

# Principles of Epidemiology (HS261)

Spring 2009

San Jose State University  
Health Science Department

**Description:** Introduction to epidemiologic concepts and methods with applications to public health practice for students intending to engage in, collaborate in, and interpret epidemiologic studies in the appraisal of public health.

Website: [www.sjsu.edu/faculty/gerstman/hs261](http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/gerstman/hs261)  
Class: Wednesday from 3:00 pm to 5:45 pm in HB 407  
Professor: Bud Gerstman  
Email: Please use the Bb e-mail tool for course communications.  
Phone: (408) 924-2978  
Office: MacQuarrie Hall 514  
Office hours: To be determined during the first week of the semester  
Required text: Gerstman, B.B. (2003). *Epidemiology Kept Simple* (2nd ed.) New York: Wiley-Liss.  
Calculator: Texas Instrument 30XIIS  
Optional: Last, J. M. (Ed.) (2001). *A Dictionary of Epidemiology* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford. (ISBN: 0195141695)

The course calendar and assignments are posted online.

## Objectives

The following essential objectives meet CEPH accreditation expectations:

1. To explain the importance of epidemiology for informing scientific, ethical, economic and political discussion of health problems; to define basic epidemiologic terms; to describe morbidity, mortality, and risk factor patterns by person, place, and time variables.
2. To apply causal concepts in the prevention of disease and health promotion.
3. To apply epidemiologic principles of screening for disease and risk factors.
4. To calculate and interpret basic epidemiologic measures of disease frequency.
5. To calculate and interpret basic epidemiologic measures of association and potential impact.
6. To draw appropriate inferences from trials and observations (ecological, cross-sectional, cohort, and case-control studies) of human health, and to comprehend ethical principals involved in the study of human subjects.
7. To identify and assess systematic errors in epidemiologic research.
8. To communicate epidemiologic information to professional and lay audiences.

**Grades:** Your course grade your average lab, quiz, and exam score, with cutoffs as follows:

100-97%	A+	89-87%	B+	79-77%	C+	69-67%	D+	Below 60%	F
96-93%	A	86-83%	B	76-73%	C	66-63%	D		
92-90%	A-	82-80%	B-	72-70%	C-	62-60%	D-		

**Academic integrity.** Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor. Students are not permitted to use consult with students who have already taken an. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the academic integrity policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary

action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development (S04-12).

**Rules for collaborating** (based in part on rules established for UNC course EPID600, Prof. Vic Schoenbach).

HS 261 encourages collaboration and group work on selected but *not* all items. In some of my courses in the past, students have gone beyond permissible collaboration and suffered serious consequences. I truly believe that when anyone breaks these rules, the entire class suffers. The belief that others are not obeying the rules erodes confidence in the ability to trust and introduces anxieties that those who do follow the rules will be disadvantaged. Having to investigate possible cheating incidents takes instructor time away from helping students learn the material. I therefore want to make clear these basic rules for collaboration in this course:

1. **Exams and quizzes:** You may *not* use published (print or web) materials when working on exams or quizzes. You may *not* communicate about the examination materials directly or indirectly with anyone except the instructor.
2. **Exercises:** Rules for collaboration are determined on an assignment-by-assignment basis. If you are uncertain about the rules for a particular assignment, please communicate directly with the instructor via Blackboard.
3. **Lab reports:** Collaboration is prohibited EXCEPT for the free discussion of issues on Bb discussion threads.
4. **Research reports:** It is unlikely that you will do an individual research report this semester. However, if this changes, you may use published materials when working on reports, as long as you synthesize the material, report it in your own words, and sources are properly cited. You may consult with experts on specific issues but you must write your report entirely by yourself. Information received from an expert must be properly cited and must constitute no more than 25% of the paper's content.

**Do you have a question? Please ask!**

**Why do we devote so much attention to the rules and ethics for collaborating on course work?** Despite the fact that intellectual honesty is essential to human learning, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are widespread in schools and universities. For example, a recent article ("Fuqua students may face expulsion", Durham *Herald-Sun*, 4/28/2007, A1, A4) reported on 37 Duke Business students accused of cheating on a take-home exam. The article also mentioned a Center for Academic Integrity 2002-2004 survey of American MBA students in which 56% reported having cheated.

**Disability:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.