

Adolescent Health

50:499:459

Spring 2025

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Meeting time/place: Tuesdays 9:35-10:55, Armitage 219

Course Description

Welcome to class!

This Adolescent Health course explores the physical, emotional, and social development of adolescents, focusing on their unique healthcare needs and challenges. Topics include mental health, sexual and reproductive health, substance use, nutrition, and the influence of family, peers, and culture on adolescent well-being. The course also emphasizes strategies for promoting healthy behaviors and preventing risk factors, with attention to diverse populations. Through case studies, research, and practical applications, students will develop the knowledge and skills to support adolescent health in clinical and community settings.

Learning goals:

1. Understand Adolescent Development:

- Recognize and explain the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes that occur during adolescence and how they impact health behaviors and outcomes.

2. Examine Key Adolescent Health Issues:

- Analyze the most prevalent health concerns affecting adolescents, such as mental health disorders, substance use, sexual health, and nutrition, within the context of developmental stages.

3. Explore Sociocultural Influences on Adolescent Health:

- Investigate how factors like family dynamics, peer relationships, culture, and societal norms influence adolescent health behaviors, decision-making, and healthcare access.

4. Critically Assess Health Disparities:

- Identify and evaluate health disparities that affect different adolescent populations, considering factors such as socioeconomic status, race, and geographic location.

Required Textbook(s)

We will cover a number of different topics in the field of health sciences. Readings (i.e., journal articles, book chapters, newspaper articles) for each week are on the Sakai site, under their corresponding 'lessons' module. You do NOT need to purchase a textbook for this course.

Weekly Schedule

This course will rely heavily on your completing lectures and readings outside of class so that in person class is a space for discussions and projects. Typically there will be a lecture a week (with quiz) and a reading assignment (via hypothesis). Some weeks we will watch a documentary in class and then discuss it, other times there will be presentations. So here is what to expect.

Tuesday night: Recorded lecture with and hypothesis assignment posted, both of which are due by the next Thursday morning at 9:30 am (before class). Materials required for Thursday's class will also be posted.

Tuesday class: We will do a number of in-class activities, with attendance of some type taken each class. This may take the form of a short-written response based on the reading or materials, a group google slide, a documentary with discussion, etc.

What you need to bring: A device (laptop/tablet), paper and pencil

Communication guidelines

I want to help you succeed in this course and do the best that you can! Please don't hesitate to reach out to me throughout the semester with any questions or concerns you may have. It's a good thing to ask for help—it means you're paying attention and you know what you need—and you are **not** bothering me.

Email

Please direct all general course questions to the “General Course Questions” discussion board in Canvas (available in the Course Essentials module). Check both the syllabus and the discussion board before asking a question. **Personal questions regarding grades or individual assignments should not be addressed in Canvas**; please email me these questions. If you need to email me, be sure to include your full name and the course title and section. Depending on when you send your email, you can expect a response:

- Monday-Friday: within 24 hours (if between the hours of 8am and 6pm, it will likely be sooner).
- Weekend emails: I’ll respond within 48 hours.
- Emails received between 5pm and 7am will likely not be addressed until the morning.

If you do not receive a response from me within the above listed time frame, please send the email again.

Office hours

Office hours will be by appointment only and usually need at least 48 hours’ notice. We can meet via web conference (using Webex) or talk over the phone. If you’d like to request an appointment, email me. Please include the reason why you’d like to meet in your email.

What you can expect from me in this course

Before I talk about what you’ll be doing in the course, I’d like to review what you can expect from me as your professor.

- Care and respect: You are all people first (and I am a person too!). Things happen. I want to support you as students in my class, yes, but also as humans. Talk to me.
- Feedback: I do not have students do papers and take-home exams as busy work. I want you to grow as writers and expand your thinking. Within the best of my abilities, I will get you the most thorough and timely feedback possible.
- Communication: As I am sure many professors say, I get a lot of emails. And I get behind. But I will do my best to answer your emails about this class, advising, rec letters, and life. If I don’t answer, it is often because your email got buried, sent to junk, or I just missed it. I never want to miss a communication though, so always follow-up. Your emails and concerns are important to me.

- Outreach: If I see you get behind in the class and start missing things, I will reach out to you. I do this not to shame you or harass you, but because I care and want you to succeed. If you're doing great, I might email you then too!

Assessment

Activity type	Percentage of grade
In-class activities (drop 2) (roll is taken every day)	15%
Adolescent health self-reflection	10%
Module quizzes (Playposit)	15%
Hypothesis readings	15%
Group media presentation/write-up	15%
Group intervention infographic	20%
Group cross-cultural paper and presentation	10%

Late assignment guidelines

I can be very flexible with some late assignments, but it is hard to make up in class work (especially if a documentary is not available free online). That is why I give you two in-class drops (excused absences with no documentation needed). Overlapping work with class is not a reason to miss, come late, or leave early regularly. Your two absences represent your ability to be sick, need a day off, have vacation, etc. After that, you get 0s. (To clarify, it is not the case that you can miss two classes then send me a doctor's note to get excused for a third, use your two absences wisely). Only under extenuating circumstances (an extreme prolonged illness or major emergency that requires missing multiple weeks would there be any discussion of more excused absences...)

In general, barring extenuating circumstances, late assignments lose 3 points/day for each day after they are due.

If you think you might miss a deadline, contact me ahead of time and let me know what is going on. We can make a plan.

You may not submit lectures late. The whole purpose of the lecture and hypothesis assignment is to complete it prior to class. I will drop 1 lecture and 1 hypothesis for each student to allow you to have an 'off' week.

Academic Integrity

I take violations of academic integrity (cheating, plagiarizing) very seriously. You are responsible for reading and understanding our policy on academic integrity policy, available from the [Rutgers Academic Integrity website](#). Academic integrity means, among other things, that all Rutgers students are required to:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work
- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress

Inclusivity

I am committed to diversity and inclusion in this course and want to include all perspectives. Please let me know if you perceive any bias in any form in this course, whether it is happening to you or to someone else. I'll be asking for your pronouns in the first module, and will ask all class members to respect the pronoun and name choices of each individual in this class. Rutgers does allow students to request a preferred name change on official university documents and systems, [which can be submitted](#) at this link if you're interested. However, I understand that all students may not have the ability to have their preferred name displayed officially, and I will use the preferred name you submit informally in this course.

This course is a safe space for everyone, no matter your gender, age, race/ethnicity, political affiliation, sexuality, class, religion, or any other characteristic. Everyone is welcome and will be treated with respect.

Food/Housing Security

When students face challenges securing food and/or housing, making learning a priority can be difficult. If you're in this situation, please reach out to the [Dean of Students](#). If you feel comfortable, please also let me know, and I will do what I am able to connect you to appropriate resources offered by our campus—you are not alone in dealing with these issues.

Students with Disabilities

Students who have a diagnosed disability on file with the [Office of Disability Services](#) are eligible for accommodations, as specified by the University. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 856-225-6442 if you need to begin the process of receiving accommodations.

Students who do not have a letter of accommodation from the university will not be eligible to receive accommodations in this course.

Academic integrity and AI

At Rutgers, guidance on the appropriate use of AI tools in academic settings will typically vary depending on the discipline, course, and/or instructor. Faculty should consider providing guidance to students on the use of AI to support learning and coursework, and students are encouraged to review course materials and speak with their instructors to understand any specific expectations related to AI. As noted in [Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy 10.2.13](#), the principles of academic integrity require that students ensure that coursework be “the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations.”

Cellphone policy

During discussion time, documentaries, and presentations, students will be asked to fully put their cellphones in their bags. This is to ensure full participation and make sure people in your general area are not distracted. Students on cellphones at inappropriate times will be given a warning followed given a 0 for attendance that day if caught again. If you have a situation that requires you to take a call, you may step into the hallway to do so and give me a heads up.

