

1202PBH

Epidemiology and Population Health

Semester 1 2009

Academic Organisation:	School of Public Health
Faculty:	Griffith Health
Credit point value:	10
Student Contribution Band:	Band 2
Course level:	Undergraduate
Campus/Location/Learning Mode:	Logan / On Campus / In Person Gold Coast / On Campus / In Person
Convenor/s:	Mr Mark Storrs (Logan) Mr Mark Storrs (Gold Coast)
Enrolment Restrictions:	Nil
This document was last updated:	19 January 2009

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the fundamental principles and practices of epidemiology in public health. Students will examine basic epidemiological concepts and methods, explore their application, perform elementary epidemiological reviews and critiques, and reflect in the role of epidemiology in public health.

SECTION A – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

COURSE AIMS

This course is presented as an introduction to Epidemiology primarily for Bachelor of Public Health students but is also offered to those students desiring a solid grounding in this topic. Epidemiology and Public Health, along with its sister course, Statistics for Public Health, is the core quantitative discipline of public health. As such, a sound grounding in its principles and applications are essential to effective public health practice. Whatever career in public health a student eventually develops, the knowledge and skills gained in this course will be prerequisite. Whilst the philosophy of Epidemiology and its approach to critical thinking is not unique, it forms the basis for effective practice in all health fields.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Goal

Students will understand the basic principles of Epidemiology and acquire skills in its applications to public health practice.

Objectives

By the end of semester, students will:

1. Understand the fundamental role of Epidemiology in public health
2. Be able to calculate and correctly interpret measures of the occurrence of disease and measures of association between exposure and disease
3. Be aware of the major sources of health data and their limitations
4. Know the principles underlying the main types of epidemiological study
5. Be able to identify whether a given study result is likely to be real (i.e. to rule out chance, bias and confounding as alternative explanations)
6. Be able to identify whether a given association between exposure & disease is likely to be causal
7. Have developed a critical approach to reading the health literature
8. Understand the general approaches to disease surveillance and outbreak investigation
9. Know the principles underlying strategies for disease prevention and screening to detect early disease
10. Understand how Epidemiology is applied to a variety of public health strategies and activities.

CONTENT, ORGANISATION AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

The course is based on a well-tried and evaluated Study Guide (see below, 'Texts and Supporting Materials' for details). The mode of contact between teaching staff and students will include face to face lectures and tutorials. Students will be able to access academic staff via the Learning@Griffith website or via email. A mix of teaching and learning approaches will be used throughout the course including:

- critical analysis and reflection

- problem-based learning, and
- tutor-supported practice.

Expectations (two-way)

One of the common sources of misunderstanding between student and convenor are what each expects of the other. One purpose of this document is to minimise that misunderstanding and below is a summary of what is expected from you and what you can expect from the teaching team.

What you can expect from the teaching team:

In addition to the Course Outline and the Study Guides that have been outlined above, the team will be on hand to provide you with help and advice, as you require it. It is the team's aim to encourage that interest by providing a supportive environment to facilitate your learning. It is appreciated that at some point during the summer semester most students will come across a problem, have queries about assignments or other difficulties. All general queries concerning this course should first be addressed to the Course Convenor, Dr Mark Storrs. At the beginning of the semester, you will be provided with information so that you can contact a member of academic staff if you have any problems with the specific subject matter.

What the teaching team expects from you:

By now you will have developed a clear idea of what is expected in terms of reading, notes, questions and exercises. This is a 10 credit point course and good teaching practice guidelines suggests that you should expect to commit **at least** one hour of study per lecture per credit point which includes the three hours contact time. Whilst one cannot be prescriptive about how much work you put into this course, the experience of previous students can be shared with you. Students who do this course 'on' campus have three hours of formal teaching per lecture session consisting of two hours of lectures and one hour of group tutorials. It is expected that they spend another four hours reading plus an average of two hours per lecture on assignments. Although different people will require vastly different amounts of time to complete the same tasks you should anticipate, therefore, spending a **minimum of eight - ten hours per lecture** working on this course.

CONTENT SUMMARY

The course has been designed to follow a logical sequence of learning. The first seven topics cover the ABC of Epidemiology, which lead into the topic of lecture eight, 'Judging the Evidence'. The knowledge and skills gained during lectures 1-8 are summarised in the development of the methods of 'critical appraisal'. Critical appraisal will be emphasised throughout the remainder of the course within Assignment and Tutorial exercises. Lectures 9 -12 are also concerned with the major applications of Epidemiology in public health and medical practice.

Study Chart

Topic	Date	Lecture Content	Tutorial Content	Readings	Assessment
1.	5 March	Review course outline, Intro to Epidemiology & Epidemiology in Practice	Exercise 1 - John Snow -	Webb, Ch 1pp 1-2; 10-25 Associated study notes	
2.	12 March	Measures of disease frequency	Exercise 2	Webb, Ch 2, pp 28-42 Associated study notes	
3.	19 March	Public health measures	Exercise 3	Webb, Ch 2, pp 42-59 Associated study notes	Assignment 1 questions provided
4.	26 March	Measures of association Sources of routinely collected data	Exercise 4 Review of Assignment 1	Webb, Ch 3 & Ch 5 Associated study notes	
5.	2 April	Study Designs in Epi research -Observational & Experimental studies	Exercise 5	Webb, Ch 6 Associated study notes	Assignment 1 due
6.	9 April	Error - Chance & Bias	Exercise 6	Webb, Ch 7, pp148-154; 158-181 Associated study notes	
MID-SEMESTER BREAK					
7.	23 April	Confounding Association and cause	Exercise 7 - Dobson et al paper	Webb, Ch 8 & Ch 10 Associated study notes	
8.	30 April	Judging the evidence	Exercise 8 - Paganini-Hill et al paper	Webb, Ch 9 Associated study notes	Assignment 2 & Workbook questions provided
9.	7 May	Communicable disease Epidemiology	Exercise 9 - Outbreak investigation Review of Assignment 2	Webb, Ch 12 pp 249-50; 254-270 Associated study notes	
10.	14 May	Surveillance	Exercise 10 - Morse & Hughes paper	Webb, Ch 4 Associated study notes	Assignment 2 due
11.	21 May	Disease prevention	Exercise 11 - Rose paper	Webb, Ch 13 Associated study notes	
12.	28 May	Screening	Exercise 12 - screening tests	Webb, Ch 14 Associated study notes	
13.	4 June	Revision	Review of Course & Workbook	None	
14.	11 June				Workbook due

ASSESSMENT

Summary of Assessment

Item	Assessment Task	Length	Weighting	Total Marks	Relevant Learning Outcomes	Due Date and Time
1.	Assignment 1	n/a	20%	25	Lectures 1-3	Thursday 2 April 2009
2.	Assignment 2	n/a	35%	60	Lectures 4-8	Thursday 14 May 2009
3.	Workbook	n/a	35%	70	Lectures 1-12	Thursday 11 June 2009
4.	Tutorial participation	n/a	10%	10	Lectures 1-13	continuous

Assessment Details

There are two main reasons for assessment. The first is to enable both you and the teaching staff to see how you are progressing with the course, allowing the staff the chance to address any problems before they turn from molehills into mountains. The second is the necessity to award you a grade at the end of the course.

Monitoring your progress:

This course has been designed so that you are able to monitor your progress continuously. It is suggested that you attempt some of the questions provided at the end of pertinent chapters of Webb et al. In addition, each lecture's work is accompanied by a more substantial exercise that is relevant to the topics that you will have just covered. These will be the basis for the weekly tutorials. These are an opportunity to reinforce the knowledge and skills introduced in the Topics.

Formal assessment:

The formal assessment for this course will consist of four parts; your workbook, tutorial participation and two compulsory assignments. **You should consult your course handbook for full details concerning the policy for submission of assignments.**

Assignments:

There will be **two compulsory assignments** for this course.

Assignment 1:

The first assignment, **worth 20% of the total marks** for the course, will cover material from the first three lectures of the course. Assignment questions will be available to you on Learning@Griffith by the end of Lecture 3 and **must be submitted no later than 4pm Thursday 2 April 2009**. This assignment will consist of three questions examining your understanding of disease frequency measures (prevalence, cumulative incidence and incidence). Successful completion of the assignment will require a mix of short answers and mathematical calculations detailing your working out and will be based on methodologies explained through pertinent tutorial exercises. The allotted marks for each question will be indicated on

the assignment questionnaire. Your work will be marked and returned to you as soon as possible from the due date so that you can review your progress.

PLEASE NOTE: Students who receive either a fail grade or a borderline pass grade on their first assessment item will attend follow-up sessions. The purpose of these sessions is to assist students to develop strategies for achieving higher grades on subsequent assessment items.'

Assignment 2:

This assignment, worth **35% of the total marks** for the course, will cover concepts from lectures 1 to 8 (with particular emphasis on lectures 4 – 8 including critical appraisal). This assignment will consist of two questions examining your further understanding of measures of association (including but not limited to odds ratios, attributable risk, population attributable risk percentage) and the applicability of a particular study design, hypothesis formulation and in-depth appreciation of error (chance, bias and confounding) and its consequences in relation to validity. Successful completion of the assignment will require mathematical calculations detailing your working out and short answers to a number of questions pertaining to a critical appraisal of a peer-reviewed paper. A total of 2,000 words will be sufficient to successfully answer all questions related to the critical appraisal. The allotted marks for each question will be indicated on the assignment questionnaire. This assignment will be posted on Learning@Griffith at the end of Lecture 8 and **must be submitted no later than 4pm Thursday 14 May 2009**.

You are reminded that we will not accept an assignment that is submitted after the due dates unless a request for extension of time has been approved by the Course Convenor. Requests for extension of time to submit an [assessment](#) item must be made in writing to the Course Convenor prior to the due date for submission of the assessment item. Where the request is made on medical grounds, an appropriate medical certificate must be submitted. A copy of the extension request should be attached to the assessment item when it is submitted.

Completion of a Workbook:

The workbook, **worth 35% of the total marks** for the course, will cover material from the whole course. The questions will be available to you on Learning@Griffith at the end of Lecture 8. The workbook **must be submitted no later than 4pm Thursday 11 June 2009**. Questions asked will pertain to particular topics discussed during the course. It is highly advised that you answer pertinent questions as you encounter the relevant areas during the course. In this manner you will gradually compile answers to the workbook as you progress through the course, which should minimise the impact of this exercise on your other study commitments. Successful completion of the workbook will require a mix of short answers and basic mathematical calculations (detailing your working out) and will be based on methodologies explained through pertinent tutorial exercises. **You are reminded that we will not accept a workbook that is submitted after the due date unless a request for extension of time has been approved by the Course Convenor prior to the due date for submission.**

Finally, participation in lectures will carry a **10% contribution** to the overall assessment. To achieve the full 10%, you will need to attend 10 out of the 13 lectures. Exercises at the end of your study notes will be discussed during the Tutorials. Whilst completion of these Exercises will not be assessed, the Exercises

will form the basis of both Assignments and Workbook questions. Your understanding of the Exercises should ensure that you perform well when formally assessed.

GRADUATE SKILLS

Graduate Skills (select appropriate boxes)	Taught	Practised	Assessed
Effective communication (written, oral and interpersonal)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Information literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Problem solving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Critical evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Work autonomously / in teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Creativity and innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ethical behaviour in social / professional / work environments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsible, effective citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TEACHING TEAM

Course Convenor

Convenor Details	Nathan
Campus Convenor	Dr Mark Storrs
Email	m.storrs@griffith.edu.au and cc to mstorrs@tpg.com.au
Office Location	Logan: LO5_4.57
Phone	(07) 3382 1039
Fax	(07) 3382 1034
Consultation times	Tuesdays and Thursdays

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

All **specific** questions related to the course content, tutorials, assignments and the workbook should be addressed to the Course Convenor, Dr Mark Storrs.

Contact: Email m.storrs@griffith.edu.au and cc to mstorrs@tpg.com.au or telephone on (07) 3382 1039 (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

There is a central office at the School of Public Health at Griffith University that will deal with all **general** program and administrative questions related to this course.

Ms Debby Findlay
The School of Public health
Logan Campus
L05 – Academic 1, Rm 4.14
Ph: (07) 3382 1021
Fax (07) 3382 1034
Email: d.findlay@griffith.edu.au

or contact: Student Administration Centre - Logan Campus
L04 1.18, Griffith University, University Drive, Meadowbrook, QLD 4131

TEXTS AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The Course Material

This section is intended to help you familiarise yourself with the course material that will form the basis of this course.

What we will provide:

The materials that will be provided for this course are:

(i) The Course Outline

This document, which you are reading now, should contain all of the information that you will need to guide you through this course. It is essential reading and it is suggested that you become very familiar with its contents. Its aim is to anticipate any questions that you might have and any problems that you might encounter during your study and to suggest ways to overcome them. There are, however, bound to be omissions and unanswered queries (none of us is perfect!) and staff will be on hand here at GU to answer any further questions you might have.

(ii) The Topic Study Notes Guide

This material forms supplementary core readings for the course and, as such, you will be expected to become familiar with the concepts and content that are introduced. The material has been divided up into 12 'topics' in order to help you plan your study. Each of these 'topics' corresponds to one lecture of face-to-face teaching on campus. Each lecture, one or two topics are presented, together with an exercise. The topics are ordered in such a way that they provide the most logical approach to the course and it is recommended that you tackle them in this order. The topics are *not* of equal difficulty and it is anticipated that you will be able to complete some more quickly and more easily than others.

Each topic is presented in a standard format. The first page contains the specific learning objectives for that topic, together with a note of any additional reading that is required as well as some suggestions for further reading. Also included is a brief 'Study Guide' which will tell you exactly what you will be expected to do for that Topic.

(iii) Reading:

The '**required reading**' will often be a chapter or specific pages in Webb but, for some topics, journal articles or other material have been provided to either supplement Webb or to cover areas that are not discussed in sufficient detail. You are expected to read this material; the relevant chapters in Webb are

especially important as the topics are intended to complement and extend the concepts, methods and examples introduced in the study guide.

Throughout the topics, you will find references to specific pages, tables and figures in Webb. Where these are good examples of the issue in hand, it is suggested that you interrupt your reading and look up the appropriate reference.

(iv) Exercises:

At the end of most 'topics', an exercise or set of questions are provided. You should also work through these and be prepared to discuss your answers in the tutorials. The questions set in both assignments and the workbook will be based on these exercises.

(v) Answers to Tutorial Exercises

Answers to the tutorial exercises will be provided through Learning@Griffith after appropriate discussion in the Tutorial. This will enable you to check your answers. All numerical answers and any definitions should be correct as given; any qualitative comments should be taken as suggested answers, there may be other possibilities. [N.B. Answers to the questions in Webb et al can be found at the end of the book.]

What you will need to provide:

Text Book

(i) Webb P, Bain C & Pirozzo S (2006) '*Essential Epidemiology – An Introduction for Students and Health Professionals*'. Cambridge University Press.

You are expected to purchase a copy of this textbook: It has been selected as the required text for this course because it provides a good introduction to Epidemiology in both the public health and medical context in a clear, inexpensive format. The book will be referred to throughout the course simply as 'Webb'. The book is available for approximately \$95.00 but may be discounted by approximately \$10.00 if a Co-op member (price correct as at December 2008) through the GU Co-op Bookshop at the Logan Campus and Gold Coast Campus (Parklands).

(ii) A calculator

You will need to provide your own *calculator* (a non-programmable calculator with basic arithmetic and statistical functions and a memory is suitable). You will need to be able to perform basic mathematical operations and have access to a computer for preparing your assignments.

(iii) An email connection

You will need a connection from either University, home or work to facilitate communication with staff here at GU.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This course has been evaluated in 2008 by in-class student evaluation surveys and qualitative feedback from students. This evaluation aimed to seek student feedback on the:

- relevance of the course to student learning
- clarity of expectations of the course
- course assessment
- quality of supporting resources
- quality of teaching and;

- overall course management

EVALUATION OUTCOMES

Two positive aspects identified from the surveys were the use of a well written text book and supporting notes which explained concepts very well and a well structured & organised course which encouraged learning. Two negative aspects expressed were that classes should not be held at night and more tutorial options should be made available. Every effort will be made during 2009 to address these aspects to ensure that the needs of the students are met.

As a result of the evaluation, this course will be scheduled on both campuses between 9am-6pm in 2009. At least two tutorials per campus will be offered and attempts will be made to recruit past high performing students as tutors to provide an alternative in explaining concepts.

SECTION B – ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATION

1. Assessment items (hard copy only) must be submitted through an Off Campus & Assignment Handling Services (OC&AHS) office by the designated time or 5:00pm of the due date, or by post to OC&AHS if prior agreement of Course convenor has been obtained. **Assessment items will not be accepted by fascimile.**
2. If students wish to submit assessment items with any similar material for two or more courses, they must first seek approval of all course convenors. Failure to do so could be interpreted as cheating.
3. Students should note that submission of an assignment represents an affirmation that it is all their own work and that nothing has been copied from the work of others except where appropriately referenced.
4. Late Penalties: The penalty for late submission of assessment items is 10% of the total assessment mark for the item per day, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. No assignments will be accepted after the one-week period. A Special Consideration form must be completed and submitted to Student Administration if students request waiver of the late penalty or an extension to an assessment item. Extensions **may** be granted for medical conditions, however extensions will not be granted for work commitments, family commitments or computer failure.
5. Special Consideration: Students applying for special consideration (due to medical or other grounds) for assessment items must complete the appropriate application form. Special consideration is not retrospective and students should submit Special Consideration forms as soon as they experience any difficulties that may interfere with study or examination performance. It is expected that any applications for special consideration will be received within 24 hours after the date of examination.

Students should refer to the Learning@Griffith website for further information about this course

SECTION C – KEY UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students must conduct their studies at the University honestly, ethically and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Any form of academic conduct that is contrary to these standards is academic misconduct, for which the University may penalise a student. Specifically it is academic misconduct for a student to:

present copied, falsified or improperly obtained data as if it were the result of laboratory work, field trips or other investigatory work;

include in the student's individual work material that is the result of significant assistance from another person if that assistance was unacceptable according to the instructions or guidelines for that work;

assist another student in the presentation of that student's individual work in a way that is unacceptable according to the instructions or guidelines for that work;

cheat; (Cheating is dishonest conduct in assessment);

plagiarise (Plagiarism is knowingly presenting the work or property of another person as if it were one's own.)

Visit the University's [Policy on Academic Misconduct](#) for further details.

PLAGIARISM DETECTION SOFTWARE

In semester 2, 2007 the University is piloting the use of plagiarism detection software. Students should be aware that your Course Convenor may use this software to check submitted assignments. If this course is included in the pilot your Course Convenor will provide more detailed information about how the detection software will be used.

KEY STUDENT-RELATED POLICIES

All University policy documents are accessible to students via the University's Policy Library website at: www.griffith.edu.au/policylibrary. Links to key policy documents are included below for easy reference:

[Student Charter](#)

[Academic Standing, Progression and Exclusion Policy](#)

[Student Administration Policy](#)

[Policy on Student Grievances and Appeals](#)

[Assessment Policy](#)

[Examinations Timetabling Policy and Procedures](#)

[Academic Calendar](#)

[Guideline on Student E-Mail](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT RESOURCES

The University provides many facilities and support services to assist students in their studies. Links to information about University support resources available to students are included below for easy reference:

[Learning Centres](#) - the University provides access to common use computing facilities for educational purposes. For details visit www.griffith.edu.au/cuse

[Learning@Griffith](#) - there is a dedicated website for this course via the Learning@Griffith student portal.

[Student Services](#) facilitate student access to and success at their academic studies. Student Services includes: Careers and Employment Service; Chaplaincy; Counselling Service; Health Service; Student Equity Services (incorporating the Disabilities Service); and the Welfare Office.

[Learning Services](#) within the Division of Information Services provides learning support in three skill areas: computing skills; library skills; and academic skills. The study skills resources on the website include self-help tasks focusing on critical thinking, exam skills, note taking, preparing presentations, referencing, writing, proof reading, and time management.

SECTION C – KEY UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students must conduct their studies at the University honestly, ethically and in accordance with accepted standards of academic conduct. Any form of academic conduct that is contrary to these standards is academic misconduct and is unacceptable.

Some students engage deliberately in academic misconduct, with intent to deceive. This conscious, pre-mediated form of cheating is one of the worst forms of fraudulent academic behaviour, for which the University has zero tolerance and for which penalties, including exclusion from the University, will be applied.

However the University recognises many students commit academic misconduct without intent to deceive. These students may be required to undertake additional educational activities to remediate their behaviour.

Specifically it is academic misconduct for a student to:

- **Cheat in examinations and tests** by communicating, or attempting to communicate, with a fellow individual who is neither an invigilator or member of staff; by copying, or attempting to copy from a fellow candidate; attempting to introduce or consult during the examination, any unauthorised printed or written material, or electronic calculating or information storage device; or mobile phones or other communication device, or impersonates another.
- **Fabricate results** by claiming to have carried out tests, experiments or observations that have not taken place or by presenting results not supported by the evidence with the object of obtaining an unfair advantage.
- **Misrepresent themselves** by presenting an untrue statement or not disclosing where there is a duty to disclose in order to create a false appearance or identity.
- **Plagiarise** by representing the work of another as their own original work, without appropriate acknowledgement of the author or the source. This category of cheating includes the following:
 1. collusion, where a piece of work prepared by a group is represented as if it were the student's own;
 2. acquiring or commissioning a piece of work, which is not his/her own and representing it as if it were, by
 - purchasing a paper from a commercial service, including internet sites, whether pre-written or specially prepared for the student concerned
 - submitting a paper written by another person, either by a fellow student or a person who is not a member of the University;
 3. duplication of the same or almost identical work for more than one assessment item;
 4. copying ideas, concepts, research data, images, sounds or text;
 5. paraphrasing a paper from a source text, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, without appropriate acknowledgement;
 6. cutting or pasting statements from multiple sources or piecing together work of others and representing them as original work;
 7. submitting, as one own work, all or part of another student's work, even with the student's knowledge or consent.

A student who willingly assists another student to plagiarise (for example by willingly giving them their own work to copy from) is also breaching academic integrity, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Visit the University's Institutional Framework for Promoting Academic Integrity Among Students for further details.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Griffith University is committed to providing a safe work and study environment, however all students, staff and visitors have an obligation to ensure the safety of themselves and those whose safety may be affected by their actions. Staff in control of learning activities will ensure as far as reasonably practical, that those activities are safe and that all safety obligations are being met. Students are required to comply with all safety instructions and are requested to report safety concerns to the University.

General health and safety information can be obtained from http://www.griffith.edu.au/hrm/health_and_safety/

Information about Laboratory safety can be obtained from http://www.griffith.edu.au/ots/secure/health/content_labsafety.html

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