

Climate & Health

Communication Plan

One Health, One Medicine: Climate and Health

Fall 2019

Climate and Health is an open online course running from October 20 - November 19, 2019. The course will be taken by a variety of students in a mostly asynchronous format. There will be non-mandatory, live seminar sessions that some students will join. The course is seminar-based, and so promoting critical thinking and discussion is of high importance.

1. Course Outline

- Week 1: Climate & Health
    - Pre-Reading
    - Seminar
    - Discussion
- Week 2: Health & Diseases
    - Pre-Reading
    - Seminar
    - Activity w/ Discussion
- Week 3: Policy to Practice
    - Pre-Reading
    - Seminar
    - Case Study w/ Discussion
- Week 4: Ethical Consideration of Climate and Health
    - Pre-Reading
    - Seminar
    - Peer Reviewed Presentation

2. Communication Methods

Email - Several types of email will be employed

1. Status updates to the entire class. These emails catch everyone up with where we are in the course, remind them of any deadlines for the week, and overall serve as a reminder to engage with the course. (Instructor-to-class)
2. Normal email communications. Commonly, replies to student inquiries. (Instructor-to-individual)

ZOOM Web Conference - ZOOM web conference will be used for:

1. Seminar sessions - Students and presenters can join in the weekly seminar discussion live. These sessions are recorded.
2. Office Hours - Twice weekly office hours for students to ask questions or share comments with instructor. These are not recorded.

Recorded Video - The ZOOM sessions are recorded and posted for students to watch later

Discussion Forum - Main course forum for introductions, prompt responses, and general questions. Prompt

responses will be reviewed and graded. Past experience shows that forums are popular for prompt-centric responses, but less utilized for general conversations and questions. This may be because A) Students are not in the forums every day and B) they feel less comfortable in an academic forum setting.

Facebook Group - Closed forum for shareable content and insights. Should be less “prompt-centric” and more “sharing-centric” than discussion forum. E.g. an interesting climate change article comes up and can be shared and discussed via Facebook. No grade implications

3. Communication Frequency

Daily:

1. Check forum and respond to new posts
2. Check social media page. Respond to posts, share interesting news/material as needed.

Weekly:

1. Send weekly status emails
2. Office Hours (2x per week)
3. Grade forum participation

Irregular:

1. Introductory Post & Welcome (Day 1)
2. Respond to Peer-Evaluated Seminar Presentation (week 4)

4. Discussion Forum Strategy

Personal Introduction/Virtual Icebreaker Activity

Open the course with an icebreaker introduction that teaches the students a bit about each other and prompts them to engage a bit with the materials:

What is your name?

Where are you from?

What are your expectations for this course?

Do you have any relevant experience you'd like to share?

“Take and Post a Picture” prompt

Get students to post and respond to photos, instead of just chat:

Share a photograph of a climate related health risk factor and describe its associated disease

Case Study Prompt

Get students to apply the theory learned in class to a real-world situation:

Apply a climate related policy initiative towards a climate related disease outbreak

Methods for Approaching Discussion Forum Facilitation

Timely responses to student posts

Respond to every student post, if it is possible with the numbers

Encourage student-to-student interaction

Encourage use of the social media page for highly “shareable” content or insights

5. Preferred Contact Methods

Preferred = Forum & Office Hours

Secondary = Email (primary for time-sensitive issues)

6. Student Expectations

These expectations will be shared with the students

General Expectations

- Remain professional, respectful and courteous at all times
- Keep posts on-topic and professional. Please refrain from discussions of religion, politics, etc.
- Remember that a real person wrote each post and will read what you write as well. It is easy to misinterpret online conversation. Give the benefit of the doubt. If you become upset, wait a day or two and cool down before posting.
- Proofread prior to submitting a post. Discussion forums require slightly more formal language than email or social, while still being more casual than writing a paper.
- Remember that discussion forums and social posts are visible by the entire class. Use e-mail for any private comments to the instructor. Inappropriate posts will be removed.

Contacting the Faculty

- Please feel free to email the faculty at any time.
- The faculty will generally respond to email within 24 hours. If you do not hear from him within 24

hours, feel free to follow up.

- In addition to scheduled office hours, the faculty is willing to schedule an online meeting via ZOOM at an alternate time by request. If you would like to schedule a meeting, please email the faculty with your request and availability.

7. Discussion Forum Assessment

Discussion forums are graded, and so expectations should be set with students about how to receive full marks. Because this is an open course, the expectations are simple:

Students will have until the end of the Sunday each week to prepare and submit their responses. Responses are required to be a maximum of 250 words in length.

8. Strategies & Contingencies

Inactivity (group):

If a discussion begins to stall or lag, the facilitator may take on the role of a prompter and pose open-ended questions that elicit a substantive response.

The facilitator may also use the Facebook page to share conversation-provoking material

Inactivity (individual):

Because this is an open, non-required course, inactive individuals will be allowed to “fall off”. In special scenarios, the faculty may elect to reach out to a student via email to make sure the student isn’t facing a technology or instructions problem.

Dominant Student

Sometimes a student will monopolize a discussion—either deliberately or unintentionally—by participating too much in the thread. In such a situation, the facilitator may contact the student privately while also publicly encouraging all students to participate.

Digressions / Off-Topic Posts

When discussion participants introduce off-topic posts, the facilitator can respond by following the general steps listed below for dealing with issues and if necessary deleting the off-topic posts.

Misconceptions

Establishing netiquette guidelines prior to day one of an online course and reiterating those guidelines in multiple locations within the LMS can help students avoid misunderstandings and remind them to be slow to react when a post is perceived as offensive. If a difficult situation does occur, the general steps listed below provide a good method for diffusing any tension.

Inappropriate Communications

Facilitators can follow the general steps listed below in order to deal with “mutineers” who post flaming messages either to incite a strong reaction or directly challenge the instructor or a student.

General Steps for Dealing with Behavior Issues within a Discussion Forum

1. Send a private e-mail to student.
2. Address the issue in general within the discussion thread.
3. Document the infraction in order to track incidents and support any further action that
4. might be necessary.
5. Delete the post(s) if it absolutely should not be viewed by other students.