

**PHCM9811**

# **Social & Cultural Aspects of Contagion**

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**Semester 2 2010**

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**UNSW**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
AND COMMUNITY MEDICINE

## **Author**

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## Course Schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	Participation
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Everyday understandings of disease &amp; contagion</b>	Participation
<b>Weeks 3 &amp; 4</b>	<b>Equitable Virus Sharing?</b>	Participation
<b>Weeks 5, 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>Emerging infectious diseases, risk &amp; preparedness</b>	Participation
Break week 6-10 Sept, after week 7		
<b>Weeks 8, 9 &amp; 10</b>	<b>The Securitisation of health</b>	Participation
<b>Weeks 11 &amp; 12</b>	<b>Conference Presentations</b>	Presentations & participation
	<b>Final Essay Due Thurs 21 Oct</b>	

## Course Staff

### Course convenor

**Dr Niamh Stephenson**

For any aspect of the course, contact me on:

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## Course information

This course aims to provide a broad understanding of some of the principal discussions in medical sociology from the perspective of public health practice, with a particular focus on public health practice designed to respond to infectious disease. We will consider sociological and cultural research on the topics of medicalisation, public understandings of disease & contagion, risk, infectious disease surveillance and preparedness, empowerment & health equity as well as biosecurity & biodefense. In examining this research we will be identifying some of the different (and sometimes competing) theories of power, risk, globalisation and embodiment being employed by medical sociologists and anthropologists. We will be looking at public health debates over the prominence of infectious diseases in the global health agenda and asking what social science can contribute to these debates.

### Units of credit

This 6 unit course can be taken as an elective towards the Master of Health Management and the Masters of Public Health Program, and is one of the nominated courses for those studying for the plan in Health Promotion.

## Course aim

The overall aim of this course is to introduce you to the knowledge and skills required to understand and participate in applying current social science research and debates to public health and health governance issues.

### Course outcomes

This course is designed to enable you to:

- Identify and examine key debates in social scientific research on health
- Identify the implications of these debates for public health practice and research
- Develop a well-informed position on these debates
- Demonstrate an understanding of social and cultural research with relevance to public health and health governance practice and research

## Learning and teaching rationale

You are probably already drawing on social science thinking and research in many different courses in the Masters in Public Health and/or Health Services Management and in your work in this field. This course provides you with the opportunity to critically engage with this important field. By gaining a deeper understanding of the issues and debates involved in the social sciences, you will be able to develop the implications of different theories for public health and health governance practice and research and to develop your own well-informed positions in these debates.

## Teaching strategies

This course is taught face to face (2 hours per week) and a seminar style of teaching will be adopted. After an initial introduction to the material, class time will involve discussing your ideas and analysis of selected texts, followed by discussion of the ideas and problems raised through these texts.

You will be expected to contribute and participate in discussions regularly. **You need to have read and thought about the assigned material (1-2 of the key readings) before coming to the seminar.** Also, the additional reading lists are provided as tools for you to use in undertaking further reading, for your essay this session or some time in the future.

There is no need to form a consensus on the material we are discussing, you may find that you share a position with some of the others involved in our discussions, or maybe you will be the only person voicing a particular position. Either way, the aim of the seminars is to share ideas and approaches to these sociological debates and to develop a rigorous understanding the different positions being put forward (including the ones with which you disagree). **It is unlikely that you will fully understand every word of everything you read** – the material and approach will be new to most of you. If there are things that you do not follow, it is useful to mark them and **try to formulate questions** about them. Well formulated questions can be as useful to others as fully formed, brilliant ideas.

In summary, the teaching strategies are designed to facilitate the development of particular skills, including:

- Demonstrating your critical engagement with social and cultural research both in discussion and in writing (all assignments)
- Discussing your evaluations, interpretations and ideas with others (seminar participation)
- Discussing other people's evaluations, interpretations and ideas with them (seminar participation)
- Selecting and analysing relevant literature in a way that explains the relevance and the development of your own position as you plan and write your essay (essay)
- Presenting and argue your ideas and position (presentation)
- Explaining the implications of your position for public health practice and research (essay)

## Online learning component using UNSW Blackboard



UNSW Blackboard is a Learning Management System that supports university learning and teaching by extending the face-to-face learning environment to online learning spaces and providing virtual classrooms for distance learning courses. See:

<http://telt.unsw.edu.au/>

We are using UNSW Blackboard in this course as a means to:

- give you online access to this course outline and notes, and
- post updates about the preparation for each seminar (and, if relevant, access to new readings)
- open a discussion thread where you can share relevant readings or other information with the rest of us.

You are **not being assessed** for your online participation, but it is your responsibility to check Blackboard for updates relevant to each seminar.

### Guidance for using UNSW Blackboard

The School runs a Blackboard tutorial during residential week at the start of each semester. If you are unable to attend this tutorial, guidance for using UNSW Blackboard, including some basic tips, can be found at: <http://support.telt.unsw.edu.au/blackboard>

If you are still experiencing difficulties with UNSW Blackboard, please contact the UNSW IT Service Desk for assistance.

## Assessment

Assessment for this course involves:

Task	Content	Due Date	Weighting
1	Seminar participation	Ongoing	25%
2	Conference presentation	Weeks 11 & 12	25%
3	Major essay	21 October	50%

You must pass **all three** parts of the assessment to pass the course (see grading criteria below).

### 1. Seminar participation – 25% (ongoing)

#### Assessment criteria for seminar participation:

You are not being assessed on simply turning up to the seminars. Of course, you need to be there to participate, but the assessment criteria are quite specific. **Simply being there is not enough to pass this assessment component.** Your contributions to the development of the seminar discussion will be assessed as follows:

- Does your participation help the group to develop an understanding of WHAT the author is saying (through sharing your understanding, through asking clear questions about the parts you do not understand, through thinking through possible answers to those questions and the implications of those answers)
- Do you explain your understanding of the relevance of the paper and do you explore possible connections with other readings
- Do you identify strengths and weaknesses in the paper AND to explain your reasons for identifying those strengths/weaknesses
- Do you relate your ideas to those being articulated by others – both others in the group discussions and other authors we are reading in this course
- Do you facilitate the articulation of other people’s ideas, by listening, asking them to explain what you cannot follow, and by making connections between what you are hearing and the course material

Between weeks 5 and 8 you will receive feedback about your participation so you get a sense of what grade you might be getting based on participation so far, and an idea of where you might improve.

### 2. Conference Presentation – 25% (weeks 11 & 12)

Before you submit your major essay (see below) you will give an oral presentation for 10-15 minutes (depending on enrollment numbers) and answer questions. The presentation is an opportunity to “try out” your essay on an audience. You will not have time to present your entire essay, but you will be expected to explain the question you have chosen, the

argument you are making, give an overview of the main steps in your argument and your conclusion. This will give you a chance to get feedback on whether others can follow and engage with your ideas as you are presenting them. You may also get ideas about improving your argument and relevant literature you might draw on.

### **Assessment criteria for presentation:**

Please note, these assessment criteria do not cover the use of visual aids in your talk. In this talk you are being asked to concentrate on helping the audience to understand the development of your coherent position.

- Do you keep to the time allowed!
- Do you clearly explain the relevance of your question and your approach to the question by a) relating your question to a particular topic in public health and b) by drawing on the relevant material/ideas covered in the course
- Do you illustrate your sound understanding of your reading around the topic
- Do you give a coherent account of the position you are developing
- In responding to questions and comments, do you demonstrate your engagement with people's response to your ideas

### **3. Major Essay – 50% (due 21 October)**

**The major essay is due in the middle of the study period – 21 October by 5pm.** It is to be no longer than **3,500 words**, excluding references. You are being asked to devise your own essay question in consultation with Niamh. Examples of essay questions will be discussed in week 5. Remember, **you need to devise an essay question that allows you to demonstrate your understanding of the course material.** You can devise a question on one of the topics covered or you can devise a question which cuts across the course topics (e.g. an essay about the relationships between 'everyday understandings of contagion' and contemporary responses to 'biosecurity'). Either way, you are expected to draw on relevant course material and this will mean making a careful selection of readings from across the course. You are expected to refer to 15-25 papers/books in writing your essay. (Whilst some of these may come from your own research you are doing plenty of reading for this course, and there are some useful pointers in the "further reading" sections for each topic. So you are not expected to do a lot more of your own research before you write the essay).

***The written assessment is expected to be your own individual work even if you worked on the assignment in the seminar or discussed it in a group. It is essential that you abide by academic standards and that your assignment is not the result of collusion or that of plagiarism. Please see UNSW definition of collusion and plagiarism in the course notes.***

### Assessment criteria for essay:

Your essay will be marked according to the following criteria:

1. Is the relevance of your question well explained?
2. Are the ideas you introduce and develop relevant to the question? Remember – answer the question, clearly and methodically. In this regard headings and sub-headings are useful and it's good to consider them as the “building blocks” of your argument.
3. Does the essay evidence thorough and insightful use of the literature? Have you drawn upon available theory and insights from others (if others in the class have given you good ideas use them and acknowledge them)? If you were asked important or useful questions in your presentation, have you responded to (some) of them?
4. Do you present underlying concepts clearly? Are terms and concepts from the field used appropriately?
5. Analysis. Are you making an argument? Is the argument lucid and well supported? Does the essay include evidence of your own analysis?
6. Referencing. Is the work adequately and competently referenced? You are advised to use APA referencing (see below) but if you are already at home with another system and prefer to use it that is fine. **Whatever system you use be consistent. At this Masters level, an inconsistently referenced essay will drop a grade.**
7. Description and presentation. Is the work well-set out and written in clear and coherent English?

## Grading

Grades to be used in this course are represented by the following symbols:

**HD, DN, CR, PS, FL**

**HD** This grade represents a High Distinction. This level of performance involves all of the characteristics of a DN performance but also a level of excellence that makes it outstanding. The level of originality, creativity, or depth of thought and understanding shown would be higher than normally expected for postgraduate students. It demonstrates a higher order of critical thinking and reflection than that demonstrated at the level of DN.

**DN** This grade represents a Distinction. This level of performance involves all of the characteristics of a CR performance but also a level of originality, creativity, or depth of thought and understanding. The work might involve a high level of abstract thinking, or the ability to take an idea or an application into a new context, understand the demands of that context and make modifications. Specific assessment criteria relevant to this assignment are adequately addressed and ALL aspects well done. (This distinguishes it from a CR in which one or two aspects may be incomplete or otherwise not well done.)

**CR** This grade represents a Credit. The assignment or project comes together to make a broadly coherent whole. The response answers the question, makes a good argument, draws on appropriate evidence, and shows some selectivity and judgment in deciding what is important and what is not. Communication is clear and effective. Specific assessment criteria relevant to this assignment are adequately addressed. (One or two aspects may not be well done but the overall result is still MORE THAN satisfactory).

**PS** This grade represents a pass. The student has demonstrated understanding of the basic aspects of the topic, but they may be minimally integrated and fail to make a convincing coherent statement or argument. Written work may be descriptive rather than analytical. It may rely too much on retelling other

sources such as texts and lecture notes, with little evidence that the student is capable of transforming these into a personal understanding. Significant elements of the assignment are treated superficially. Assessment criteria relevant to the assignment are sufficiently addressed to warrant a PS however the overall standard is no more than satisfactory.

**FL** This grade represents a clear fail. This grade is used when the student has misunderstood the point of the assignment, or failed to address the most important aspects of the topic. In other words a substantial failure, which would need major work before it could be passed.

**NOTE: Students are expected to meet UNSW standards of academic writing and in particular must meet standards of referencing described by the Learning Centre. Failure to reference correctly may limit marks to PS or below. Plagiarism or collusion will result in an automatic FL.**

## Submitting your assignments

Please submit your essay by 1) placing it in the assignment box on level 2, Samuels, by the due date **and** by 2) putting it in the UNSW Blackboard assignment box by the due date.

1. **All assignments** must have a cover sheet attached.  
Cover sheets can be downloaded from the school website:  
<http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/sphcmweb.nsf/page/AdminForms>  
Students submitting assignments in UNSW Blackboard should use the cover sheet available in UNSW Blackboard. **Please note:** Any assignment submitted electronically may be checked at random for plagiarism using the tool, Turnitin. For more on how to avoid plagiarism, see section on plagiarism.
2. Extensions of up to one week are only granted if requested before the due date and if good reasons are evident. Longer extensions, up to a maximum of 13 days, are only considered with medical certificate unless other appropriate reason is given.
3. Assignments will not be marked if submitted after other students' assignments have been returned.
4. Only FL assignments can be resubmitted. The maximum grade that can be achieved after re-marking is a PS.
5. Marked assignments for internal students can be collected by individual students from the School.
6. See School website for more information on **guidelines on assessment**, including information on extensions and late assignments:  
<http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/sphcmweb.nsf/page/assessmentguidelines>

## Late submission of work

**All late assignments (unless extension or exemption previously agreed) will drop a grade.** This rule applies if the assignment is one day or one week late. Assignments more than 1 week late will receive a grade, but no comments.

## Feedback on assessment

Assignments will be marked within two weeks of due date. Feedback may not reach students until 3 weeks after assignment submission.

## Referencing

**APA** is the (in text) referencing system you are advised to use for this course, as it is the most comprehensive. If your records are in APA you can always translate them into other systems without searching for additional information. Guidelines for presenting the list of references at the end of your essay can be found here:

[http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref\\_apa2.html](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref_apa2.html)

## Academic honesty and plagiarism

At UNSW plagiarism is considered to be a form of academic misconduct and is viewed very seriously. The following notes describe what plagiarism is. You need to ensure you understand what it is so you avoid it in any of your assignments or other work:

### What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or work of another as one's own.\* Examples include:

- direct duplication of the thoughts or work of another, including by copying material, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document (whether published or unpublished), composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, web site, Internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement;
- paraphrasing another person's work with very minor changes keeping the meaning, form and/or progression of ideas of the original;
- piecing together sections of the work of others into a new whole;
- presenting an assessment item as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people, for example, another student or a tutor; and
- claiming credit for a proportion a work contributed to a group assessment item that is greater than that actually contributed.†

For the purposes of this policy, submitting an assessment item that has already been submitted for academic credit elsewhere may be considered plagiarism.

Knowingly permitting your work to be copied by another student may also be considered to be plagiarism.

Note that an assessment item produced in oral, not written, form, or involving live presentation, may similarly contain plagiarised material.

The inclusion of the thoughts or work of another with attribution appropriate to the academic discipline does *not* amount to plagiarism.

The Learning Centre website is main repository for resources for staff and students on plagiarism and academic honesty. These resources can be located via: [www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism)

The Learning Centre also provides substantial educational written materials, workshops, and tutorials to aid students, for example, in:

- correct referencing practices;
- paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing, and time management;
- appropriate use of, and attribution for, a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre.

Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting, and the proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

\* Based on that proposed to the University of Newcastle by the St James Ethics Centre. Used with kind permission from the University of Newcastle

† Adapted with kind permission from the University of Melbourne.

## Collusion

This course is designed to encourage you to share ideas and to learn from other people's ideas. But you are expected to write your conference presentation and essay on your own. Acknowledge other people for the ideas they have given you to work with (including other students). If you copy other people's work or if the material you submit is not your own, you may be required to rewrite and re-submit your assignments or may be awarded a fail for the assignment or may be failed in the whole course and even be excluded from the University for misconduct. You should not attempt the assignment questions together and submit the same work as someone else. **It is also not acceptable to submit an assignment which has been submitted by a student in a previous year.**

## Continual course improvement

Periodically student evaluative feedback on both courses and teaching is gathered. The UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Processes are used along with student focus groups, student forums, and at times additional evaluation and improvement instruments developed in consultation with the Faculty of Medicine's Program Evaluation and Improvement Group. Student feedback is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback.

Evaluation activities across the Faculty are strongly linked to improvements and ensuring support for learning and teaching activities for both students and staff.

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## Additional support to students

### IT requirements for UNSW students

Our courses have online components which have been developed and are taught on the assumption that all students meet the UNSW IT Requirements Policy. Viewable online at: [http://www.its.unsw.edu.au/policies/policies\\_home.html](http://www.its.unsw.edu.au/policies/policies_home.html)

### UNSW IT Service Desk (UNSW Blackboard support)

The IT Service Desk is your central point of contact for assistance and support with UNSW Blackboard, UniPass, zPass, UniMail, UniWide, zMail and Anti-virus software. Contact them directly for assistance with IT related matters, including UNSW Blackboard:

Website: <http://www.it.unsw.edu.au/index.html>  
Tel: +61 (2) 9385 1333  
Email: [itservicecentre@unsw.edu.au](mailto:itservicecentre@unsw.edu.au)  
Location: UNSW Library

### UNSW library support

Staff at the library can help you:

- find information resources for your assignments
- access electronic resources & databases
- advise you on library and information services.

Information about UNSW library assistance is available at:

Library Homepage: <http://www.library.unsw.edu.au/>  
Postgraduate Services: <http://www.library.unsw.edu.au/servicesfor/PGandH.html>  
Tel: 02 9385 2650  
Location: UNSW Library, Level 2 Service desk

### Library resources

#### Online training and resources

There are a variety of online tutorials and resources available to Postgraduate students to help equip you with the information skills you will need to get started in your program. It is **highly recommended** that you complete these tutorials and get familiar with the resources available prior to commencing your studies and assignments.

<http://elise.library.unsw.edu.au/home/welcome.html>

#### Online Information Skills Tutorial - ELISE Plus

This is a task-based approach to the information literacy and the skills you need to be effective. It contains modules on searching databases (which include videos and screen captures), evaluating different types of resources like peer-reviewed journals and websites

and citing references. This tutorial is designed to help students learn more about: searching for information to complete assignments and projects, and self-directed learning. Entering coursework students should complete the ELISE quiz: <http://eliseplus.library.unsw.edu.au/>

### **The ELISE postgraduate tutorial – ELISE Advanced**

The five modules will step you through the fundamental processes of research and information seeking, they cover; selecting and searching, finding and using and critically evaluating all sources of information. <http://pgelise.library.unsw.edu.au/>

### **Subject guides**

Use these guides as a quick and easy pathway to locating resources in your subject area. These excellent guides bring together the core web and print resources in one place and provide a one click portal into the online resources.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/>

### **Virtual Library: Public Health**

The Virtual Public Health Library brings together public health sites and resources from around the world in a systematic and easily accessible way for all those wishing to be in touch with the most relevant and meaningful public health resources – see

<http://vph.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/>

### **Learning Centre**

The Learning Centre provides a wide range of workshops and study skill resources to students enrolled in degree programs at the University. Students can access information on: Essay and assignment writing, Exam skills, Reading and writing skills, Referencing and plagiarism, Organisation skills, Oral presentations. See: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au>

### **Administrative matters**

All administrative matters are covered comprehensively on the SPHCM Website. Check for details on how to access email, obtain your UniPass etc. at:

<http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/sphcmweb.nsf/page/StudentResources>

See the school website for information on school assessment guidelines, including extensions and late assignments:

<http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/SPHCMWeb.nsf/page/AssessmentGuidelines>

If you do not have a handbook you can pick one up from the Postgraduate Coursework Office, Level 2 Samuels Building or download if from the web.

<http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/SPHCMWeb.nsf/page/Current%20Students>

For any further assistance, you can contact:

Postgraduate Office School of Public Health and Community Medicine The University of New South Wales Level 2, Samuels Building UNSW Sydney NSW 2052, Australia
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T: + 61 (2) 9385 1699 - Graduate Health Management Programs  
T: + 61 (2) 9385 2507 - Graduate Public Health Programs  
T: + 61 (2) 9385 1928 - Graduate Clinical Education Programs  
F: + 61 (2) 9385 1526  
E: [postgrad-sphcm@unsw.edu.au](mailto:postgrad-sphcm@unsw.edu.au)

## Other matters

Occupational Health & Safety: [http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/ohswc/ohswc\\_home.html](http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/ohswc/ohswc_home.html)

Complaints procedures: <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html>

Equity & Diversity: <https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/EquityDiversity.html>