conduct field work as interns at public health organizations, which serve as field study placement sites. The role of the MPH student intern is to assist partnering organizations with specific public health projects and to promote and support the activities of those organizations that provide comprehensive health services to communities, locally or abroad. Student participation should contribute to strategic resolutions, be valued by the Organization, and contribute to meeting its mission and goals. Through their field work, students help to build and strengthen working partnerships between field study placement sites and TUC.

The practical skills and the knowledge gained through the Field Study are essential to students’ academic and professional growth, preparing them for careers in population and public health. In this course, students are provided opportunities to cultivate core public health skills, explore career options, and develop professional goals and networking skills by building and maintaining valuable connections with professionals in the public health field. As a working partnership between the Program and the public health practice organization, this course provides a public health fieldwork experience for all MPH students, which can be conducted locally or abroad. The students' work in the field study projects should be valued by the organization and contribute to meeting the organization's goals or mission. Field study projects must also address a public health issue and student participation should contribute to strategic resolutions.

As with many internships, field study placements also provide students opportunities to apply and integrate academically acquired skills and knowledge to practice in a professional setting. An internship is essentially a field experience in a professional setting designed to develop skills and competencies and to increase the level of proficiency. Thus, a field study placement is equivalent to an internship. MPH students who conduct field studies at affiliated placement sites are often referred to as interns.
The TUC Public Health Program is well-represented by a diverse student population consisting of:

- Independent MPH (IMPH) students enrolled in the MPH Degree Program;
- MPH Dual Degree students (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)/MPH and Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)/MPH Dual Degree) who are concurrently enrolled in the colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) and Pharmacy (COP); and
- Joint Master of Science in Physician Assistants Studies (MSPAS)/MPH Students

Upon completing all core and track MPH courses, students are eligible to register for the Public Health Field Study. This course requires 6-12 weeks of field work (12 for IMPH students and 6 for MPH Dual/Joint Degree students (DO/MPH, PharmD/MPH students, and Joint MSPAS/MPH students).

The Program requires all field study placements to provide core public health functions, such as needs assessment, program planning, program evaluation, policy development, educational campaign, applied research, and to allow the opportunity for students to exhibit proficiency in at least one of these public health areas, including program implementation, policy analysis, or data collection/analysis). Specific activities and projects must also meet the criteria of the MPH competencies:

- (One (1) competency from at least two out of the five following Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) 2016 competency categories:
  - Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health
  - Public Health & Health Care Systems
  - Planning & Management to Promote Health
  - Policy in Public Health
  - Leadership

- One (1) competency from each of the following CEPH 2016 competency categories:
  - Communication
  - Interprofessional Practice
  - Systems Thinking

- One (1) cross-cutting competency
- Three (3) concentration competencies (Community Action for Health, Global Health, Health Equity and Criminal Justice)

The Preceptor Field Study Handbook at [http://cehs.tu.edu/publichealth/culminatingexperience/forpreceptors_sites.html](http://cehs.tu.edu/publichealth/culminatingexperience/forpreceptors_sites.html) provides detailed information on the field study responsibilities of students, the role of Preceptors and Sites, and the Program.
COMMUNITY HEALTH FIELD STUDY:
Students enrolled in the *Community Health Concentration* conduct their field studies under the guidance of preceptors at affiliated organizations that serve as field study placement sites. **Community Health field study sites** include, but are not limited to: local health departments, state and federal health agencies, non-profit community-based public health organizations, hospitals, clinics, managed care organizations, academic institutions, California correctional facilities, philanthropic and voluntary health agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

GLOBAL HEALTH FIELD STUDY:
Students enrolled in the *Global Health Concentration (GHC)* conduct their field studies at sites in **Bolivia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nepal** and **Uganda** under the guidance of site preceptors and course coordinators at public health institutions, universities, ministries of health, non-governmental organizations, and United Nations agencies.

HEALTH EQUITY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE FIELD STUDY:
Students enrolled in the *Health Equity and Criminal Justice (HECJ) Concentration* conduct their field studies under the guidance of preceptors at affiliated organizations that serve as **field study sites**. HECJ Concentration students conduct their field studies at California correctional facilities or community-based non-profit/non-governmental organizations serving people with a history of incarceration, as well as their families, and communities.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Through the field study, MPH students will be able to:

1. Integrate public health theory, knowledge and skills in a practice setting;
2. Complete a defined project(s) in an area of public health practice including core public health functions such as a needs assessment, program plan, program evaluation, policy development, educational campaign, applied research project;
3. Exhibit proficiency in at least one of the following areas: program planning, needs assessment and data gathering, program implementation, applied research, program evaluation, policy analysis, or data analysis under the guidance of an experienced preceptor;
4. Demonstrate understanding of the role of the social determinants of health and social justice as it relates to his or her individual field study experience.
5. Demonstrate competence in a public health practice setting; and
6. Demonstrate leadership, teamwork, communication skills, and creativity in the development of a public health practice activity.

The Public Health Field Study will involve:

a. Participation in “project-oriented” work in a public health setting. Examples of appropriate tasks may include the following, but are not limited to involvement in:
• Developing, implementing and or evaluating health promotion programs for specific population(s);
• Conducting research on a public health issue of interest (e.g., study and assessment instrument design, data collection, data entry, analysis, and assessment of findings;
• Conducting policy analysis or advocacy related to a public health issue;
• Conduction a community needs assessment;
• Coalition building and coordination of resources;
• Developing, pre-testing and evaluation of curriculum and or health education materials;
• Contributing to the development of grant proposals;
• Communicating health education needs and information to policy makers and the public

b. Development of a Scope of Work to implement the selected project;

c. Presentation of project findings in a **field study report** that addresses a health issue of the community and contributes in resolving practical health problems.

**COURSE FORMAT:**

The TUC Public Health Program has developed a network of placement sites with partnering organizations that provide our students a variety of placement sites from which to gain valuable field experience. Students are matched and placed in sites that provide a quality learning experience based on their public health interests, skills, experience, and expectations.

For the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, students will complete **virtual or remote** field study placements over a 6-12-week block. All field study work must be conducted remotely under the supervision of the field study preceptor(s) and/or site supervisory team members. The Virtual Field Study is defined as the following:

- A flexible and distance-based real world public health field experience with a public health organization that allows students to serve communities while contributing to real world solutions to public health issues in a distance-based virtual format;
- A placement that allows students to intern from wherever they are with a broadband or Internet connection and a phone;
- A supervised education and experiential opportunity under the supervision of seasoned public health professionals that requires communication with preceptors, supervisors, and teams via video conferencing, email, phone calls, text messaging, and synchronized collaborative files (e.g., Google docs); and
- A structured practice experience that requires the completion of course deliverables/assignments by specific due dates.

The Public Health Program remains committed to maintaining our students’ safety while also supporting their continued learning and progression of their public health education and
training. Our goal is to have our students return to on-site/face-to-face rotations as soon as it is safe to do so. We remain in close contact with our sites and community partners. Currently, all placements are virtual; however, availability of in-person/on-site at local placement sites will be determined on a case by case basis starting in summer 2021.

**MPH students** who seek full-time field study placements are expected to complete 30-40 field study hours per week over a 12-week period (equivalent to 400+ hours) during an academic session.

**Joint MSPAS/MPH students and MPH Dual Degree students** are expected to complete 30-40 field study hours per week over a 6-week period during an academic session. Field study start/end dates for these students will vary due to the availability of open blocks periods which are provided by clinical education and experiential departments.

**Part-time MPH students** may complete part-time field study placements and are required to complete a minimum of 20 field study hour per week over the course of two semesters.
The following timelines described the placement planning process for the PHFS.

**PHFS Placement Planning Timeline & Course Deliverables Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHFS Activity</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHFS Orientations</td>
<td>Spring Semesters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fall Semesters</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students submit the Online PHFS Planning Form, Cover letter, CVs/Resumes*</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Submit New PHFS Site Registration (for Requests for Placement at Unaffiliated Sites/Student-Initiated Placement)*</td>
<td>February 15</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study Coordinator Reminds Preceptors/Sites to Post Available PHFS Opportunities*</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching Process Begins*</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>October</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study Coordinator Confirms PHFS Placement Opportunities</td>
<td>3-6 weeks prior to general field study start dates</td>
<td>3-6 weeks prior to general field study start dates</td>
<td>3-6 weeks prior to general field study start dates</td>
<td>3-6 weeks prior to general field study start dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHFS Start/End Date**</td>
<td>Mid-May – Late July</td>
<td>Early August – Mid-December</td>
<td>Early January – Late April/Early May (Note: The Bolivia, Ethiopia, Uganda Field Study Start in late February)</td>
<td>Mid-May – Late July</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PHFS Course Deliverables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHFS Course Deliverables</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Work, Competency Inventory, Contract, and Selected Field Study Site Visit</td>
<td>Due 1 week after placement start date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study Reflections</td>
<td>Due every 2 weeks (begin submitting 2 weeks after placement start date)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study Site Visit</td>
<td>Mid placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preceptor Evaluation</td>
<td>Due one week after placement end date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Due one week after placement end date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPH Student Exit Survey</td>
<td>Due one week after placement end date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study Report</td>
<td>Dates vary (see Field Study Coordinator)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dates have changed due to pandemic.

**Tentative date: Exact dates, times and locations will be announced via email or posted on the Public Health Program website where applicable.
Public Health Preceptorship Institutional Agreements

To develop field study placement partnerships with public health practice agencies and organizations, the Public Health Program utilizes both informal and formal institutional agreements.

- Informal institutional agreements are completed through short affiliation field study letters of agreements (LOAs) allowing placements for one student at a time during specific time periods (6 or 12 weeks) throughout a semester (summer/fall/spring). An LOA must be generated for each student individually.

- Formal institutional agreements, such as contracts or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) allowing placements for multiple students during the length of the agreement, renewable after 5 years, and affirming that parties will both benefit by making a clinical rotation and/or public health experience available to University students at the Agency or Organization.

Templates for both types of agreements are available upon request.

Contact:
Nemesia Kelly, MPH
Assistant Professor & Field Study Coordinator
Chair, Health Equity and Criminal Justice Concentration
Public Health Program
College of Education and Health Sciences
Touro University California
1310 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592
Phone: 707/638-5827
Cell: 707/731-7436
Fax: 707/638-5871
nemesia.kelly@tu.edu
publichealth.tu.edu