**Course Description**

This culminating course in the MPH program allows students to integrate and synthesize the curriculum in seminar discussion and through a capstone project that reflects a current topic of importance to contemporary public health science and practice.

Students who are planning to enroll in this course must have their capstone project advisor identified and are required to submit all course documents according to the timeline below.

How to find a capstone project advisor: The USD/SDSU MPH program will provide you a list of potential capstone project advisors along with their professional interests and contact information. Please contact the MPH Program coordinator to get more information on finding a capstone project advisor and for more information on required deadlines.

The Public Health Project requires both written and oral components and it is normally completed in the last semester of the student’s MPH program.

**Capstone Project Options:**

1. **Research Project** — Students completing a research project will develop a written report (manuscript) suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Students will identify a problem to be studied, review the literature, collect and analyze the data in order to answer the research question posed, discuss the findings, present conclusions, and make recommendations based on the findings.

2. **Systematic Review of the Literature** — Students conducting a literature review will define a study question, identify appropriate literature, read and review the literature, summarize the findings, present conclusions, and make recommendations based on the systematic review. This option is intended to demonstrate the student’s ability to critically review literature and synthesize published findings on a public health topic.

3. **Evaluation of an Existing Program** — Students will develop a plan to evaluate or monitor an existing public health program. Documentation will include a description of the program under review, the purpose of the evaluation, the methods and procedures used to evaluate the program, and present the results of the evaluation.

4. **Written Plan for a Program** — This option asks students to develop a plan and describe the implementation process for a new public health program. Students will conduct a needs assessment, create a program mission, goals, and objectives, develop an intervention, describe how the program will be implemented, and explain how the program would be evaluated.

5. **Grant Proposal** — Students writing a grant proposal for a public health initiative will identify the problem for which the grant would be used, explain the significance, list the hypotheses/questions to be answered, review the literature associated with the problem,
create goals and objectives, methods, create a time line and budget, and explain how the intervention would be evaluated.

6. Manual — Students creating a manual for a public health initiative will demonstrate the need for the manual, create goals and objectives for the manual, create a table of contents, develop the content for the manual, describe how the manual will be used, and explain how the manual would be evaluated.

**Oral Requirement:**

- Students are required to give a 15 min oral presentation summarizing their public health research projects to a faculty committee (comprised of a research mentor, academic advisor, and MPH chair/program director). Questions from committee members will follow the presentation. In addition, students will complete an oral examination in which committee members may ask broad questions about MPH core competencies.

**Course Goals and Student Outcomes**

The course goal is for students to synthesize, integrate and apply the skills and competencies they have acquired during their MPH program to a relevant public health problem. Students will demonstrate proficiency at communicating the details of their project to faculty, fellow students, and relevant stakeholders.