

The purpose of Hlth391 is to explore public and community health principles and praxis from a systems and social justice perspective. Systems theory, healthy public policy, cultural competence and cultural humility, community organizing and building, and social determinants of health will be examined, as well as equitable and sustainable solutions to contemporary community health issues. Students will develop specific public and community health practice abilities (advocacy, health communication, asset mapping, and behavior modification skills, among others) and do hands-on, service-learning activities in local communities, conduct needs and strengths assessments, serve as a community health resource person, and plan, implement and evaluate a specific community health intervention.

Because of the Chesapeake Project, I am now integrating a number of sustainability concepts into Hlth391 (Principles of Community Health), a required professional preparation and scholarship in practice course for behavioral and community health majors. The specific sustainability concepts I am addressing include interconnectedness and interdependence, systems thinking, social justice and fair distribution, health equity, cultural diversity and indigenous/traditional knowledge, and the precautionary principle. These (or very similar) concepts have previously been discussed in this course, but not as thoroughly and as pervasively as they will now be covered. Sustainability concepts are now a unifying, underlying theme woven throughout the course. In addition to using a number of readings and videos available from The Northwest Earth Institute's website, their course book [A World of Health: Connecting People, Place and Planet](#) is now a required text for the class and [Seeing Systems: Peace, Justice and Sustainability](#) and [Change is our Choice](#) are recommended books for the class.

Specific assignments include class discussions, written reaction papers and debates on the sustainability concepts or "big ideas" identified in the previous paragraph. Additionally, we will spend one class and one lab period viewing and discussing *The Story of Stuff*, *The Story of Bottled Water*, and *The Story of Solutions*. The major scholarship in practice project students implement in the community will be based on systems theory and the interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena. Any community health solutions developed over the semester will address sustainability. I highlighted in yellow on the syllabus activities and concepts corresponding to sustainability constructs. Specific sustainability learning objectives include:

- Explain and apply systems theory to contemporary community health issues (e.g. mental health, environmental health, minority health, and violence prevention).
- Explain the precautionary principle, its importance in achieving public health goals for the nation, and barriers that frequently prevent its implementation in healthy public policy.
- Identify current environmental health issues facing communities and identify potential sustainable solutions.