"Capstone Course: Roundtable Case Series"

Omicron Chapter (University of Pittsburgh)
Delta Omega Honor Society in Public Health

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Origin of the Course: a true collaboration

Pitt/GSPH had resource & need:

- Omicron Chapter's offer to sponsor a lecture series
- Need for practice-oriented "integrative" course in the core curriculum

Resource used to meet the need:

- GSPH faculty member designs course based on the "Roundtable Cases" drawn from public health practice
- Omicron chapter cosponsors the Roundtable presentatations
- Omicron chapter & faculty co-teach the new course

Why a “capstone” course?

Last course in the core curriculum:

- **Integrates learning across the core disciplines**
- **Applies course work to practical problem-solving**

Purpose of the course

- "to present students with cases, problems, or issues
- requiring them to integrate discipline-based knowledge and
- demonstrate their ability to understand, analyze, and offer potential resolutions of
- inter-disciplinary problems drawn from contemporary public health practice"

Course format

- Five class meetings
  - Intro, Roundtables (three per semester), final presentations
- "Roundtables" with faculty & practitioners
  - topics: manganese exposure, West Nile, Giardia, Tobago health system, etc.
- Class meeting after each Roundtable
- Interdisciplinary student teams

Course Objectives

- **Recognize** practical problems as being multi-disciplinary
- **Identify** appropriate discipline-specific tools
- **Analyze** problem with own tools; synthesize results with those of others
- **Communicate** analysis & conclusions

Objective 1
Recognize practical problems as multi-disciplinary

Student activities:

- Listen to case report from practitioners
- Read background information about the case
- Participate in cross-disciplinary case discussions

Objective 2
Identify appropriate discipline-specific tools

Student activities:

- Specify analytic tools of own discipline
  - *i.e.*, risk assessment for environmental science
- Recognize the analytic tools of classmates' disciplines
- Consider the strengths/weaknesses of each analytic approach

Objective 3
Analyze using own discipline; synthesize with other disciplines

Student activities:

- Write 300-word essay on the case using own analytic tools
- Read/consider others' essays on the case
- Develop an intervention/resolution synthesizing own and others' analyses

Objective 4
Communicate analysis & conclusions

Student activities:

- Write discipline-specific analysis
- Develop oral presentation on multi-disciplinary analysis with intervention or resolution
- Deliver oral presentation

Outcomes

- Essays showed students' mastery of own disciplines
- Presentations explained interfaces of own & others' disciplines
- Presentations well prepared & delivered
- Students satisfied

Students' suggestions:

- Add to core curriculum: politics, economics, and policy matters
- Invite academic departments to describe their own analytic tools
- Give contact info for consultation with practitioners

Changes for next term:

- Focus on one case with a broad theme
  - i.e., effective behavior-change interventions
- Roundtable on each aspect:
  - problem definition
  - science
  - practice
  - politics, policy, & economics
- Students read/rate each others' essays