

Summary Report - Aug 28, 2013

Survey: Anonymous end-of-semester evaluation of CrCrTh 653 hybrid, Spring 2013

1. Start with an evaluation of yourself What were your personal goals in taking this course? Did you achieve them? How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again? What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

Count	Response
1	I would have liked to have had more time personally to read every article.
1	Personal goals -- learn more about epidemiology, think deeper, and write better Achievement -- I did learn more about epidemiology and my thinking and writing has evolved Proceeded differently -- I would have put in more time and effort in redrafting my submissions. Personal obstacles -- How to not sound like an idiot and contributing something meaningful to the discussions.
1	I achieved the following goals: Increase knowledge regarding epidemiology Learn about other perspectives in reading assignments I would not have proceeded differently... No real major obstacles except time constraints

1. Self-evaluation (continued) What have you learned about what you have to do to make an online course stimulating and productive?

Count	Response
3	N/A

2. General Evaluation of course What was special about this course (+positive and/or -negative)? How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? In what ways do you think this course could be improved?

Count	Response
1	Positive -- this course facilitated my thinking in epidemiology. This course was different and exceeded my expectations. The course can be improved by bringing people in to the discussions (Brown, Davey-Smith, Krieger, Lynch, and such).
1	Because it has been awhile since my last Epi course, I would have liked a week or two as background to review the basic ideas presented in an Epi methods class. Perhaps not use cards but just open discussion amongst the group. More case studies used in discussion.
1	Positive- met expectations Good discussion Interesting topics I think the distant student experience may need some improvement. I felt that it might have been difficult for the distant student to engage in the class discussion at times. Often it was challenging to notice the additional students at a distance from a laptop computer. Maybe a larger classroom with a bigger screen might help.

2. General evaluation (continued) In what ways did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester? How does it compare with other graduate courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

Count	Response
-------	----------

1	I thought the approach to learning was creative, and allowed for free discussion regarding weekly topics and areas of interest of students.
1	My attitude for the course has stayed stable for the semester. There were times when I was unable to submit work because of 1) illness or 2) the blog had a sign that said "data overload, please try again later". I really learned a lot from Professor Taylor and my colleagues. I hope to collaborate with them in the future about epidemiology and this topic. Compared to other graduate courses -- it gave me an "open space" to think and it gave me time to do the work that I needed to. Yes, I would recommend it to prospective students who want to think more about the topics of epidemiology rather than just an introduction.
1	As it became increasingly complex, I felt frustrated at times like I was not actually learning the content but simply going through the motions of completing the assignments. I had to take a step back, regroup, sometimes read a different article to get a sense of the topic of the week and get back on track. Future students should know that they need to be self motivated and not get bogged down by resistant texts. The works only get more complex, so it is very important to understand each week before moving on, even if its just a superficial understand.

3. Evaluation in relation to the course description Read the course description/goals below. Comment on how well the goals expressed in the syllabus were met. Make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met. Course description: Introduction to the concepts, methods, and problems involved in analyzing the biological and social influences on behaviors and diseases and in translating such analyses into population health policy and practice. Special attention given to social inequalities, changes over the life course, and heterogeneous pathways. Case studies and course projects are shaped to accommodate students with interests in diverse fields related to health and public policy. Students are assumed to have a statistical background, but the course emphasizes epidemiological literacy with a view to collaborating thoughtfully with specialists, not technical expertise.

Count	Response
1	The course description is very precise what the course is about. I do not think there was special attention given to any. The course project shaped me more as I applied each weekly topic to the project. The blog showed how my writing and thinking evolved over the course. I do not think the disclaimer to statistical background is needed. Readings and case studies are assigned to further think about the topic for the week.
1	Course objectives were met. I would have liked more case studies in addition to the articles that could be used as discussion points.
1	I think the course was accommodating to the student area of interest. I think there could have been more discussion on public policy. I also would have liked to see current articles that are associated with recommended readings.

4. Synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) Building on your comments from Qs 1-3, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.) Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses. Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of mentors to support the learning in the course.

Count	Response
1	Integrate gold standard articles with current literature on topics Find another process other than the "card" system for taking turns Focus more on social influences related to health Integrate guest speakers for assigned topics
1	Topics were clearly stated but initially I was confused the assignments and wiki/blog because there was so much information. In addition to the syllabus quiz, a review of assignments in class is helpful. Overall a less structured discussion would be appreciated so people could speak more freely and respond to others' comments more readily. I

had never done annotations for a class before and found them extremely helpful for digesting the information presented in the articles. I struggled sometimes with the sketches, but did find them beneficial in terms of relating the week's topics to my own studies and interests.

- 1** Evaluating the course: - Yes, I recommend this course to students who would want to further develop their thinking about epidemiological topics applied to health and public policy. - The course covers the topic well but the student must understand that the complexities of the problem or topic cannot be resolved immediately. - Patience and meditative qualities might be needed to really get the topic at hand. - The course can be rearranged (weekly topic) to help the student think about epidemiology more (the current schedule of topics is okay). - The lay epidemiology can be moved to the beginning and end to ground all the thinking the students have done over the semester.