Course: Introduction to Epidemiology—Online  
Term: Summer 2015  
Professor: Dr. Jareen Meinzen-Derr  
Teaching Assistants: Laura Smith, MPH and Stephani Kim, MPH  
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Textbook: Epidemiology (fifth edition), 2013 by Leon Gordis

Course Objectives
This course will introduce you to the foundational concepts of epidemiology. We will examine study design types and how to choose the appropriate one using real world examples. You will learn the equations used for calculating risk as well as how to control for bias and confounding. We will also explore public health policy and the common ethical issues encountered in epidemiologic studies. Additionally, the project gives you the opportunity to critically examine and analyze a study on a topic that interests you.

Course Overview and Requirements
This course is an 8-week (July 1st – August 23rd) course taught through a series of online modules that can be accessed in Blackboard at any time and can be viewed as many times as needed. Blackboard can be accessed at https://canopy.uc.edu your Central Login username and password for access.

Students will be assessed by four homework/discussion board assignments, a synchronized chat session, a project, and two exams: midterm and final. Both exams will be timed and available on a specific day and time period through Blackboard.

Modules: This course contains “modules,” which are Flash movies that include audio, video, and quiz questions. These questions are not graded. Depending upon your computer and the speed of your Internet connection, they may take a minute to several minutes to load. Please be patient. If you have significant issues loading them, refer to the Trouble-Shooting Tips in the Online Student Guide found in Blackboard. You will need the latest version of Flash Player to view the modules. Supplementary handouts for each of the modules are also available in Blackboard. You will not be graded on whether you complete the modules. This is your responsibility to keep up with the course, but I do not monitor your viewing of the modules.

Homework and Discussion Board: There will be four homework/discussion board assignments (two assignments involving calculations and 2 assignments using the discussion board) that are worth 10 points each, for a total of 40 points. All assignments, respectfully, are due on Sundays at 11:59pm.
For all assignments, you will access and submit those in Blackboard in the **Assignments** tab. You may also access the two discussion board prompts through the **Discussion Board** tab.

All posts should reflect:

- Critical analysis of the topic
- The use of examples to support your argument (can be from the textbook or journal articles)
- Good writing skills (includes grammar, word choice, and overall organization)
- Presentation of new ideas/concepts that promotes further discussion
- Minimum length of 100 words (replies are a minimum of 50 words)
- Be posted by 11:59pm on the due date (early posts are encouraged so others can respond)

Your original post is worth up to 6 points and will be graded following the rubric below. Your reply to at least one classmate is worth up to 4 points. “I agree” is not a satisfactory response! Please keep all feedback respectful and constructive—any inappropriate or derogatory language will not be tolerated and may result in an “Incomplete” or “F” for the course. If you are unsure of how to post to the board, please refer to the **Online Student Guide** in Blackboard.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Discussion Board Post Grading Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Excellent:</strong> Post shows critical thinking and stimulates the discussion. Provides examples and/or details to strengthen the response. Encourages other responses and brings new ideas to the table. Includes excellent grammar, spelling, organization of thoughts, and clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Good:</strong> Post shows some critical thinking and occasionally encourages discussion. Organization of thoughts is clear, and writing is free of spelling/grammar errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Average:</strong> Post lacks clarity and occasionally wanders off topic. Uses personal opinion instead of examples/details to strengthen argument. Includes a few minor spelling/grammar errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Minimal:</strong> Post barely addresses topic and shows no critical thinking. Mainly based on personal opinion and includes multiple grammar/spelling errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td><strong>Poor:</strong> Post shows no critical thinking and does not add anything valuable to the discussion. Consists almost entirely of personal opinion. Many grammar/spelling errors and poor word choices.</td>
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Discussion board assignments may require you to select studies from Epidemiology journals. You can access these in-person or online. To gain online access to UC’s Health Sciences Library, go to [http://www.libraries.uc.edu/hsl/](http://www.libraries.uc.edu/hsl/). Choose “Off Campus Access” from the **QuickLinks** menu bar on the left. You will need to use your **Central Login** username and password for access. Other valuable online resources are available under the **Web Resources** tab.

**Synchronized Chat Sessions:** There will be four synchronized chat sessions scheduled during the quarter (see weekly schedule below) led by the instructor, discussing different topics.

Last updated 06/22/2015
that are TBD. You are required to participate in ONE chat session (worth 10 points). If you would like to participate in the other two sessions, people who have not had a session will get first priority. The remaining slots will be on a first come first serve basis. You will be required to inform the TA which chat(s) you will be participating in no later than 24 hours prior to the scheduled chat so that the instructor has an idea of how many students to expect. We are only allowing 10 people per session to participate. It is possible that if this is your 2nd session, we may ask you to not actively participate to give first-timers appropriate opportunity. If the sessions are booked, you may be asked to participate in another session, so choose your date as soon as possible.

Any conflicts with scheduled chats need to be brought up with the TA as soon as possible. The chats will last approximately 30-45 minutes each, depending on how much discussion is taking place.

Directions on how to access the chat sessions, as well as directions to ensure that your computer has all of the correct settings, will be made available prior to the scheduled chat sessions. You may also access a “practice chat” under the Assignments tab in Blackboard.

**Project:** The project will consist of a thoughtful exploration of designing an epidemiologic study. The purpose of this project is not to design the perfect study, but rather to appreciate the complexities of study design from a variety of perspectives and to refine your epidemiologic thinking process with regard to these complexities. You will choose a research topic of interest and compare and contrast two possible study designs for addressing that topic of interest.

Refer to the Assignments tab in Blackboard for more detailed instructions.

**Exams:** Both exams will consist of short answer questions. The midterm includes approximately 30 questions, and the final is comprehensive with approximately 50 questions. Details about access, time allotted, etc. will be made available prior to the exams. Review the test-taking guidelines in the Online Student Guide in Blackboard before taking any online test. There will be two “practice” quizzes available so that you can solve any potential problems before taking a graded exam.
Grading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Percent of Total Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework/Discussion Board</td>
<td>40 points (4 x 10 points each)</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronized Chat Session</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>60 points</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>40 %</td>
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Course Policies

1. **Email**: Please direct content questions to the TAs first, unless it concerns a grade or a personal matter. Send questions to both TAs. If either Laura or Stephani is unable to answer your question, they will direct it to the instructor. Emails will be answered within 24-48 hours, although often you will hear back within 12-24 hours. If you have a question about Blackboard or issues with the modules, please refer to the help documentation located in the Online Student Guide. Additionally, Blackboard Support is available every day of the week at 513-556-1602 or blackboard@uc.edu.

2. **Due Dates**: For every day a homework assignment, project or exam is late, there will be a 10% deduction from your grade for that assignment. *If you have unusual circumstances or a family emergency, please let the TA and the instructor know.*

3. **Plagiarism**: In your project, you may paraphrase the work of another by putting it into your own words. However, any sentence or long series of words copied from another source (including the Internet) must appear within quotation marks (“xxxx”) and a reference to the original given. Any other usage is plagiarism, and in addition to being unethical, will be graded the same as if you did not do any work.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Readings and Modules</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| 1    | Read chapters 1-4 in the textbook  
Complete the following modules:  
Course Introduction Module  
Module 1: Introduction and Definitions  
Module 2: Dynamics of Disease (2 parts)  
Module 3: Morbidity and Mortality (2 parts)  
Total Time: 1 hour, 35 minutes | Due Sunday 7/5 by 11:59pm:  
- Introduce yourself in the Discussion Board  
- Complete HW #1 (Incidence/Prevalence) in Blackboard |
| 2    | Read chapters 9 and 10 in the textbook  
Complete the following modules:  
Module 4: Cohort Studies (2 parts)  
Module 5: Case Control Studies (2 parts)  
Total Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes | Due Sunday 7/12 by 11:59 pm:  
- Complete HW #2 (Epidemiology History example) in Blackboard |
| 3    | Read chapters 11-14 in the textbook  
Complete the following modules:  
Module 6: Risk Estimation (2 parts)  
Module 7: Causation (2 parts)  
Total Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes  
*Chat Session #1, Thursday (7/16) @ 6:30pm* | Due Sunday 7/19 by 11:59 pm:  
- Complete HW #3 (Hill’s Criteria Discussion Board) in Blackboard |
| 4    | Read chapter 15  
Complete the following modules:  
Module 8: Bias  
Module 9: Midterm Review (2 parts)  
Total Time: 51 minutes  
*Chat Session #2, Wednesday (7/22)@6:30pm* | Due Sunday 7/26 by 11:59 pm:  
- Midterm |
| 5    | Review chapter 15  
Read chapters 7 and 8  
Complete the following modules:  
Module 10: Confounding (3 parts)  
Module 11: Randomized Clinical Trials (2 parts)  
Total Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes  
*Chat Session #3, Tuesday (7/28) @ 6:30pm* | Due Sunday 8/2 by 11:59 pm: |
| 6    | Read chapters 5, 18, and 19  
Complete the following modules:  
Module 12: Screening (2 parts)  
Module 13: Public Health Policy (2 parts)  
Total Time: 1 hour, 24 minutes  
*Chat Session #4, Thursday 8/06 @ 6:30pm* | Due Sunday 8/9 by 11:59 pm:  
- Complete HW #4 (Screening exercise) in Blackboard |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7 | Read chapters 16 and 20  
Complete the following modules:  
**Module 14: Genetic Epidemiology (2 parts)**  
**Module 15: Ethical Considerations (2 parts)**  
Total Time: 1 hour, 11 minutes | Due Sunday 8/16 by 11:59 pm:  
Project Due                                    |
| 8 | Complete the following modules:  
**Module 16: Final Review**  
Total Time: 21 minutes | Final Exam Due Date: 8/23 by 11:59 pm       |