

## Interdisciplinary Studies: Public Health

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I am proposing an Interdisciplinary Studies Major with an emphasis in Public Health. I have always enjoyed helping people and have seen myself having a career where I would be able to follow this passion. I am also interested in the health field. A career in Public Health will allow me to combine these two interests. According to [WhatIsPublicHealth.org](http://WhatIsPublicHealth.org), an informational site created by the Association of Schools of Public Health, Public Health is, “the science of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention.” The field of Public Health encompasses so many different academic areas that it is itself interdisciplinary. Health Education, Epidemiology, Public Health Policy, and Global Health are just a few of the many parts of Public Health. I am particularly interested in health prevention and health policy. My goal is to create an organization that promotes healthy living and creates policies that help people live healthy lives. There is a great quote by a doctor in a sociology text; the doctor describes practicing medicine as repeatedly jumping in a river and saving people from drowning. The doctor says, “I am so busy jumping in, pulling them to shore, applying artificial respiration, that I have no time to see who... is upstream pushing them all in.” I would love to be the person to go upstream and stop the person pushing everyone in the river.

In my major I would combine classes from Biology, Sociology, Psychology, Politics, and Kinesiology to help develop a broad based knowledge of Public Health. The Kinesiology department has added classes that pertain to Public Health. These classes will be central to my major. They will give me an understanding of subjects that are being taught to Public Health students at other universities. Introduction to Public Health (KINE 235) will give me the basic

understanding of the field. Health and Wellness (KINE 220) will teach me about holistic approaches to health. I will learn about preventative measures and how to make healthy life choices. This knowledge will help me make better-informed decisions about what people need. In Theory of Health Behavior (KINE 265) I will learn how to analyze and apply preventative health methods. Epidemiology (KINE 340) is a key focus in Public Health. It looks at who becomes sick and what specific diseases or illnesses are involved. Epidemiologists look at how diseases spread through the population.

Sociology is the study of societies and how they work. Since Public Health focuses on health issues on a large scale, the tools learned from sociology will allow me to analyze the reasons behind why our society is set up the way that it is. These tools will also help me see what aspects of each society will help or hinder health changes that could be implemented.

Sociological Research Methods (SOCI 335) will teach me how to conduct studies and surveys. The methods used in Sociology mirror techniques that are used in Public Health so I can apply what I learn to Public Health issues. In Medicine and Culture (SOCI 380) I will learn how to look at the medical system through a critical sociological eye. This will allow me to see what aspects help as well as which ones need to be changed. It will also help me understand why health disparities hit some populations harder than others.

Even though Public Health focuses on changing health measures at the group level, they are still dealing with individuals. Psychology will give me an understanding of how the person thinks. This will help me learn ideal and effective ways to implement change, learning what people respond to. Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 110) will give me the basic understanding of how the human mind works. I will also take Statistics (PSYCH 290), which will give me the mathematical tools to interpret data found in various studies.

Public Health may come up with ways to better the health of the population, but unless they are successfully implemented into our society long term change will not occur. One very important way to implement health changes is through policies and laws. In Public Policy (POLI 235) I will learn how to formulate, implement, and evaluate policies in America.

The Biology courses I take will give me knowledge of the physical workings of the body. Genetics (BIOL 250) will give me an understanding of how our body works at a micro level. In Animal Physiology (BIOL 320) I will learn how the body systems work and what external factors can affect them. These classes will also be a foundation for knowledge in other topics in Public Health, such as Epidemiology and Environmental Health.

My proposed classes will give me an understanding of topics in Public Health. Through them I will learn what aspects are needed to live a healthy life, how to identify who needs help, what policies need to be changed, what preventative measures will help the population, and how to implement these changes in our society. All these things are major factors in Public Health.

For my senior capstone I will write a thesis on a topic in Public Health. I will give a presentation of my thesis to my committee. The committee will give me a grade based on my paper and presentation.



The following 11 classes are required for my major. Two additional electives may be taken if time permits in the schedule, for a total of 13 possible classes towards an Interdisciplinary Studies in Public Health major.

#### Major Requirements

##### Kinesiology

- Health and Wellness (KINE 220)\*
- Introduction to Public Health (KINE 235)
- Theory of Health Behavior (KINE 265)
- Epidemiology (KINE 340)

##### Sociology

- Sociological Research Methods (SOCI 335)
- Medicine and Culture (SOCI 380)\*

##### Psychology

- Introduction to Psychology (PSYC 110)\*
- Statistics (PSYC 290)

##### Politics

- Public Policy (POLI 235)

##### Biology

- Genetics (BIOL 250)\*
- Animal Physiology (BIOL 320)\*

#### Electives

- Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 110)
- Environmental Sociology (SOCI 375)
- Issues in Politics – Race/Ethnicity (POLI 100)
- International Human Rights (POLI 326)
- Topics: Non-profit organizations (POLI 420)
- Health Psychology (PSYC 351)
- Immunology (BIOL 430)

\*Already Taken