Course Objectives

Students in the course will have the opportunity to:

1. learn how the principles and methods of epidemiology can be applied to the study of aging.
2. learn about special concepts in the epidemiologic study of older persons.
3. learn about the distinctions between disease and disability.
4. learn about key methodological considerations for conducting epidemiologic studies of older persons.
5. review health assessment techniques which are used for conducting epidemiologic studies of older persons.
6. learn about the epidemiology of selected diseases, syndromes and conditions common to old age.
7. examine primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, as applied to older persons.
8. learn about differing conceptions of long-term care, and their roles in the prevention, intervention, and treatment of illness in older persons.
9. learn how to critically evaluate research in this field.
10. pursue an area of gerontological epidemiology in detail with faculty supervision.

Readings

Readings are organized by session. They should be read prior to class. All readings are required unless specified differently.

Group Discussions
Four discussion sessions have been scheduled during the semester. These sessions will permit an opportunity to discuss course materials and papers. All sessions will allow students and faculty leaders to review materials covered in the course. For the first discussion session, students should prepare a conceptual overview of their course paper. For the second session, an outline should be presented. The third discussion session will be used for a general discussion of progress on papers. During the fourth session, each student will present their paper to the class.

**Evaluation**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in discussions. A short take-home exam will be distributed December 13. It will be due December 20.

A formal research report (approximately 15 pages typed, double spaced) focusing on one area of special interest will be required of all students. This paper will be due December 13. In addition, each student will be given time during the final session (December 20) to give a presentation on his/her work, and to lead a discussion on his/her selected topic. All topics should be discussed with one of the coursemasters early in the semester.

**Office Hours**

Instructors are available for consultation by appointment.
I. The Merger of Gerontology and Epidemiology

Sept. 6 A. Introduction to the Epidemiology of Aging

(1) Epidemiology/Demography


Sept. 13 B. Special Concepts in the Epidemiologic Study of Older Persons - 1

(1) Age, Aging, and Cohorts


(2) Aging vs. Disease  


(1) Disease and Disability: The Complexity of Chronic Illness  


(2) Longitudinal Designs  


Sept. 27 D. Special Concepts in the Epidemiologic Study of Older Persons - 3

(1) The Compression of Morbidity and Active Life Expectancy


(2) Dimensions of Functioning and Disability: Conceptual Distinctions and Descriptive Epidemiology


II. Methodologic Issues in the Epidemiologic Study of Older Persons

Oct. 4 A. Measurement of Functional Status Sheryl Itkin Zimmerman


Oct. 11 B. Practical Methodologic Issues


III. Epidemiology of Selected Diseases, Conditions and Syndromes Common to Old Age

Oct. 18 A. Stroke


B. Delirium and Depression

Peter Rabins


Oct. 25 C. Falls Janet Yu-Yahiro


D. Osteoarthritis Marc Hochberg


Nov. 1 E. Vision Impairment Gary Rubin


Nov. 8 F. Osteoporosis and Other Causes of Hip Fracture Jean Scott


G. Consequences of Hip Fracture Jay Magaziner

Sheryl Itkin Zimmerman


Nov. 15 H. Cardiovascular Disease


I. Dementia


Nov. 22 J. Hormone Therapy in Older Women


IV. Prevention and Long-Term Care: Concepts and Approaches

Dec. 6  A. Community Long-Term Care


B. Prevention and Long-Term Care


Dec. 13 C. Prevention of Disease and Disability


* Additional recommended readings.

D. **Tertiary Prevention and Rehabilitation**  
Gerald Felsenthal


V. **Integration of Gerontology and Epidemiology**

Dec. 20  
A. General Discussion

B. Discussion of Exam

C. Student Reports