

**SYLLABUS: Epidemiological Research Methods**  
**SYA 6936-01**  
**Fall, 2006**  
**Thursday 8:00-11:00**  
**Bellamy, Room 517**

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**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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Office Hours: Monday and Tuesday from 9:00-11:30 and by appointment  
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**COURSE MATERIALS:**

*Required Text: \**  
Bhopal, Raj. 2002. *Concepts of Epidemiology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

\*Additional readings will be assigned as needed.

*Recommended Text:*  
Last, John 2001. *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*, Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides an introduction to epidemiology, i.e., to the study of the description and determinants of disease frequency in human populations. The course focuses on "how we know what we know" about the causes of disease in human populations.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

At the completion of this course, the student will: Understand basic concepts in epidemiology, including measures of disease frequency and association; Appreciate the role of epidemiology as the basic science of public health; Recognize the distinction between descriptive and analytic epidemiology; Understand the difference between absolute, relative, and attributable risk; Understand the strengths and weaknesses of traditional epidemiologic study designs and their uses in hypothesis testing; Understand the difference between association and causality; Be able to intelligently critique epidemiologic studies.

**GRADING/EVALUATION:**

<i>Grading:</i>	(% of total points)
Midterm	30%    100 possible points

Final	30%	100 possible points
Exercise	30%	100 possible points
Class Participation	10%	33 possible points
Total		333 possible points

### **GRADING/EVALUATION:**

Although no points will be deducted as a result of student absences, class attendance is crucial to your success in this course. The mid-term, final exam, and paper are worth a maximum total of 100 points each. Class participation is worth a maximum of 30 points. The grading scale is as follows: 333-297 = A; 296-264 = B; 263-231 = C; 230-198 = D; 197 or less = F.

### **Research Paper:**

Each student will be required to write a review paper on a specific disease or health outcome. The exercise will be described in class. It consists of writing and presenting in class a 15-20 page research paper, with a minimum of 50 references from scientific books and journals. Students should consult with me prior to beginning this project. Exercises not turned when due will be marked down 1 letter grade per week. Students whose native language is not English should have their exercise edited prior to submission. Yin Paradies in the *International Journal of Epidemiology* recently published a good example of a systematic review paper. A PDF file of this paper is posted in the course library.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

All students are expected to be present for scheduled classes and assignments. However, if a serious medical or family emergency arises, causing a student to miss class, please notify me prior to the class. If I cannot be reached, leave a message with the Departmental Secretary (644-6416) or e-mail me explaining the circumstances. No make-ups will be permitted for class presentations.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Class attendance is required. Five or more unexcused ones will result in an F grade for the course. The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: Religious holidays, as specified in FSU policy (see elsewhere in syllabus); absences due to representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events; verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Medical illnesses are serious in nature and require continued treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Colds, the flu, fatigue, and stress do not qualify as medical illnesses. If you have a chronic illness that could affect your attendance, it is imperative that you alert me to this at the beginning of class. Documentation for an absence to be excused is required. Please provide a copy of the documentation to your professor and keep a copy for your own records. While one is not penalized for the absence of excused absences, he or she remains

responsible for all content missed, including assignments, knowledge, or skills that were covered in the missed class(es).

### **COURSE CONTENT AND OUTLINE:**

The course outline is posted in the "assignment" section of your blackboard course website.

### **ACADEMIC HONOR CODE:**

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in The Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook. The Academic Honor System of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community.

Please see the following web site for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Code.

<http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/codes/honor.html>  
<http://www.fsu.edu/Books/Student-Handbook/>

### **The Plagiarized Paper: A Definition**

The Internet is changing the methods of obtaining plagiarized material. It is very easy for anyone to obtain papers written by others via the Internet and to extract wholesale sections of documents for insertion into his or her own papers. Hundreds of sites offer papers, research, writing, and editing. The ease with which such material is available over the Internet does not lessen the seriousness of claiming material from the Internet as your own.

**Your paper would be considered as "plagiarized" in part or entirely if you do any of the following:**

- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.
- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references.
- Submit a paper in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.

### **Deterring and Detecting Plagiarism: Turnitin.com**

To deter and detect "Internet plagiarism," FSU has acquired a [site-wide license to Turnitin.com](#). This service scans uploaded materials to see if content has been copied from materials available on the Internet or from papers collected in its database.

**Students agree that by taking this course the required assignments they submit may be submitted to Turnitin.com for review.**

All submitted papers will become source documents in the Turnitin.com database and used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in papers submitted in the future. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of the use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com website.

### **Resources for Improving Your Writing and Research, and Avoiding Plagiarism**

As an intellectually honest student, you will avoid plagiarism through the ways that you think, learn, formulate, and express your ideas. By performing according to the standards of this university and this course, you will not only avoid failure and dismissal from the university - you will develop a mental structure that will make your future learning more compelling and productive.

Whether you are "new" or "experienced" in university-level research and writing processes, you should take some time to review the following resources. They include checklists, guidelines, examples, and explanations on how to research and write papers without risk of plagiarism. The last item on the list provides you with a link to FSU's Reading and Writing Center - another resource for all FSU students who wish to improve their research and writing skills.

- A checklist from Purdue University: [Writing Research Papers: A Step-by-Step Procedure](#)
- Guidelines and examples from the University of Alberta: [Handouts and Online Resources for Students](#)
- Practical steps and tips from the Internet Public Library: [IPL Teen Space: A+ Research and Writing](#)
- A multimedia interactive tutorial (requires Authorware plug-in) from the University of Dalhousie: [Information Literacy Tutorials](#)
- [Internet: Citing an Electronic Source](#) for APA, MLA, and other major style manuals, from the FSU Libraries
- Information on how FSU students at any stage of writing may receive tutoring, participate in group sessions, or enroll in courses or online classes to learn process-centered research and writing skills through [FSU's Reading and Writing Center](#)

Would you like clarification about the definitions and examples of plagiarism? Would you like other tips and resources? If so, review the following additional resources.

- A sample quiz to help students identify instances of plagiarism - [What is plagiarism at Indiana University?](#)

- [Examples of Plagiarism](#) from Princeton University
- [Turnitin.com Research Resources](#) for educators and students - definition, tips, guidelines, answers, and printable handouts for educators, and very useful for students

Finally, students in the course will be held to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or possibly an "F" for the course and may be reported to the University Judicial Office. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

## **COURTESY IN THE CLASSROOM**

Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. This means no cell phones, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the professor or discussion leader), reading newspapers, etc. during class. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about kids or other family members, keep it on "vibrate." Entering and leaving is distracting to me and to other students. Therefore, you need to be on time for class and stay until the end. If you must enter late or leave early, please inform me before class begins and take the seat nearest an exit and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Also, please stay with the door to make sure it does not 'bang' as you enter or leave. Repeated disruption of class may lead to penalties that reduce your final grade.

Class discussions of political issues can often stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions need to be scholarly. Scholarly comments are:

Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement.

- Related to the class and course material. Scholarly comments advance the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs.

Are delivered in normal tones and in a non-aggressive manner.

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the

Student Disability Resource Center  
97 Woodward Avenue, South  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
[sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu)  
<http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>

(This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.)

**SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY:**

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.