

Anthropology 210: Biomedical Science and Human Adaptability

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Subject Area/Discipline: [Anthropology](#)

School: [University of Pennsylvania](#)

Project Area: [Health](#)

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Overview of the Course:

This course will deal with the issues of community health, its evaluation, and the implementation of strategies for effecting change. The perspective will be that of anthropology, the social sciences, and medicine, in which community health is seen as the interaction between biological, environmental, and sociocultural factors. The course deals with issues that involve interactions between these factors and the relation between these factors and health promotion.

The focus of the course will be on enhancing dietary intake and nutritional status, using as a model the approach of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Specifically, members of the class will participate in a PAR project at the Turner Middle School, located at 59th and Baltimore Avenue. The project is designed to measure the nutritional status of children attending the school, to teach principles of nutrition to 6th graders, and to evaluate the outcome.

The Turner School Project

The project consists of several components, involving teaching, research, and evaluation. Students will select (first come-first- served) the part in which they want to work during the semester. The work will take, on average 3 hours per week, although the actual amount will vary from week-to-week. The components are:

1. Teaching principles of nutrition (12 students)
2. Evaluating dietary intakes (4 students)
3. Measuring and analyzing heights and weights (4 students)
4. School Lunch Project (4 students)

Note: Students should decide as soon as possible, and no later than January 23, in which area they want to work. This will be discussed the first day of class, January 16. There will be a sign-up sheet on the door of Room 432.

In general, the plan is for students to work as teams on their projects, either with Dr. Johnston or Penny Gordon-Larsen. During class meetings we will discuss progress, problems, impressions, and findings. Each project team will present a project progress report at each class meeting. At the end of the course, each team will present a summary report to the class, and each individual will turn in a written report of his or her work.

In-class Schedule and Readings

There will be a set of background readings on issues of health, nutrition, child development, and evaluation. These readings will be available as a bulk pack and will be discussed in class. In-class discussions will concentrate on the assigned readings and your experiences in the field. In addition, there will be another bulk pack at Campus Copy containing separate readings for each of the project groups (Dietary, Anthropometry, and Teaching groups) - you should pick up your additional bulk pack after you have selected which project you will work on. Each class meeting will be split into two parts, the first half of the period, roughly 1:30 - 3:00 will be spent in discussion with the entire class. The second half of the period we will get into our project teams to discuss issues pertinent to the Turner school project.

Schedule of Readings

Jan. 12 Introduction to Anthropology 210

Jan. 19 Perspective: Academically-Based Community Service

Guest Speaker: Dr. Ira Harkavy, Associate Vice President and Director, Center for Community Partnerships

Jan. 26 Orientation to Turner Middle School

Class held at Turner Middle School (Transportation will be provided)

WEPIC activities at the Turner School pp. 1-17. (Unpublished Manuscript)

Benson, L and I Harkavy (1994) 1994 as turning point: the university-assisted community school idea becomes a movement. *Universities and Community Schools* 4:5-6.

Data on West Philadelphia. Information packet from the Center for Community Partnerships.

****ALL GROUP PROJECTS TO BEGIN THE WEEK OF FEB 2,1997"

Feb. 2: The Ecological Approach to Health

Armstrong, GJ, et al. (1976) The Ecological Perspective in Disease. *The Ecologist* 6(2)71-83.

Feb. 9: Defining the Problem - the urban ecosystem

Schell, LM (1992) Risk Focusing: An Example of Biocultural Interaction. In: Huss-Ashmore, R. J Schall. and M. Hediger (eds.) *Health and Lifestyle Change*. Vol 9: 137-144. MASCA, The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Cross, AT (1987) Politics, poverty, and nutrition. *J. Am. Diet Assoc.* 87: 1007- 1010.

Assorted articles by AM Freedman (1990) *Wall Street Journal* December 17, 18, 19.

Anderson, E (1994) The Code of the Streets. *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 1994, pp. 81-94.

Feb. 16: Issues in Intervention (Participatory Action Research)

Townsend, JW (1987) Intervention Advocacy for Action. In FE Johnston (ed.) *Nutritional Anthropology*. NY: Alan R. Liss, Inc., pp 277-94.

Greenwood, DJ, et al (1993) Participatory action research as a process and as a goal. *Human Relations* 46:175-92.

Benson, L and I Harkavy (1994) Anthropology 210: academically-based community service, and the advancement of knowledge, teaching, and learning: an experiment in progress. *Universities and Community Schools* 4:66-9

Feb. 23: Evaluating Nutritional Status

Johnston, FE (1981) Anthropometry and Nutritional Status. In: *Assessing Changing Food Consumption Patterns*, Committee on Food Consumption Patterns, Food and Nutrition Board, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, DC, pp. 252-64.

Dwyer, JT (1991) Concept of Nutritional Status and its Measurement. In: JH Himes (ed.) *Anthropometric Assessment of Nutritional Status*, New York: Wiley-Liss, pp. 5-28

*** Bulk Pack Stops Here - Additional Readings to be announced***

Mar. 2: Introduction to Nutrition (Part 1)

Mar. 9: Spring Break

Mar. 16: Nutrition and Health

Mar. 23: Introduction to Nutrition (Part 2)

Mar. 30: Early and Late Influences on Adult Health Status

Apr. 6: Project Preparations - Group Meetings (No Official Class Meeting)

Apr. 13: Project Reports at Turner (Class Meets at Turner Middle School)

Apr. 20: Project Reports at Penn (Regular Class Meeting)

Evaluation and Grading

The emphasis in the course is upon the integration of conceptual issues and "hands-on" experience so there will be a small portion of the course involved in formal testing and paper writing. Students will be responsible for all readings. Students will be asked to lead some class discussions, particularly those discussions of topics relevant to the group projects and the Turner experience.

Students will work in teams, focusing on the completion of the team's project. Each team member is integral to the whole, and full participation during field work is imperative. This is of particular importance due to the fact that Turner teachers, students, and staff depend on your attendance. Missing field days is unacceptable. If there is a problem with attending any field session you **MUST** speak with me prior to the absence. If you expect to miss any field session, you are responsible for finding an alternate to attend in your stead.

Final grades will be based upon the following criteria:

- Participation in class discussions (20%)
- Participation in Turner school project/ Individual written reports (50%)
- Group presentation during the final weeks of class (20%)
- Final in-class essay exam (10%)