Culminating Experience Seminar

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For the Faculty of Health Sciences
Graduate Public Health Program
The GPHP at AUB offers an MPH with three concentrations and 3 MS degrees.

- The MPH is a 42-credit hour program with
  - 19 hours of core courses
  - 12-13 hours of concentration courses
  - 6 hours of public health practice courses
The PHP courses include a research project, practicum, and a culminating experience (CE) seminar.

- 300 hours spent at practicum site
- Gaining hands on experience while contributing knowledge/skills acquired in the program to benefit the host organization
- Working on specific CE project that indicates acquisition of specific concentration and broader public health competencies
Overview of the CE Seminar

- All MPH students are required to complete the requirements for the Culminating Experience Seminar (CE) before graduating from the program.
- The CE is a 1 credit course offered for 1 1/2 hours each week over one semester (recently increased to 2 credits).
- It is facilitated by 5 faculty members, one from each department at FHS.
  It is attended by students from the three MPH concentrations.

The interdisciplinary nature of public health is emphasized
Objectives of CE Seminar
By the end of the seminar, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the public health significance, ethical issues, social justice perspective, and disciplinary relevance of a variety of public health practice experiences
2. Document the public health significance of their own project, as well as the ethical issues, social justice perspective, and disciplinary relevance of their project.
3. Reflect on and document the process of applying theories and tools learnt in the classroom to real life situations: challenges to the application; contextualization of the theories; difficulties encountered; partnerships or relationships established; lessons learnt.
4. Discuss the experience as it relates to the public health values.
Requirements of CE Seminar

- Class attendance and participation
- Executive summary of personal journal
- CE final report
- CE poster presentation
Rationale behind Instituting CE Seminar

• Reinforcing all dimensions of public health towards the end of their degree program.

• Ensuring critical analysis/reflection of impact of a particular project carried out at the practicum site on the students, the site, and the community.

• Developing students’ ability to think broadly, not only about their own work, but also about the work of others as they reflect and respond to their classmates’ cases.
Why is CE Seminar considered innovative?

1. Highlight models of collaborative, comprehensive, and community-based public health practice and scholarship

2. Integrate actual public health practice experiences and examples into classroom discussions

3. Involve community-sector partners in teaching

4. Focus on skills development

5. Emphasize the application of public health principles and science-based decision-making
1. Highlight models of collaborative, comprehensive, and community-based public health practice and scholarship

- It is an interface between academic and public health practice.

- The CE seminar emphasizes both the content-specific and the less tangible reflective aspect of a practicum and CE experience, contributing to the comprehensiveness of the experience.

- The CE seminar course is a prime example of participatory multi-disciplinary scholarship and interaction.
2. Integrate actual public health practice experiences and examples into classroom discussions

- The CE seminar is delivered through case studies and reflections, based on actual public health practice experiences.

- Students can choose to present to class (i) their own case studies from the work they are doing in the practicum or (ii) a reflection based on an event or events that took place at their practicum site and affected their views of public health.
3. Involve community-sector partners in teaching

- The objectives of the CE and the identification of activities/tools/methods and time needed to achieve those objectives is a participatory process between the student, preceptor and departmental practicum advisor of the student.

- The preceptors are heavily involved in guiding the students towards a choice of CE project that is of benefit to the site, and facilitate and guide on site activities.

- Preceptors also evaluate the work of the culminating experience and attend the poster presentation of students.
4. Focus on skills development

• The CE seminar experience is a skill-based course:
  
  • It provides an opportunity for students to apply content related disciplinary skills to a real life problem

  • Students also apply interpersonal and team-based skills to interact with others at the practicum site and effectively and efficiently carry out their CE project.
5. Emphasize the application of public health principles and science-based decision-making

- By the end of the CE seminar, students submit a CE report that:
  1) Describes the specific project that was identified as the CE project
     • With reference to the evidence accumulated on the issue as well as the effectiveness of the methods/approaches/tools
     • With reference to theories learned in the classroom; and discuss lessons learned and implications for decision makers at the practicum site as well as public health practitioners in Lebanon and the region.

  2) Demonstrates the application of public health principles
     • Students reflect on the CE project in relation to key concepts of public health such as relevance to the different disciplines, ethical principles of respect, justice and autonomy, social responsibility, team work and capacity building.