

Sociology and Health
Faculty advisor: Dr. Victoria Evans

Offered with cooperation of
Kinesiology and Sociology Departments

Rationale: Statistics show that obesity and food related health issues are undeniably on the rise in the United States. I see this as a social justice issue, because these health problems are more prevalent in populations of low socioeconomic status. I feel strongly called to help reverse this epidemic, but I feel that it will take more than scientific studies or social work alone to solve the problem. A degree in Sociology and Health will help me accomplish my goal by teaching me to develop community-wide interventions while keeping in mind sociological factors that could determine whether or not an intervention will work. This degree will rely equally upon the Sociology and Kinesiology departments, so a degree in just one would not be sufficient.

General Requirements:

1. Twelve Courses (see below)
2. An Odyssey project studying New Urban communities in Portland, OR, and their food culture. (Green City: New Urbanism in Portland, OR, completed over spring break 2012)
3. A summer internship with an existing intervention program. (I completed this requirement by interning at Little Rock Urban Farming during the 2012 summer.)

Twelve Required Courses:

*Nutrition (260)-*Information about nutritional needs, so that I can help people meet theirs*
Intro to Sociology (110)-*To understand the theories used in sociological research*
*Intro to Public Health (235)-*Foundations for identifying, critiquing, and implementing different types of interventions*
*Theory of Health Behavior (220)-*An examination of why people develop health or unhealthy habits*
*Food, Culture and Nature (340)-*To learn about the role food plays in society*
*Health and Wellness (220)-*A general overview of what constitutes different kinds of health*
Epidemiology (340)- *To learn about how epidemics begin, spread, and can be stopped*
Poverty and Welfare (214)-*Poverty is a common risk factor for obesity in the US*
Epidemics and Society (339)- *A historical look at how societies of the past have handled epidemics*
Medicine and Culture (380)-*To gain insight on how medical treatment is viewed in a cultural context, i.e. what is considered healthy and what is not, and whether biomedical or folk medical traditions should be applied to different groups*
*Sociological Research Methods (335)- *An exploration of techniques used to examine entire populations*
*Asian Medical Traditions (300)- *An in-depth look at the standards for and ideas about health in Asian cultures*

(Courses I've already taken are marked with *)

Capstone: My studies will be focused around how to develop population-wide health interventions in a way that is sensitive to sociological factors of the population (race, socioeconomic status, age, gender, religious ideology, etc.) My capstone project will be a research paper in which I study two food-related interventions within the central Arkansas area, then discuss why their sensitivity, or lack thereof, to the community they targeted seems to be causing their success or failure. The first of the two interventions I will study will be the Coronary Health Incentive Program, an educational group hosted by the Seventh Day Adventist Church of Little Rock that focuses on improving heart health through dietary change that replaces animal products with things like whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables. I was able to meet with the group this past summer, and have already developed a relationship with them. The second intervention I will work with is the Delta Garden Study, a school garden aimed at decreasing childhood obesity rates in Central Arkansas.

Dr. Victoria Evans:



Dr. Stella Capek:



Amelia Robert: