Early Childhood Research with Tribal Communities (Course number: 221.665.11)  
July 13-17, 2015
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health  
615 N. Wolfe Street, Baltimore, MD 21205  
Room W2030

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Early Childhood Research with Tribal Communities (Course number: 221.665.11) – Syllabus

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Course Description: There are burgeoning demands and opportunities for early childhood research with tribal communities. American Indian and Alaska Native communities possess tremendous cultural strengths and supports to promote positive parenting and optimal early child development. At the same time, many American Indian and Alaska Native communities grapple with severe economic, health, and social disparities, and historical and modern trauma that can place young children’s development at risk. Federal funding, such as that channeled through the Affordable Health Care Act, provides opportunities for tribal grantees to assess and address early childhood developmental needs. Tribal and affiliated scholars seek knowledge about early childhood developmental processes, intervention strategies and best practices, and appropriate research approaches to measure developmental influences and intervention impacts in tribal settings. This course will: 1) explore theoretical approaches and methodologies related to early childhood development and intervention research; and, 2) examine unique aspects of tribal research and culture as it applies to promoting early childhood development, with an emphasis on the importance of community-based and community-engaged approaches.

Learning Objectives:
This course will provide students with:
1. An understanding of early childhood development
2. An understanding of the basic elements of early childhood research design
3. An understanding of community-based participatory research methods and their application in research with tribal communities
4. The ability to identify a research question relevant to early childhood development in tribal communities and relevant research methods to answer that question
5. The ability to use research to inform early childhood program, practice, and intervention improvement

Prerequisites: This course is designed for American Indian and Alaska Native tribal early childhood program directors and staff, health and education professionals and paraprofessionals, and others interested in tribal early childhood development and research. Prerequisites include experience living or working in/with American Indian and Alaska Native settings/communities and experience/interest in
early childhood development and research with tribal communities. Previous formal training in research methods is not required.

Course Format: Teaching methods will include lectures, discussions, and individual work. A final paper is required for those taking the course for credit.

Assignments, Evaluation and Grading Policy: Assessment will be based on: (1) class attendance and participation; (2) small group attendance and participation; (3) daily thought pieces; and, for students taking the course for credit, (4) a final paper due 2 weeks following course completion.

Students taking the course for credit will receive a letter grade. Students who are not taking the course for credit will receive a pass/fail grade based on class attendance, participation, and daily thought pieces.

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Guidelines for Class Attendance and Participation
Each student is expected to attend the entire class each day and be an active participant in daily class discussions. Missing class will result in the loss of points for class attendance and participation. Missing more than one class could result in class failure.

Guidelines for Small Group Attendance and Participation
Students will be assigned to small groups that will meet for a portion of each day, Monday-Thursday. The purpose of the small group is to provide time for focused discussion of course material with course faculty. Students will be expected to share their reflections on readings and lectures, connecting topics to their own work with tribal children and families or related contexts. Students will be evaluated for small group attendance and active participation that demonstrates having read the readings, heard the lecture content, and processed the information thoughtfully. Missing a small group will result in the loss of points for small group attendance and participation. Missing more than one small group could result in class failure.

Guidelines for Daily Thought Pieces
Each student will be given a homework assignment to complete in the form of an individually written “thought piece” at the end of each day, Monday-Thursday and due at the beginning of class the next day. Each thought piece will center on a single question that will relate to the day’s readings, lectures, and/or small group discussion. Thought pieces should contain a minimum of 1-2 well-constructed paragraphs in response to the question(s) posed. Thought pieces are worth 5 points each, for a total of
up to 20 points for students taking the course for credit, or 10 points each for a total of up to 40 points for students taking the course for non-credit. Each thought piece will be graded on a pass/fail basis, so students will receive a 0 or a 5 (or 10 for non-credit) on each piece.

Thought pieces must be submitted as printed or hand-written on paper into the “Everything Box” in the first row when you enter the classroom before class begins each day. Information about printing in the School’s two computer labs is on a brightly colored sheet tucked into the front pocket of your course binder. Electronic submissions will only be accepted if dire circumstances prevented printing, in which please email your thought piece to Kyle Hill (khill29@jhu.edu) prior to the start of class. Whether submitted on paper or electronically, the thought piece from the day before must be submitted at the beginning of class.

Guidelines for Final Paper
Students taking the course for credit must submit a final paper that is due two weeks after class, on Friday, July 31, 2015 by 5 pm Eastern Daylight Time. Papers should be submitted to Nicole Paré by email (npare1@jhu.edu) or fax 410-955-2010. Detailed guidelines for the final paper will be reviewed together in class, and are also available in a separate document titled “Paper Guidelines.” Core faculty will be available via email to answer any questions. Five (5) points will be deducted for each day the paper is late; after Friday August 7th at 5 pm Eastern Daylight Time, papers will not be accepted and 0 points will be given for the final paper, resulting in potential failure of the class. Students who are not taking the course for credit do not have to submit a final paper.

Readings
Readings that pertain to each day’s topic are available in a student Drop Box. Required readings listed on each day should be read prior to coming to class that day; for example, readings listed for Tuesday should be read prior to coming to class that day. Several optional readings are also included; however, if you are interested in a particular topic and would like additional resources, please check with one of the course instructors listed in this syllabus. Please note, printed copies are not provided.

Daily Schedule
Please see the following pages for the daily schedule of lectures, required and optional readings, and assignments.
MONDAY
JULY 13, 2015
INTRODUCE TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

1:30 Blessing, Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of the Course
Phil Smith, WJ Strickland, Allison Barlow, and Michelle Sarche

2:15 Early Childhood Foundations of Lifelong Health
Ann Bullock

3:15 Break

3:30 Child Development Theory and Practice
John Walkup

4:30 Small Groups
Introductions, discuss one or more of the most relevant points of the lectures from today for your tribal service population. Where would you focus resources in your community to promote optimal early childhood development? (Determine a note taker – your notes will become helpful in future group discussions. You may rotate note takers day to day.)

5:00 Adjourn

Monday Thought Piece (due at start of class Tuesday): Considering Dr. Bullock’s and Dr. Walkup’s lectures, what aspect of or approach to promoting early child development do you think is most needed among your service population? How feasible is it today? What barriers exist? Where would you begin?

Monday Required Readings:


Monday Optional Readings:

TUESDAY
JULY 14, 2015
APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

1:30  Review and Overview of Day
      Allison Barlow and Michelle Sarche

1:45  What is Research?
      Doug Novins

2:30  Formulating a Research Question and Testable Hypothesis
      Melissa Walls

3:15  Break

3:30  Six Steps to Effective Database Searching
      Donna Hesson

4:15  Small Group Discussions: Review your notes about where you would focus resources to
      promote optimal early child development in your communities. Choose one of your ideas and
      develop a research hypothesis to test. From Dr. Novins’ lecture, explore what types of research
      would help you answer your question.

5:00  Adjourn

Tuesday Thought Piece (due at start of class Wednesday): Go to PsychInfo, Google Scholar, PubMed, or
another searchable source and find 5 abstracts on an early childhood development topic that is a
priority in the community/program where you work. What are some things that the research literature
tells you about this topic? What does the existing literature not answer – what questions still remain?
How might what is known/not known shape the kind of question you would like to explore?

Tuesday Required Readings:
Online at http://www.mheducation.ca/college/hetherington

Tuesday Optional Readings:
McLelland, C.V. The nature of science and the scientific method – online

Medicine Men and the Puzzling Placebo – online at http://www.pbs.org/saf/1307/features/knows.htm

Psychology and the Scientific Method: From Theory to Conclusion – online
at https://www.boundless.com/psychology/textbooks/boundless-psychology-textbook/researching-
psychology-2/the-scientific-method-26/psychology-and-the-scientific-method-from-theory-to-
conclusion-123-12658/

What is Research? Online at http://www.personal.psu.edu/wxh139/research_talk.htm
WEDNESDAY
JULY 15, 2015

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY DESIGN

1:30   Review and Overview of Day
       Allison Barlow and Michelle Sarche

1:45   Community-based and Tribal Participatory Research Approaches
       Myra Parker

2:30   Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods
       Lauren Tingey

3:15   Break

3:30   Intro to Quantitative Research Methods
       Summer Rosenstock

4:15   Small Group Discussions: Revisit the research question(s) that your group generated yesterday. Consider how you apply principles of CBPR and/or TPR to begin a research process. Discuss what types of quantitative or qualitative research methods you might use to answer your question.

5:00   Adjourn

Wednesday Thought Piece (due at start of class Thursday): Consider you are going to start some research to prevent or reduce an early child development issue (name what it is in your thought piece) in your or another tribal community. Discuss some qualitative and quantitative methods or approaches you would use to understand the problem.

Wednesday Required Readings:


Wednesday Optional Readings:
THURSDAY
JULY 16, 2015
MEASUREMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH

1:30  Review and Overview of Day
      Allison Barlow and Michelle Sarche

1:45  Introduction to Measurement: Are the Data Telling us the Truth?
      Nancy Whitesell

2:45  Measuring Children’s Development and Its Influences
      Deana Around Him

3:45  Break

4:00  Small Group Discussions: What are the key constructs you need to measure to answer the research question that your group has been discussing? What types of measures could help assess your key constructs? What measures that you learned about today would be useful? Would these measures need adaptation for your tribal communities, or can they be used as is?

5:00  Adjourn

Thursday Thought Piece (due at start of class Friday): What lecture or small group discussion has stretched your thinking the most and why?

Thursday Required Readings:


Thursday Optional Readings
FRIDAY  
JULY 17, 2015  
EXAMPLES OF CURRENT EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH WITH TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

1:30  Review and Overview of Day  
Allison Barlow and Michelle Sarche

1:45  Home Visiting Research with Tribal Communities: Examples from the Family Spirit Project  
Allison Barlow

2:30  Planning for the First Study of American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start: CBPR on a National Scale with the AI/AN Family and Child Experiences Survey  
Nancy Whitesell and Michelle Sarche

3:15  Break

3:30  Student evaluations

3:45  Closing thoughts: Facilitated whole class discussion  
Allison Barlow & Nancy Whitesell

4:15  Adjourn

Friday Required Readings


Friday Optional Readings