

UCLA School of Public Health  
Masters in Public Health for Health & Allied Professionals

Syllabus  
HS 597 - Empirical Methods

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**TA:** TBA

**Background:** This course brings together training in health care content, analysis and empirical methods to satisfy the increasing need for health services organization managers skilled in providing sound evidence-based decision making.

In the Fall quarter of this course, students will use data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) to study health care markets in California. The Excel spreadsheet application will be used in analyzing these data and in preparing the findings.

- Objectives:**
1. Provide health care professionals with applied quantitative methods and the experience necessary to apply these methods to the management of health services organizations.
  2. Build on the Introduction to Biostatistics sequence, applying its statistical tools to contemporary, real world problems in health care.
  3. Offer students insight into health care markets in California.

**Schedule:** This course meets for one hour each session for the first six sessions of the Fall quarter. The seventh session of this course, during which students will present their research, will meet from 4:00 to 5:00 and from 7:00 to 9:00. Session 1, 4 and 7 will be held in 41-268 CHS. The other four sessions will be held in the computer lab on the "A" level of CHS building.

The course is built around a student-designed research project. These projects are unique and typically require at least one consultation with the instructor. Each class session is busy, making it difficult to answer all the individual questions that arise during each session. Therefore, you may find it necessary to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the instructor. You should plan on arranging this meeting before the 5<sup>th</sup> session.

**Materials:** There is no textbook for the fall quarter of the course. Photocopied materials will be distributed from time to time.

You will need access to a personal computer. Either Apple OS or Windows is acceptable. You should have access to a spreadsheet application, such as Excel®, and some type of word-processing application.

You should bring to the lab sessions a 100-megabyte ZIP disk and a 1.44 megabyte diskette.

**Grades:** Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Attendance is mandatory. You must notify your instructor before class if you are unable to attend. You will not pass this course if you miss more than two sessions.

**Assignment:** Your course grade will be based entirely on the successful completion of a single assignment. This assignment will be due at the end of the quarter and will consist of a short written report and a brief (5-minute) PowerPoint presentation of your research and findings.

The written report will be prepared as a memorandum and will be no more than ten pages long. Of these ten pages, two to four will report the research question and the principal findings of your research. Another page should be devoted to documenting the data used. The remainder of the memo will be charts and graphs summarizing your research. An example report will be distributed later.

A one-page memo presenting your research topic will be due on October 11<sup>th</sup>.

## Schedule

- Session 1      September 20<sup>th</sup> (meet in room 41-268 CHS)  
Course introduction  
Course assignment
- Session 2      October 4<sup>th</sup> (meet in the computer lab)  
Exploring the California Health Interview Survey
- Session 3      October 11<sup>th</sup> (meet in the computer lab)  
Lab time
- Topic memo due
- Session 4      October 25<sup>th</sup> (meet in room 41-268 CHS)  
Describing data
- Session 5      November 8<sup>th</sup> (meet in the computer lab)  
Lab time
- Course assignment Q & A
- Session 6      November 22<sup>nd</sup> (meet in the computer lab)  
Lab time
- Session 7      December 13<sup>th</sup> (meet in room 41-268 CHS)  
Presentations
- Course project due