Semester: Fall 2015
Classroom and Time: EPIB Conference Room, 2234 CC
Thursdays 1:00 pm – 2:45 pm
Instructor: Cher Dallal, Ph.D.
Office: 2234GG SPH Building
Phone: 301-405-7065
Email: cdallal@umd.edu

Required Texts and Other Readings:

- Required readings/journal articles will be distributed in class

Course Description: This course provides an overview of the epidemiology, prevention and treatment of obesity. The epidemic of obesity, its causes and consequences, and energy balance issues will be covered. The course will also focus on applying epidemiologic methods to the study of obesity.

Course Pre- and Co-requisites: Students must have completed EPIB 610 Foundations of Epidemiology (or equivalent). Students from other departments must request departmental permission to register.

Course Learning Objectives:
Upon completing this course, the student will be able to:
1. Characterize the obesity epidemic in the overall population and among subgroups, both nationally and internationally.
2. Compare and contrast the various metrics of obesity.
3. Explore characteristics of the obesogenic environment including individual level and community level factors.
4. Discuss the public health consequences of obesity.
5. Understand the biological mechanisms underlying the obesity phenotype and related health consequences.
6. Identify primary and secondary prevention strategies of obesity.
7. Understand and apply epidemiologic methods to studies of obesity.

Program Competencies Addressed in this Course:
The following competencies for the MPH and PhD in Epidemiology are addressed in this course:
1. Explain the importance of epidemiology for informing scientific, ethical, economic, and political discussion of health issues.
2. Describe a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, time, and place.
3. Communicate epidemiologic information to lay and professional audiences.
4. Critically review and summarize statistical analyses presented in public health literature.
5. Draw appropriate inferences based on statistical analyses used in public health research.
6. Design and evaluate interventions to reduce prevalence of major public health problems.

Course Organization: Students are expected to complete the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned and to be prepared to discuss those readings during class. The instructor will
provide the required reading materials one week prior to the relevant class session. Students will be asked to summarize key points and findings from the readings to help facilitate discussion.

The instructor welcomes meetings with students outside of class to discuss questions or review the course material presented. Please contact the instructor to set up an appointment. Please be reminded, however, that the class will be taught during class time only. Material will not be presented again on a one-on-one basis at other times. Therefore, attendance at every class is expected. Students who miss class are responsible for obtaining notes and hand-outs from other students.

Course Policies:

Email – The Official University Correspondence:
Verify your email address by going to www.my.umd.edu.

All enrolled students are provided access to the University’s email system and an email account. All official University email communication will be sent to this email address (or an alternate address if provided by the student). Email has been adopted as the primary means for sending official communications to students, so email must be checked on a regular basis. Academic advisors, faculty, and campus administrative offices use email to communicate important and time-sensitive notices.

Students are responsible for keeping their email address up to date or for redirecting or forwarding email to another address. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding email, and returned email (from “full mailbox” or “unknown user” errors for example), will not excuse a student from missing University announcement, messages, deadlines, etc. Email addresses can be quickly and easily updated at www.my.umd.edu or in-person at the Student Service Counter on the first floor of the Mitchell Building.

For technical support for University email: www.helpdesk.umd.edu or call 301-405-1400.

Absence Policy:
In accordance with University policy if you are absent for a single (1) lecture due to illness or some form of personal or family emergency, this absence will be considered “excused” and the instructor will accept a note from you attesting to the date of the illness/incident, along with an acknowledgement that the information is true. Whenever feasible, you should try to contact the instructor in advance.

Multiple or prolonged absences, and absences that prevent attendance at a major scheduled grading event (like an exam or test) will require written documentation from an appropriate health care provider/organization.

A link to pull information on the new policy covering absences from class can be found at http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/v100g.html

Late work and Missed Exams / Assignments:
All coursework is due on the dates assigned on the subsequent pages of the syllabus. Only hard copies of assignments, reports or papers are accepted except where indicated. E-mail and FAX copies will not be accepted where indicated. Any work not completed and handed in at the
beginning of class on the due date will receive a reduction of one letter grade. Work will not be accepted if it is more than one day late, except in extreme circumstance approved by your instructor.

Use of laptops, netbooks, smartphones, e-readers, or other communication devices
Please place your cell phone on vibrate or turn it off during class and also limit the use of laptops/smartphones/devices to legitimate classroom purposes (e.g., taking notes, working on an in-class exercise). E-mail, instant messaging, surfing the Internet, etc are not considered legitimate classroom purposes. Each classroom session includes a scheduled break. You may also quietly step out of the room to attend to urgent emails or calls.

Course Evaluations
The University, the School of Public Health, and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics are committed to the use of student course evaluations for improving the student experience, course and curriculum delivery, and faculty instruction. Your evaluations help instructors improve their courses; help deans and department chairs decide on merit pay for faculty, renewal of contracts, and support tenure and promotion decisions; and help current and future students decide on classes. The system (www.CourseEvalUM.umd.edu) will open in December 2014 for course evaluations. Dates will be announced by the instructor as they become available.

Grading Procedures:
Students will be graded based on the successful completion of course assignments and participation in class discussions.

Grade Weights
Class participation (including attendance and active in-class participation): 20%
Assignments:
  Assignment #1: Methods of Obesity Assessment  15%
  Assignment #2: Health Consequence of Obesity  15%
  Assignment #3: Article Critique  15%
Final Project – 35%
   Paper – 25% / Presentation – 10%

Grading: Grades will be based on a 100-point scale. Below is a ‘general guideline’ for grading.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
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## Course Outline / Course Calendar:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Topic, Readings and Assignments</th>
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</table>
| Session 1 9/3 | 1                   | **Topic:** Course overview  
Introduction to Obesity Epidemiology                  |
| Session 2 9/10 | 1                   | **Topic:** Obesity: Is it still on the rise?  
Prevalence of obesity in adults and children  
Disparities by race and geography                       |
| Session 3 9/17 | 2                   | **Topic:** Identification – How do we measure and classify obesity?  
**Assignment #1 Distributed**                           |
| Session 4 9/24 | 3                   | **Topic:** Determinants of obesity  
Individual-level risk factors  
Energy balance, Physical Activity, Sedentary Behavior  
Obesogenenic environments  
**Assignment #1 Due:** Measurement of Obesity               |
| Session 5 10/1 | 7                   | **Topic:** Biology of obesity  
Distribution of adiposity                                |
| Session 6 10/8 | 4                   | **Topic:** Consequences of Obesity: Mortality and morbidity of chronic & other diseases, Part I  
**Assignment #2 Distributed**                             |
| Session 7 10/15| 4                   | **Topic:** Consequences of Obesity: Mortality and morbidity of chronic & other diseases, Part II  
**Assignment #2 Due:** Each student will select a topic and corresponding journal article to be distributed to the class. Each student will lead a short discussion (~15 min) of their selected study and health consequence. |
| Session 8 10/22| 5                   | **Topic:** Genetics and epigenetics of obesity  
Lifestyle or genetics?                                   |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Session 9</th>
<th>Topic: Measurement issues &amp; study design considerations, Part I</th>
<th>Assignment #3 Distributed</th>
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<tr>
<th>Session 10</th>
<th>Topic: Built environment National Prevention Programs/Initiatives</th>
<th>Assignment #3 Due</th>
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<tr>
<th>Session 11</th>
<th>Topic: Treatment or Prevention or Both? Surgical treatment, Medications</th>
<th>Assignment #3 Due</th>
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<tr>
<th>Session 12</th>
<th>Topic: Obesity in early childhood through adolescence Practicum on anthropometric measurement</th>
<th>Assignment #3 Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 13</th>
<th>Happy Thanksgiving!</th>
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<td>11/26</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 14</th>
<th>Health disparities in obesity Social determinants of obesity</th>
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<td>12/3</td>
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<tr>
<th>Session 15</th>
<th>Student Presentations</th>
<th><strong>Final Papers Due by Thursday Dec 17th by 1 pm</strong></th>
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**Critical university policies:**

**Religious Observances:**
The University System of Maryland policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is.

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**Additional Literature, Websites and Other Resources:** The University of Maryland Libraries has many resources for additional public health research of interest. Examples of scientific journals available at the library that publish epidemiologic findings include the: American Journal of Public Health, Annals of Epidemiology, American Journal of Epidemiology, Journal of American Medical Association, etc.
missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor in advance of any intended absences for religious observance.

Special Accommodations / Disability Support Services:
If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations for test taking or other needs, you will need documentation from Disability Support Service (301-314-7682). If you are ill or encountering personal difficulties, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. You can also contact Learning Assistance Services (301-314-7693) and/or the Counseling Center (301-314-7651) for assistance.

Academic Integrity:
The University's code of academic integrity is designed to ensure that the principle of academic honesty is upheld. Any of the following acts, when committed by a student, constitutes academic dishonesty:

- **CHEATING**: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in an academic exercise.
- **FABRICATION**: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this code.
- **PLAGIARISM**: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.

For more information see: [http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html).

The Honor Pledge is a statement undergraduate and graduate students should be asked to write by hand and sign on examinations, papers, or other academic assignments. The Pledge reads:

*I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.*

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu).

Inclement Weather / University Closings:
In the event that the University is closed for an emergency or extended period of time, the instructor will communicate to students regarding schedule adjustments, including rescheduling of examinations and assignments due to inclement weather and campus emergencies. Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website ([http://www.umd.edu](http://www.umd.edu)) and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW), as well as local radio and TV stations.