



Public Health
Student Handbook
2024-2025

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Introduction to the Public Health Major

Public Health is a versatile major that will provide you with skills and knowledge that you can apply in many settings. Our graduates work in a variety of settings, from community-based organizations that provide health and human services to schools, hospitals, clinics, research centers, and labs. Some work in state or county health departments. Our graduates are involved in prevention and treatment, direct services and policy work, family planning, violence prevention, sexuality education, and work for social justice of all kinds. They work with people across the lifespan and from many different communities in need.

Our program has an emphasis on social determinants of health and community-level factors. In many other health careers, like medicine, nursing, physical therapy and others, the focus is mostly on the individual person. While in Public Health, we focus on the upstream influences that are often not acknowledged, but that profoundly influence health and well-being. Our program emphasizes how income disparities, education, neighborhood characteristics, cultural differences in health practices, and stigma can all influence health simultaneously. Individual level interventions usually cannot improve health alone, and you will learn how to consider all other determinants of health when planning and implementing interventions.

Sequence of Public Health Coursework

While the majority of courses are taken during the four semesters of upper division, you can start with lower division foundation courses before that. If you are a transfer student, or are coming from Biology, Nursing, etc., you may have taken courses that we can substitute for these, so please reach out to an advisor in Public Health. See additional notes in table below about substitutions. We can rarely substitute for PH 100 because it was a course created by our department for the major.

BIOL 100 & BIOL 101 - Human Biology and Laboratory
-We can substitute any Human Anatomy or Physiology for this requirement
MATH 124 - Elementary Statistics
-Any course that counts for lower division GE <u>Quantitative Reasoning (Area B)</u>
PH 100 - Public Health Biology
PH 205 - Introduction to Public Health

The table on the next page shows the required core courses in the program. We have laid these out in this particular order so that skills and knowledge build up slowly. Important knowledge and skills are introduced early on and practiced and reinforced in later classes. These required courses provide the content that all Public Health practitioners need to be successful in the field. You can also choose electives that meet your individual career goal needs. You can find descriptions of all Public Health courses, including electives, on the bulletin.

Most students will move through the program in four semesters, as outlined below. Advisors at the Undergraduate Advising Center can also help build individualized roadmap.

semester 1 fall junior year	semester 2 spring junior year	semester 3 fall senior year	semester 4 spring senior year
PH 400 GVAR Determinants of Health	PH 420 Epidemiology ¹	PH 431 Program Planning, Implementation, & Evaluation ²	PH 480 Fieldwork & Reflective Seminar ³
PH 410 Public Health Systems	PH 455 Community Organization & Community Building	PH 450 Public Health Policy	
PH 425 Public Health Research ⁴	PH 520 Structural Oppressions and Social Foundations of Health ⁵	PH 600 Public Health Media, Technology, & Communications	
Major Elective #1	Major Elective #2	Major Elective #3	

¹ pre req: PH 425

² pre req: PH 400 GVAR & PH 425

³ pre req: PH 431

⁴ pre req: Quantitative reasoning; concurrent enrollment: PH 400

⁵ pre req: PH 400 GVAR

*GWAR means Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement. In every major, one course is designated as the place where writing is assessed to determine if students meet the writing requirements of that major. More emphasis is placed on writing instruction and feedback in this course than in many others, although several PH courses are writing intensive.

The prerequisite for GWAR is a first year composition course (native SF State students who earn a grade of CR or C- or better in the ENG 104-105 or ENG 201-202 sequence satisfy the first-year composition requirement). Students who receive a grade of NC in ENG 105 or ENG 202 must enroll in and earn a grade of CR or C- or better in ENG 114 or ENG 209 to satisfy the first-year composition requirement. First year composition courses cannot be taken concurrently with GWAR.

Prerequisite Sequences

As outlined in the table on the previous page, there are several prerequisite sequences to keep in mind while moving through the roadmap. Please pay close attention to them because **there are no prerequisite waivers**. All prerequisites must be successfully passed before moving on to the next course in the sequence, and they can not be taken concurrently. Please keep this in mind as you plan your roadmap.

1. PH 400 & PH 425 → PH 431 → PH 480
2. PH 400 & PH 425 → PH 420
3. PH 400 & PH 425 → PH 520

Academic Support

If writing is a challenge for you, or your instructor suggests that you get extra support for writing, you might seek support at [Tutoring and Academic Support \(TASC\)](#). Many of our students take advantage of these resources, and for many, tutoring makes the difference between barely scraping by on a course, and learning life skills for becoming a stronger writer.

Career Outlook

There are many rewarding careers to choose from when you pursue a BS degree in Public Health, such as:

- Community Health Worker
- Disaster Preparedness Coordinator
- Environmental Health Specialist
- Contact Tracer
- Health Educator
- Health Promotion Specialist
- Program Coordinator
- Community Planners
- Research Assistant

Related Graduate Programs examples: nursing, medicine, social work, public policy, public administration, city planning, education, and of course public health!

Check out the Public Health tab on the [Career & Leadership page](#) for tons of resources and information on career paths, salary, professional associations, and employment opportunities!

Who Does What?

You have access to a lot of expertise in the Public Health Department, and can seek help from staff advisors, department administrators, and faculty. Here is a quick guide about who to talk about what.

Undergraduate Advising Center (UAC): (uacadvising@sfsu.edu)

- What courses to take in what order
- Electives

Staff Advisors: (Steven Bach, ph@sfsu.edu)

- Registration issues
- Withdrawal from a class
- University and department policies or regulations
- Forms of all sorts: for example, Graduation forms, petition for waiver of college regulation, PH 699/685

Department Chair: (Juliana van Olphen, jvo@sfsu.edu)

- Supports students in the department with any concerns/suggestions and procedures for filing grievances/complaints
- Approves various petitions and forms (grade change, withdrawal, graduation, etc.)
- Mediation between student and faculty or between students

Program Coordinator: (Maia Feinman-Welcher, mfeinmanwelcher@sfsu.edu)

- Academic probation
- Concerns with grades or treatment in classes if talking to the instructor has not resolved the issue
- Course substitutions
- Advising questions if not answered by UAC

Director of Applied Practice: (Georjean Morado, gmorado1@sfsu.edu)

- Questions related to PH 480 capstone or internships

Individual Faculty Members/Instructors:

- Questions about careers in community/public health
- Taking independent study or being a teaching assistant with that faculty
- Discussions of areas of interest
- Questions about the content of a course they teach
- Questions about assignments or anything related to a class you are taking with them

Faculty Teaching Roster

Faculty Member Name	Courses in Spring 2025
Robert Allen	PH 450; PH 835
Kat Brown	PH 455
Nancy Carmona	PH 420; PH 825
Ivy Chen	PH 320
Deborah Craig	PH 210; PH 400GW
Atina Delfino	PH 480
Courtney Donovan	PH 410; PH 425
Julie Gardner	PH 811
Marty Martinson	PH 205; PH 290
Supriya Misra	PH 370; PH 425; PH 890
Lisa Moore	PH 315; PH 520
Matthew Moore	PH 600
Georjean Morado	PH 480

David Rebanal	PH 420; PH 450; PH 840
Rochelle-Jan Dionisio Reyes	PH 100
Brooke Sommerfeldt	PH 400
Ruby Turalba	PH 400
Jason Victoriano	PH 455
Jessica Wolin	PH 431; PH 820
Sarah Wongking	PH 431
Marley Zalay	PH 655

Department Procedures

This section outlines some of the policies and procedures that you need to know at the department, classroom, and university levels. Other policies can be found in the university bulletin and website.

Grade Thresholds

Courses that you must make a C or higher in order to meet the prerequisite and pass:

- PH 400 GWAR - Determinants of Health
- PH 425 - Public Health Research
- PH 431 - Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation
- PH 480 - Fieldwork and Reflective Seminar

Adding a Class

You may add classes without a permission number up until and during the first two weeks of classes.

Dropping a Class

If you must drop a class, be sure to do so by the drop deadline published on the official [Dates and Deadlines page](#).

- **Weeks 1-3 of instruction** - dropping is permitted without restriction or academic penalty and you can do so through your Student Center
- **Weeks 4-12 of instruction** - students may request to withdraw from courses for serious and compelling reasons. Such withdrawals require approval from the instructor and the chair of the department. If your request is approved, you will receive a W on your transcript for the class. W grades are not included in your GPA. You can also do this in your Student Center.

Course Substitutions

If you are a transfer student and have taken courses that you think are equivalent to Public Health Foundation courses, please reach out to an advisor in Public Health with the course descriptions and we can assist with a substitution.

Substitutions for core courses are less common since they are upper division, unless you are transferring from another 4-year institution and have taken classes towards the major already.

Examples of courses that we can substitute:

- BIOL 100 & BIOL 101 - can be substituted with a Human Anatomy/Physiology class plus lab (4 units total)
- PH 205 - can be substituted with an Intro to Public Health course taken at another institution
- Quantitative reasoning - we can accept any course that would count for General Education Area B

Advising

A good starting place if you are new to the major would be to review this Public Health Advising slideshow. Please also check out this Advising FAQ which has answers to many commonly asked questions. Most advising, course selection, and roadmap planning will take place at the Undergraduate Advising Center. They see students both in-person and virtually through appointments and drop in hours. If you still have questions after meeting with an advisor,

please reach out to a department representative for more support (ph@sfsu.edu).

Graduation Applications

The Public Health office sends out announcements about deadlines for graduation. You will apply to graduate through your Student Center following these [instructions](#). The graduation application has a \$100 fee. If for whatever reason you end up needing to move graduation to the next semester, you can email the Registrar (regweb@sfsu.edu) and ask them to move your application to the correct semester. You do not have to pay the \$100 fee again.

Graduation application deadlines are as follows:

Summer graduation: Feb 1- First Friday in March

Fall graduation: March 1- First Friday in April

Spring graduation: September 1-Third Friday in October

Grade Change Requests

These requests begin with the instructor of the class. If you feel a mistake was made in calculating your grade, bring all graded assignments to the instructor. If you believe that some grade was unfair, provide a written letter outlining your reasons. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting with the instructor, then make an appointment with the Chair of the department to discuss your concerns.

Taking An Incomplete in a Class

Each faculty member decides whether to grant an incomplete or not, so consult with your faculty member. The official university policy is that a student should have completed 75% of the assignments toward their grade in order to be eligible for an incomplete. Consult your instructor as soon as possible if you want to request an incomplete and you can work with the instructor to negotiate a timeline for completion of your work. The incomplete stays on your record until the end of the next semester (one year at the end of the semester:

example: Spring 2014 □ end of Spring 2015), then turns into a failing grade unless the appropriate grade change paperwork is submitted.

Maximum attempts to Pass a Course

Public Health major courses can be taken a second time if students are not successful the first time. Third attempts are allowed with a Waiver of College Regulations form signed by the most recent instructor and Department Chair. You may not repeat a course if you got a C or higher or credit (CR) for the class.

Academic Notice

If you receive notice that you are on academic Notice, please make an appointment with the Chair or Program Coordinator. Together you will develop a plan of action for academic success. This plan goes on the Academic Notice Form that you will both sign.

Special Study Courses (PH 699)

Special Study courses – PH 699s - are available for individualized study. You can choose to do this as one of your electives if there is a topic that you wish to explore in more depth, or if you would like to work more closely with a faculty member on his/her research or projects (other than teaching). Before a student is able to officially sign up for a special study course, the sponsoring faculty member and student must complete the Special Study 699 Form. This form needs to be completely filled out – including signatures from the sponsoring faculty member, unit load corresponding with project and a contract with deadlines for completing the work. After the form is completed, the Chair will sign and then faculty and student will be emailed the permit code to add the course. The academic office staff manages the distribution of add codes for PH 699s.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants (PH 685)

Another option for electives is to serve as a teaching assistant (TA). To qualify,

you must have permission of the instructor and have previously taken the course and passed with at least a “B+.” You cannot receive academic credit for a course for which you are a TA. Teaching assistants may assist with maintaining attendance records, performing preliminary evaluations of student work (faculty are responsible for final evaluations of student assignments, issue grades, etc.), leading class discussions, giving a presentation, holding peer office hours, taking notes in class, and offering technological support. The faculty member for the course will negotiate these duties and provide a contract in writing that includes grading criteria. Students serving as teaching assistants are required to sign up for PH 685 to receive academic credit for serving as a teaching assistant. The academic office staff manages the distribution of add codes for PH 685.

Department Policies

Attendance, Tardiness, and Participation

Each class has somewhat different requirements about attendance. In general, it is important to show up to class on time, and make every effort to attend every class. There will be penalties for absences and tardiness in most classes, and in some classes, more than 3 absences may cause you to fail the class. If you have legitimate absences, please let instructors know ahead of time and bring documentation. Please be sure to refer to your course syllabus for instructor requirements. Attendance is particularly important for group projects. If you do not show up, you are letting down your entire group.

Respect and Civility

To respect your classmates and professors, please do not engage in side conversations when someone else is speaking. Please give each speaker your full attention. If you are unhappy with something related to the course, such as the readings, assignments, or things that happen in class, talk to the instructor about it rather than disengage. If you have disagreements with classmates or instructors, engage in a dialogue about what could be better rather than becoming confrontational. College is an opportunity to explore non-violent

ways of resolving conflict. Please practice non-violent methods and civility in your verbal communications as well as written communications such as emails or texts.

Late Assignments

In general, late assignments will not be accepted. If you have a legitimate emergency, let the instructor know as soon as possible and negotiate about turning in the assignment late. Please be sure to refer to your course syllabus for instructor requirements.

Plagiarism (Including use of AI)

Each course syllabus will include a statement about plagiarism, including consequences if a student is discovered plagiarizing, as well as use of AI. Faculty have been encouraged to include a policy statement about use of AI in their syllabus, so please consult with them if you don't see this. Some faculty consider any use of AI to be plagiarism, whereas others will permit it as long as you quote/paraphrase and appropriately cite instances of use. In most cases, faculty will give a warning the first time plagiarism is discovered (some faculty will have a penalty on that assignment), and if plagiarism happens a second time, it is grounds for failing a course. Many courses in the major will use anti-plagiarism software to detect instances of plagiarism. Here is the weblink to SFSU policy on Plagiarism: <http://conduct.sfsu.edu/plagiarism>

Grades

Each syllabus will outline the assignments and other class expectations, how they are graded, and how grades are calculated. The meaning of grades is as follows:

A = exceptionally excellent performance, above and beyond all requirements

A - = outstanding performance

B+ = excellent performance

B = above average performance

B- = slightly above average performance

C+ = on the high end of average performance

C = average performance; slightly exceeds all course requirements

C- = on the low end of average performance

D+ = slightly below

average D = below

average

D- = falls below the most minimal requirements of the class

D grades are not passing in some classes. Please consult the syllabus to determine these classes. In other classes, you must get a C or higher to continue to the next semester.

SF State University Policy on Student Conduct

This section applies to all SFSU Students and comes from the University Bulletin

<http://conduct.sfsu.edu/standards>

Health Education Student Association (HESA)



HESA is the undergraduate student organization whose goals are to promote health education and awareness of available resources on and off campus; increase peer support by serving as a social network for HED students; increase department visibility; and increase student/faculty interaction by way of social functions that will enhance knowledge of the department and the Health Education field. You can get involved by attending HESA meetings and events or running for office. Running for office or being an active member of HESA will have many benefits to you and this type of involvement is part of professional development. To begin, you can:

- Like the HESA Facebook page
- Check out the HESA event calendar
- Go to a HESA meeting

2024-25 Mental Health and Wellness Resource List

ON-CAMPUS

[Health Promotion and Wellness](#)

- [Wellness resources](#)
- [SFSU Wellness Map](#)
- [Parenting Student Resources](#)
- [Wellness Vending Machine](#)
- [Events and Workshops](#) (including CalFresh Help Clinic, Nutrition Clinic, Wellness Kits, Gator Groceries & Food Pantry)

[Food+Shelter+Success](#)

- Food, housing, and economic support

[Veterans Services at San Francisco State University](#)

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)

- Counselling and crisis support
- [Groups and Workshops](#)

OFF-CAMPUS

[Crisis Counseling hotlines](#)

[Bay Area Legal Aid](#)

[Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#)

For additional SF-based and area resources, please see [SF Resource Connect](#)