

University of Florida
College of Health and Health Professions
HSC 4608: CRITICAL THINKING IN HEALTHCARE (3 credits)
Spring 2026

Delivery Format: In-person
Course Website: UFL E-Learning

Instructor: Jamie Pomeranz, PhD, CRC, CLCP
Office: HPNP 4157A
Email Address: pomeranz@ufl.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30am to 12pm or by appointment

Class information

Section	Instructor	Class Day	Class Time	Location
22626	Jamie Pomeranz	Wednesdays	8:30 AM – 10:25 AM	G103

Preferred Course Communications: Please use the email listed above or the Canvas email tool.
Email Policy: Response within 24 hours to emails received on weekdays (M-F). Emails received during the weekend or after 5pm Friday will be answered on the following Monday.

Preferred Course Communications (e.g., email, office phone): Email. Please use the email listed above and NOT the Canvas email tool.

Email Policy: Response within 24 hours to emails received on weekdays (M-F). Emails received during the weekend or after 5pm Friday will be answered on the following Monday.

Prerequisites

Students must either be a senior in the Health Science major of the Bachelor of Health Science program or have permission from the Faculty Supervisor.

Purpose and Outcome

Course Overview

This course is designed to facilitate the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in healthcare. In the beginning, Instructors will provide a general overview of logical fallacies and cognitive errors, both in a general sense as well as within a medical/rehabilitation context. After the initial introductory modules, students become more active in their own learning by participating in five, small-group comprehensive case studies. A problem-based learning approach is used in which students are provided with carefully selected clinical, legislative, ethical, and professional problems and are provided guidance in problem solution by the Lab Instructor. Students work in small groups to collect information relevant to problem solution and take a hypothesis-oriented approach to dealing with each task.

Relation to Program Outcomes

This course introduces, reinforces, and/or assesses four out of the seven student learning outcomes set by the Health Science major. These include (1) describe key elements of the US Healthcare system (R), (2) develop appropriate professional behaviors for health careers (R), (3) develop and apply critical analysis skills to contemporary health issues (I, R, A), and (4) apply effective basic communication skills for health professionals (R).

Course Objectives and/or Goals

By the end of the course, the student should:

1. Develop a knowledge base that enables the critical evaluation of a wide variety of problems and that encourages the use of a systematic approach to problem appraisal, data collection, and problem-resolution.
2. Develop firm decision-making and critical reasoning skills that include knowledge of how to use available informational resources to test hypotheses about problem solution.
3. Develop self-directed learning skills, clinical skills, and group and interpersonal skills that foster productive activity within the interdisciplinary health care team.
4. Develop an appreciation of the need for health care assessments, interventions, and decisions to be evidence-based, and for health care practitioners to know how to find, appraise, and apply the best evidence supporting the decisions they make.

Required Texts:

There is no required text for this course however students will periodically be provided articles for which they must read prior to class.

Helpful Resources:

There are assignments that require American Psychological Association (APA) citation formatting. It is strongly encouraged that you review the APA 7th Edition Manual. In addition, please take the time to review external resources such as Purdue Owl.

What is expected of you?**Course Materials and Technology**

For **technical support for the course Canvas site, activities, and assessments**, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- helpdesk@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>

Instructional Methods:

This course is taught using a variety of readings, online videos, class activities, and reflection assignments. The assignments and in-class activities are meant to stimulate critical thinking, collaboration, and connection to real world application of the materials delivered.

Blended Learning

What is blended learning and why is it important?

A Blended Learning class uses a mixture of technology and face-to-face instruction to help you maximize your learning. Knowledge content that, as the instructor, I would have traditionally presented during a live class lecture is instead provided online before the live class takes place. This lets me focus my face-to-face teaching on course activities designed to help you strengthen higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration. Competency in these skills is critical for today's health professional.

What is expected of you?

You are expected to actively engage in the course throughout the semester. You must come to class prepared by completing all out-of-class assignments. This preparation gives you the knowledge or practice needed to engage in higher levels of learning during the live class sessions. If you are not prepared for the face-to-face sessions, you may struggle to keep pace with the activities occurring in the live sessions, and it is unlikely that you will reach the higher learning goals

of the course. Similarly, you are expected to actively participate in the live class. Your participation fosters a rich course experience for you and your peers that facilitates overall mastery of the course objectives.

To maximize use of class time, you are expected to:

1. Look at the Canvas site for notes and announcements prior to each class
2. Read assigned readings prior to each class, and come to class prepared for discussion
3. Bring your laptop/textbook to course meetings.

The use of computers and other electronic devices in class is limited to class related activities. Students who are being disruptive (e.g., using electronic devices when not appropriate for class activities, talking over the instructor/other students, or otherwise disrupting the learning environment for other students) will be asked to leave class. Students who are asked to leave for disruptive behavior will lose all assignment points for that day.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Grading/evaluation of student performance is based upon five in-lab quizzes, five in-lab activities, group case reports, a creative case report, attendance, participation, peer evaluation feedback, and professionalism.

Assignments:

Syllabus Quiz (ungraded) - In order to open course content, you must successfully pass a syllabus quiz in Canvas.

Quizzes (4 total; 3 points each; 12 points total) – Students will complete five (4 quizzes. Quizzes will cover content presented in module lectures during weeks two through six. Each quiz will be comprised of multiple-choice questions. Students will take each quiz during the first 5 minutes of their assigned lab section.

These quizzes are CLOSED notes. Students attempting to complete the quiz using outside materials or outside of class time will receive a zero on the quiz, lose 1 full letter grade from the course, and be referred to the Dean of Students.

Lab Activities (4 total; 3 points each; 12 points total) – Between weeks one through six, students will participate in group activities during class. These activities are collaborative assignments that allow students to engage with content and skills that will be relevant to the upcoming case studies.

To receive full credit, students must demonstrate active participation (as assessed by their instructor) during lab activities. No Canvas submission is required.

Case Study Group Reports (6 total; 40 points total) – Students will collaboratively work to successfully diagnose patient cases. Prior to Case Study #1, the Lab Instructor will assign students into *Treatment Teams* of five (5) to six (6) students. *Treatment teams* will be assigned to encourage interdisciplinary perspectives and diverse thinking based on students' reported disciplinary tracks and interests. These teams will remain in place for the entirety of the semester.

For each of the six (6) case studies, the students will be assigned to a unique role and every student will, at some point, take on each role. The roles include:

- *Case Manager* – The case manager is ultimately responsible for organizing the group and ensuring group members are staying on point. Finally, the case manager will also be responsible for reviewing the case report for format, clarity, comprehensiveness, and submitting the final case report to Canvas.
- *Charting Expert* – For groups of six (6), two (2) individuals will be assigned as charting experts. The charting experts will be in charge of organizing the group in completing 3 illness scripts for the case report.
- *Patient Interviewer* – The patient interviewer will be in charge of consulting with group members to formulate questions to ask the “patient” (i.e., instructor) and engaging in an interview session with the patient. Throughout questioning, the instructor reserves the right to “spot check” the patient interviewer by asking them to provide a reflection statement, open/closed ended question, or summary statement.
- *Treatment Specialist* – The treatment specialist will take the lead in developing a treatment clinical question, using the PICO model. They will also be in charge of finding scientific literature (i.e., peer-reviewed academic journal articles) that support the treatment option. The Treatment Expert will document which search engines, keywords, and Boolean operators were used during the search process.
- *Lab Technician* – The lab technician will be in charge of interpreting patient lab results. Lab technicians are encouraged to use publicly available data, scientific literature, and other resources to identify what physical exam and diagnostic test results may mean in relation to the patient's diagnosis.

Each report will be approximately three to four pages, single-spaced. The case reports represent a summary of findings (including but not limited to patient history, presenting symptoms, diagnosis and justification, and treatment). Formatting expectations will be given prior to the first Case Study. Case reports are due the following day (24 hours after the start of your previous lab).

Each *Treatment Team* is required to work independently as cross-team consultation/collaboration is strictly prohibited. Any team who submits a case report in which the team or single member of the team consults or collaborates with a person from a different team, the colluding members of each team will receive a zero for the case report, lose 1 full letter grade from the course, and be referred to the Dean of Students.

Late submissions are subject to late submission policies. Only case managers are eligible to submit on behalf of their group. However, EVERYONE within the group is subject to the same late submission policies if the case report is submitted after the outlined deadline. If an individual who is NOT the Case Manager submits on behalf of their group, that individual will be deducted 1-point

from their grade. **If the wrong file is uploaded and the correct file is not resubmitted before the deadline, the report is considered late.**

Any student who has an unexcused absence during a case study will receive a 0 for that case report

Creative Case Study (30 points total) – Throughout the semester, each *Treatment Team* will work with their team to create a Case Study. You and your team are responsible for developing all aspects of a comprehensive case study and are essentially working backward to develop a case. During some weeks, you will have an opportunity to submit a portion of the case study for feedback. You will provide a 15-minute presentation of your case study to your classmates during your Week 15 lab session. Here, other groups will provide you feedback and suggestions to improve your case study. Further instructions regarding what is expected during this presentation will be provided closer to the due date. **The in-class oral presentation is worth up to 15 points.** You will then have one additional week to adjust and submit your final case study based on the provided feedback. **The final creative case submission is worth up to 15 points.** Late submissions are subject to late submission policies. Further instructions will be provided in class and via Canvas. Any individual can submit on behalf of their team.

Professionalism (6 points) – Students will begin with 5 professionalism points. Any student who is identified by the Lab Instructor as “unprofessional” will lose 1 point for every infraction. Unprofessional behaviors include, but are not limited to, disrupting classmates, being chronically late to class, using electronic devices when not approved or for reasons other than coursework, etc. If a student wants to contest a professionalism point deduction, then he or she should contact Sarah Collins via email or schedule an appointment. In addition, students are expected to attend all their labs.

Grading:

The student’s final grade will be based on the number of points accumulated during the course:

Syllabus Quiz	Ungraded	A	93-100 points =	4.00
Quizzes (x4)	12 points	A-	90-92.99 points =	3.67
Lab Activities (x4)	12 points	B	83-86.99 points =	3.00
Case Study Reports (x6)	40 points	B+	87-89.99 points =	3.33
Creative Case Study	30 points	B-	80-82.99 points =	2.67
Professionalism Points	6 points	C+	77-79.99 points =	2.33
		C	70-76.99 points =	2.00
		D+	67-69.99 points =	1.33
		D	63-65.99 points =	1.00

TOTAL 100 POINTS

NOTE: Percentages are **not** rounded up at the end of the semester, and grades are not curved.

For more information visit: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

GENERAL POLICIES

Make-up Policy

Make-ups will be granted based upon the following circumstances: (a) illness, (b) serious family emergencies, (c) military obligation, (d) religious holidays, (e) participation in official university activities, or (f) court-imposed legal obligations. For circumstances a. and b., students must contact the faculty via email within 48 hours of the missed quiz, and the faculty may request the student

provide medical or other forms of documentation to validate the make-up.

Absence due to COVID-19 related illness or exposure requires medical documentation. Please submit your documentation directly to the “Notify my Instructor” portal provided by the University: <https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>

For all other circumstances, students must contact the faculty at least 72 hours prior to the anticipated missed day and provide reasonable documentation confirming the obligation/activity. The instructor will provide make-up materials to the student.

Missed quizzes or activities due to severe weather or poor internet connectivity will be reviewed on a case by case basis. If you are unable to access consistent internet, please email the instructor ahead of time (if possible); otherwise email the instructor at the earliest time possible.

Policy Related to Make up Exams or Other Work

For **assignments (NOT QUIZZES)**, late submissions are not encouraged. Late submissions will be accepted for up to 3 days, but with the following penalty schedule:

With regard to missing or incomplete assignments (NOT EXAMS), the following policies apply:

- The instructor will not contact you about missing or incomplete assignments. It is your responsibility to check that the correct assignment has been submitted to e-learning on time.
- It may be possible to avoid a late penalty IF YOU CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE. You should email your instructor and explain what issue (e.g., bereavement, illness) necessitates lateness. In some cases, documentation may be requested. If a lateness allowance is agreed to, this applies to a single assignment only. It does not allow you to delay future assignments.
- If your assignment is late, you will lose 25% each day. Thus, if an assignment is worth 12 points, you will lose 3 points for each late day. “Late” begins one minute after the due time (e.g., an assignment due at 8:34 am is considered late at 8:35 am). Penalties are as follows:

Item	Late category	Penalty
1	1 minute to 24 hours late	25% of maximum deducted from achieved grade
2	1 day + 1 minute late to 48 hours late	50% of maximum deducted from achieved grade
3	2 days + 1 minute late to 72 hours late	75% of maximum deducted from achieved grade
4	3 days + 1 minute late to 96 hours late	100% of maximum deducted from achieved grade

NOTE: **UPLOADING THE WRONG DOCUMENT IS SAME-AS-LATE**, even if you have documentation that you completed the document on time. **It is your responsibility to verify that you have uploaded the correct document.** (You should open or download your uploaded assignments and double- or triple-check that you have uploaded the right one).

- There will be no exceptions to this policy.
- If you have uploaded the wrong document, and e-learning does not allow you to correct this, you should IMMEDIATELY send the correct document to the instructor via email.
- If you cannot upload a document due to technical problems (e.g., if e-learning is down), you may e-mail your assignment to the instructor. The timestamp on your e-mail will serve as the time submitting. In such cases, please upload your assignment to e-learning as well, once the technical issue is resolved.

Please note: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the UF Computing help desk (<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>) correspondence. You MUST e-mail the instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Make-up exams will be provided only in cases of excused absences or conflict during final exams per university policy and MUST be discussed with the instructor in advance. Make-up exams will differ from the regularly scheduled exam. University policies states acceptable reasons for absence include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official University activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Remember that, when possible (i.e., extracurricular activities, official University activities, and religious holidays), prior notification of absence is required if the student plans to be given an extension on assignments. For more information regarding university policy on excused absences, please go to:

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#attendance>

Policy Related to Plagiarism

Plagiarism, as defined in the UF Student Honor Code (<https://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf>), will not be tolerated. Plagiarism detection software (e.g., TurnItIn) and other resources may be used to detect plagiarism. Assignments where the instructor deems that plagiarism has occurred may receive a zero grade, and may be reported to the Dean of Students office as a Student Honor Code violation. The APA publication manual (recommended readings) provides guidelines on avoiding plagiarism; for more details you can also reference the Purdue Online Writing Lab website (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html).

Communication Guidelines

Please email the instructor directly (email address listed in course information at top of syllabus) rather than using the messaging tool in Canvas. For digital communication, please see the following Netiquette Guidelines: <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to act in accordance with the University of Florida policy on academic integrity. As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge:

“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”

You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For additional information regarding Academic Integrity, please see Student Conduct and Honor Code or the Graduate Student Website for additional details:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>
<http://gradschool.ufl.edu/students/introduction.html>

Please remember cheating, lying, misrepresentation, or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and inexcusable behavior.

Policy Related to Guests Attending Class

Only registered students are permitted to attend class. However, we recognize that students who are caretakers may face occasional unexpected challenges creating attendance barriers. Therefore, by exception, a department chair or his or her designee (e.g., instructors) may grant a student permission to bring a guest(s) for a total of two class sessions per semester. This is two sessions total across all courses. No further extensions will be granted. Please note that guests are not permitted to attend either cadaver or wet labs. Students are responsible for course material regardless of attendance. For additional information, please review the Classroom Guests of Students policy in its entirety. Link to full policy:

<http://facstaff.php.ufl.edu/services/resourceguide/getstarted.htm>

Policy Related to Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Online Faculty Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you require classroom accommodation because of a disability, you must register with the Dean of Students Office <http://www.dso.ufl.edu> within the first week of class. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation of accommodations to you, which you then give to me as the instructor of the course to receive accommodations. Please make sure you provide this letter to me by the end of the second week of the course. The College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to assist students in their coursework.

Counseling and Student Health

Students sometimes experience stress from academic expectations and/or personal and interpersonal issues that may interfere with their academic performance. If you find yourself facing issues that have the potential to or are already negatively affecting your coursework, you are encouraged to talk with an instructor and/or seek help through University resources available to you.

- The Counseling and Wellness Center 352-392-1575 offers a variety of support services such as psychological assessment and intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit their web site for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu>. On line and in person assistance is available.
- U Matter We Care website: <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>. If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, you can reach out for help through the You Matter We Care website, which is staffed by Dean of Students and Counseling Center personnel.
- The Student Health Care Center at Shands is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health at Shands offers a variety of clinical services. The clinic is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 392-0627 or check out the web site at: <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>
- Crisis intervention is always available 24/7 from: Alachua County Crisis Center: (352) 264-6789
<http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/Pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>
- University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-

- 1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to come in and talk with us. We have helped many students through stressful situations impacting their academic performance. You are not alone so do not be afraid to ask for assistance.

Inclusive Learning Environment

Public health and health professions are based on the belief in human dignity and on respect for the individual. As we share our personal beliefs inside or outside of the classroom, it is always with the understanding that we value and respect diversity of background, experience, and opinion, where every individual feels valued. We believe in, and promote, openness and tolerance of differences in ethnicity and culture, and we respect differing personal, spiritual, religious and political values. We further believe that celebrating such diversity enriches the quality of the educational experiences we provide our students and enhances our own personal and professional relationships. We embrace The University of Florida's Non-Discrimination Policy, which reads, "The University shall actively promote equal opportunity policies and practices conforming to laws against discrimination. The University is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act." If you have questions or concerns about your rights and responsibilities for inclusive learning environment, please see your instructor or refer to the Office of Multicultural & Diversity Affairs website: www.multicultural.ufl.edu

CALENDAR

Week	BEFORE Lab	IN Lab	DUE DATES for Assignments
Week 1 (Jan 12)	None	Introduction to course, team assignments, course expectations and norms.	Take Syllabus Quiz
Week 2 (Jan 19)	View lectures on Therapeutic Communication Principles	Quiz 1 Introduction to SOAP notes and importance of gather information and taking a medical history in in class. Lab Activity 1	None
Week 3 (Jan 26)	View lectures on Social Determinants, Cultural Competency, and Social Identity	Quiz 2 Lab Activity 2	None
Week 4 (Feb 2)	View lectures on Illness Script, Semantic Qualifiers, and Summary Statements	Quiz 3 Lab Activity 3	None
Week 5 (Feb 9)	View lectures on PICO model and Causal Evidence	Quiz 4 Lab Activity 4	None
Week 6 (Feb 16)	None	Case Study #1	CS#1 DUE 24 hours after class
Week 7 (Feb 23)	None	Case Study #2	CS#2 DUE 24 hours after class
Week 8 (Mar 2)	None	Case Study #3	CS#3 DUE 24 hours after class
Week 9 (Mar 9)	None	Case Study #4	CS#4 DUE 24 hours after class
Week 10 (Mar 16)	Spring Break (ENJOY!)		
Week 11 (Mar 23)	None	Case Study #5	CS#5 DUE 24 hours after class
Week 12 (Mar 30)	None	Case Study #6	CS#6 DUE 24 hours after class
Week 13 (April 6)	None	Creative Case Study Presentations	
Week 14 (April 13)	None	Creative Case Study Presentations	

Caveat: The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Any changes will be announced in class and via Canvas, and students are personally responsible for obtaining updated information regarding these changes.