

Wellness Behavior Syllabus Fall 2025

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Rutgers CANVAS

11:193:421

Wellness Behavior (15 Weeks)

Course Syllabus Fall 2025

Note: There may be a few minor revisions to the syllabus throughout the semester which will be shared with you through email and on course announcements.

Instructor: Dr. Karen Ensle RDN, FAND, CFCS (Section 90)

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Office Hours: Instructor is available by email. Additionally, instructor can be contacted by phone.

Credit Hours: 3 credits: (180 minutes/week x 15 weeks = 2,700 minutes/course = 45 hours/course)

SEBS School Requirement: A required course for the *Certificate in Community Health Outreach* (22 credits) and the *Holistic Wellness Minor* (18 credits). An on-line, hybrid course in CANVAS taught Spring & Fall Semesters since 2012.

Since 2020 course was revised to be an online course totally due to the pandemic.

Proposed CORE Curriculum Requirement: Fulfills CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES [CC] area *GOAL A. Students will be able to: Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experiences of and perspectives on contemporary issues.*

Students are challenged to view human differences among social groups that shape individual and group perspectives of contemporary health issues. Such differences and stratifications include race, language, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status, abilities, and other social determinants and their intersections. Students learn about the differences, disparity and lack of health equity throughout the course. They are challenged by analyzing contemporary individual and family health issues from a local, global, and multidisciplinary perspective which they discuss through six threaded discussions. Students analyze their personal health by completing twenty-six personal health assessments and then report their behavior changes and recommended improvements through their short papers. Evaluation of their health habits allows students to bring together the latest scientific evidence on healthful behaviors with their own personal negative and positive health behaviors. Throughout the course, contemporary social, environmental and health topics are discussed with other students and the instructor. Students will expand their learning of healthcare and environmental systems through face-to-face/virtual interviews at local agencies. Students complete their individual health care professional interview and group research projects getting practical experience in understanding the politics and culture of health of the community. They work in groups to interview agency professionals working within healthcare or environmental settings to observe leadership/management, agency costs, impacts and health outcomes of the agency. Students learn to be savvy, critical consumers, actively engaged in their own health as well as the health of their communities. They are challenged to act and encouraged to begin to remove barriers and promote access to health for all.

Pre-requisites: At least one prior on-line course in CANVAS or similar on-line platform is recommended. This course requires extensive threaded discussions and writing of short papers and two community-based individual and group projects. Organizational management, frequent individual and group communication with class and instructor, effective leadership, and teamwork are required to complete assignments and projects. This course is open to Juniors and Seniors due to extensive work on-line and in the community.

Textbook: *Access to Health, 16th Edition*, by Rebecca J. Donatelle. Paperback copy or e-text
ISBN-10: 0135173795
ISBN-13: 9780135173794
Publication date: 2/14/2019
Publisher: Pearson

Available as a print or e-text version available at the Barnes & Noble college bookstore. Retail price \$132 -\$160. If you prefer to rent or pay monthly you may find it elsewhere including Amazon at: <https://www.amazon.com/Access-Health-16th-Rebecca-Donatelle/dp/0135173795> or Pearson Higher Education <http://www.mypearsonstore.com/bookstore/access-to-health-0135173795>



Course Description: In today's world, health and wellness are contemporary challenges as well as headline news. This course reviews the diversity of health issues and social inequalities as they affect our experiences and perspectives on health and wellness. Students will examine, discuss, and analyze twenty major health issues (local, global or both) and their influence on the individual and society. Different perspectives on issues from readings, community projects, threaded discussions may lead to a broader understanding of how health decisions are made. A person's human differences in background, culture, age, experience, and gender allow for a broader range of knowledge of the health issue. Threaded discussions allow for in-depth discussion from textbook readings of current research. Personal health is dependent on a multitude of communication and leadership skills, and current knowledge on chronic diseases and lifestyle factors. Often positive behavior changes will ensure a long and healthy life. By completing, analyzing, and comparing 26 self-assessments to current scientific evidence, you can change your personal habits for positive behavior change. You will decide necessary changes from your readings and discussions which will become the basis for a series of short paper assignments to plan for improved health. Analysis of the latest scientific research will be considered as you make choices of living a healthier lifestyle. Getting and staying well is a worthwhile goal that affects our common futures no matter where you are right now. Learning to appreciate human differences in a diverse population and understanding how health issues intersect along with environmental challenges in our local communities continue to allow for social inequalities. This online 3-credit course delivers the latest research and statistics using current

text, videos, and PowerPoints to encourage positive behavior change so you can be an agent of change for your family, friends and community.

Required Readings and Assignments: Download a copy of the syllabus for reference. Each week this online course includes required readings and self-assessments. These readings are the basis for the assignments including: 6 threaded discussions, 4 short papers analyzing your self-assessments, one healthcare professional interview project and one group research community project assessing agency operations and impacts in the community. Both projects can be done either virtually or in person. It is essential that you buy or rent the textbook for all reading assignments and complete the self-assessments available under Course Home –Modules each week of the course. Class weeks start on Sunday and end on Saturday. For self-assessments you need to install the free Adobe Reader to open and fill out the assessments. Follow these steps: (1) Install Adobe Reader (2) Save each assessment to your desktop, (3) Fill out assessment and save to your desktop, (4) Once completed, click the blue box in the upper right corner of the screen to “Submit Assignment” and follow the directions; or if using hard copy of the assessments, please complete each assessment, save as a pdf and upload the file to “Submit Assignment”. **We are using the 16th latest edition of the textbook.** Follow the weekly course outline for reading assignments, personal assessments, threaded discussions, short papers and individual project and group project. Please make sure to complete all assignments on time for full credit.

Course Learning Objectives

As a result of this course, you will:

1. Assess your personal health and complete a contract to implement personal behavior changes during the course with short term and long-term goals for improved health and wellness.
2. Compare and contrast the *medical model* of health vs. the *public health model* and discuss the six dimensions of health.
3. Understand the issues of diversity and health equity and list actions you can take as individuals and as a society to begin removing barriers and promoting access to health care for all.
4. Use mindfulness to promote short- and long-term health benefits using current research on topics such as sleep, technostress, mental health.
5. Identify your own current, risky behaviors, and discuss factors that influence those behaviors along with strategies you can use to change them. Explain how behavior change can occur.
6. Define health equity and explain why it has become a critical issue in 21st century America and discuss actions you can take to promote health equity on campus and in the community. Discuss how mindfulness can help you respect your differences and biases.
7. Identify populations most vulnerable to health disparities in the U.S. and systemic changes needed at the national and community level to allow progress toward “good health for all”.

8. Define the components of psychological health, roles of self-efficacy and self-esteem and differences between causes/treatments of psychological disorders. List actions possible and treatment options for those experiencing mental health problems.
9. Explain key stress theories and the impacts of your physical, intellectual, and psychological stressors. Discuss ways you can cope more effectively using mindfulness strategies.
10. Describe the problem of sleep deprivation, processes of sleep, common sleep disorders and ways to improve your daily habits. Include mindfulness techniques and sound hygiene approaches in your class discussions.
11. Assess your eating habits, weight, physical activity, and strategies for healthful and mindful eating. List pros and cons of planned personal nutrition and fitness changes.
12. Explain factors contributing to global obesity and why it is a health threat. Include strategies that can be taken individually and collectively to reduce these worldwide statistics in your threaded discussions.
13. Define body image, factors that influence it and differences between dissatisfaction and disordered eating types. Include discussion of exercise disorders and treatment options.
14. Describe the health benefits of physical activity, obstacles, and strategies for optimal food and fluid consumption for exercise and recovery. Explain how to prevent and treat exercise injuries.
15. Discuss building personal relationships and communicating effectively, the impact of social networks, common forms of intimate relationships, ways to improve interpersonal interactions via the digital environment. Discuss and identify the characteristics of successful, committed relationships including common conflicts.
16. Define your sexual identity and discuss how biology, gender identity, gender roles, sexual orientation, attitudes, behaviors, and sexual expression affect one's health and safety.
17. Explain your reproductive choices and key issues to consider when choosing a contraceptive, planning a pregnancy including prenatal care, and possible solutions to infertility.
18. Recognize and define addictive behaviors: technology addictions, work addiction, exercise addiction, gambling, compulsive buying disorders, alcohol abuse, tobacco use along with drug abuse. Evaluate treatment and recovery options including intervention, therapies and 12 step programs.
19. Assess your risk for cardiovascular, diabetes, cancer, chronic diseases. Understand the potential outcomes of risky behaviors. Explain and discuss prevention and treatments.

20. Describe the prevalence and symptoms of key respiratory diseases, allergic response and common neurological disorders including digestive disorders, arthritis, low back pain along with strategies for prevention.
21. Discuss why *smart healthcare choices* are important while comparing conventional health care, complementary and integrative care. Describe the types of health insurance and how the changing systems affect cost, quality, and access to healthcare services. Identify the health benefits of understanding your family health history.
22. Differentiate between intentional and unintentional injuries and discuss trends in violence and abuse in America and on college campuses. List personal strategies for minimizing the risk of violence.
23. Explain the environmental impact associated with global population growth and our ecological footprint. Describe major causes of air and water pollution, greenhouse gas accumulation and ozone depletion. Using a mindful approach to alternative energy options, discuss the causes and impacts of climate change and global warming on our health. List strategies for reducing land pollution including hazardous waste.
24. Plan, schedule, conduct, evaluate your virtual individual interview with a healthcare professional with a minimum of a bachelor's degree, describing their role in healthcare including their work with individuals, families, and the community.
25. Apply the principles of team processes by serving on an assigned group project team. Show leadership, good communication skills, citizenship, ethics, respect, and teamwork in preparing for and completing the virtual Field Group Research Project.
26. Each group will prepare an e-portfolio research project (like a virtual poster board) with their small group. The e-portfolio research project will include a page for each student in the group to design and develop. The group must work together to pick AND visit a healthcare or environmental organization. See Course Home for full directions. **ALL GROUP MEMBERS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE VIRTUAL or in-person AGENCY INTERVIEW** as this is a requirement of this online course and takes the place of a final exam.

Course Grading:

Participation/Contribution in 6 Online Threaded Discussions (TDs) (Intro TD and TD # 1 with class; and TDs 2-6 with your assigned group)	120 points
4 Short papers up to 500 words each that define behavior changes students will make due to assessments.	280 points
1 Group Research e-Portfolio Field Project	250 points

1 Individual Healthcare Professional Interview Project	226 points
What is your family health history self-assessment? (Week 10)	20 points
26 Self-Assessments Completed and Uploaded @ 4 points each	<u>104 points</u>

Total 1000 points

Late assignments will have 5 points per day deducted. Short papers, TDs, both projects have due dates in the syllabus and on the calendar. Make sure you complete the self-assessments each week so you are ready to write the short papers. Note the self-assessments assigned need to be completed and uploaded weekly BEFORE the short papers are written.

Please make sure you keep up with all due dates of assignments. Each assignment has assigned point values. Accumulation of points will result in the following grade ranges for this course:

A= 950-1000 points

B+ = 899-949 points

B = 848-898 points

C+ = 797-847 points

C= 726-796 points

D= 655-725 points

F= 654 and below

Academic Integrity

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. This academic integrity policy is designed to guide students as they prepare assignments, take examinations, and perform the work necessary to complete their degree requirements.

Students are required to adhere to the professional standards outlined in the Rutgers University policies on academic integrity, which are available Policy on Academic Integrity and at: Office of Student Judicial Affairs. <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Class Participation Policy

In addition to working together in your groups, students are expected to actively participate in all the online activities for the course as outlined in the Course Outline (see below). Attendance in the online sessions is determined by thorough, thoughtful, relevant and on time contributions made in the weekly reading assignments, self-assessments, threaded discussions, short papers, interview project, and group project. It is expected that students will contribute 2 entries to each Threaded Discussion (TD) whether they are within the whole class or just your assigned group. **TD first post needs to be completed by midnight Wednesday of the week assigned and 2nd post by midnight on Saturday of that week. Both posts need to be documented where the information came from. Your opinions need to be backed up by research. Additional research-based information besides the text is encouraged for both first and second posts. There are six graded TDs over the course of the semester. Each post is worth 10 points for a total of 20 points for each TD.**

Students are responsible for completion of all assigned readings, materials discussed and assignments on or before the assigned due date. Both Individual Research Project Assignment and Group e-Portfolio Field Project need instructor approval, a picture of you and your group along with agency representative(s) interviewed, along with completed verification forms. **Each project has a specific verification form which must be signed and dated by agency persons for project to be accepted and graded.** These forms and pics need to be submitted on the project due date added to the rest of your project.

The Individual Research Assignment: Interviewing a Health Care Professional needs approval by 10/4. (Project Due on 11/8/25).

The e-Portfolio Health Issue or Environmental Organization Group Research Project needs approval by 11/15/25. (Project Due on 12/6/25).

WEEKS 1-15 start on Sunday and end on Saturday

Course Syllabus Outline:

Week 1 (9/1/-9/6/25)

“Finding the Right Balance”

Assessing your health with a focus on differences, disparity and health achieving health equity. Promoting and preserving your psychological health with a focus on mindfulness, spiritual health, and spiritual intelligence.

Read and Review Chapters 1 and 2 Pages 1-74

Complete the following self-assessments: How Healthy Are You? How Psychologically Healthy Are You? What is Your Spiritual IQ?

All self-assessments are uploaded to “Submit Assignment” to your instructor only.

Introduction Threaded Discussion (with class) is an Introduction of you with first post by 9/3 and second post by 9/6. (All TDs have 2 posts with first post due midnight Wednesday and second post by midnight Saturday)

Week 2 (9/7-9/13)

“Mindfulness, Spiritual Health, and Spiritual Intelligence ”

Managing Stress and Improving Your Sleep

Read Chapters 3- and 4-

Pages 75-118

Complete the following self-assessments and upload: How Stressed Are You? Are You Sleeping Well?

Threaded Discussion # 1 (with class) on Chapters 1-4. First post by 9/10 and second post by 9/13. (Graded)

Week 3 (9/14-9/20)

Building Healthy Lifestyles

Nutrition: Eating for a Healthier You, Reaching and Maintaining a Healthy Weight

Read Chapters 5 and 6

Pages 119-171

Complete the following self-assessments/upload: How Healthy Are Your Eating Habits? Are You Ready to Start a Weight Loss Program?

Week 4 (9/21-9/27)

Enhancing Your Body Image, Improving Your Physical Fitness

Read Chapter 7

Pages 172-212

Complete the following self-assessments and upload: Are Your Efforts to be Thin Sensible or Spinning Out of Control? How Physically Fit are You?

Threaded Discussion # 2 with assigned group on Chapters 5, 6, 7.

First post by 9/24 and second post by 9/27.

Complete and submit Short Paper # 1 next week on 10/4. Discuss your results from the 9 personal assessments (Chapters 1-7) assigned from Weeks 1-4.

REMINDER: Work on your health care professional interview project. E-mail instructor with name of person you will interview, job title and credentials for approval by 10/4. (Person needs to have at least a bachelor's degree or higher). Project Due 11/8.

Week 5 (9/28-10/4)

“Creating Healthy and Caring Relationships”

Building Healthy Relationships & Communicating Effectively

Read Chapter 8

Pages 213-231

Complete the following self-assessment and upload: How Well Do You

Communicate? **Complete and submit Short Paper # 1 on 10/5 this week. Discuss your results from the 9 personal assessments (Chapters 1-7) assigned from Weeks 1-4.**

Week 6 (10/5-10/11) Understanding Your Sexuality, Considering Your Reproductive Choices.

Read Chapters 9 and 10

Pages 232-289

Complete the following self-assessments and upload: What are Your Sexual Attitudes? Are You Comfortable with Your Contraception?

Threaded Discussion # 3 with assigned group on Chapters 8-10 first post due 10/8 and 2nd post due by 10/11.

“Avoiding Risks from Harmful Habits”

Week 7 (10/12-10/18) Avoiding Risks from Harmful Habits
Drinking Alcohol Responsibly, Ending Tobacco Use,
Read Chapter 11 and 12 **Pages 290-345**
Complete the following self-assessments and upload: Are You Addicted? What is Your Risk for Alcohol Abuse? Tobacco: Are Your Habits Putting You at Risk?

Week 8 (10/9-10/25) Avoiding Drug Misuse and Abuse
Read Chapter 13 **Pages 346-373**
Complete the following self-assessment and upload: Learn to Recognize Drug Use and Potential Abuse.
Threaded Discussion # 4 Chapters 11-13 with assigned group. 1st post due 10/22 and 2nd post due 10/25.
Complete and submit Short Paper #2 next week integrating your results from last 7 personal assessments (Chapters 8-13) assigned from Weeks 5-8. Due 11/1.

“Preventing and Fighting Disease” (3 Weeks)

Week 9 (10/26-11/1) Preventing and Fighting Disease
Read Chapters 14 and 15 **Pages 374--411**
Complete the following self-assessments/upload: Protecting Against Infectious Diseases, STIs and Understanding Your Health History. STIs: Do You Really Know What You Think You Know?
Complete and submit Short Paper #2 integrating your results from last 7 personal assessments (Chapters 8-13) assigned from Weeks 5-8. Due 11/1.

Week 10 (11/2-11/8) Preventing Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes
Read Chapter 16 **Pages 412-445**
Complete the following self-assessments/upload: What is Your Personal CVD Risk? Are You at Risk for Diabetes? What is Your Family Health History?
Threaded Discussion # 5 with assigned group on Chapters 14-16. First post due 11/5 and second post due 11/8.
Healthcare Interview project with verification form and pic of person interviewed due on 11/8.

REMINDER: Plan your e-Portfolio health or environmental issue/organization group research project. Research Issue/Organization selection needs approval by 11/15. E-mail instructor with selection. Project Due 12/6.

Week 11 (11/9-11/15) Reducing the Risk for Cancer and Chronic Conditions.
Read Chapters 17 and 18 **Pages 446-488**
Complete the following self-assessments and upload:
What's Your Personal Risk for Cancer? Are You at Risk for Chronic Illness?

“Facing Life’s Challenges” (3 Weeks)

Week 12 (11/16-11/22) Making Smart Health Care Choices
Read Chapter 19 **Pages 489-513**
Complete the following self-assessments/upload: Are You a Smart Health Care Consumer? **Threaded Discussion # 6 with assigned group on Chapters 17-18 from weeks 9-11. First post due 11/19 and second post due 11/22.**
Complete and submit Short Paper # 3 on last 6 self-assessments (Chapters 14-18) assigned from Weeks 9-11. Due 11/22.

Week 13 (11/23-11/29) Preventing Violence and Abuse
Read Chapter 20 **Pages 514-548**
Complete the following self-assessment/upload: Are You at Risk for Violence? Are You at Risk for a Motor Vehicle Accident
Make sure you completed **your** family health history assessment from Week 10.

Week 14 (11/30-12/6) Preserving and Protecting Your Environment
Read Chapter 21 **Pages 549-571**
Complete the following self-assessment/upload: Are You Doing All You Can to Protect the Environment? **Complete and submit Short Paper # 4 on last 4 self-assessments. (Chapters 19-21) assigned from Weeks 12-14. Due 12/13.**

Week 15 (12/7-12/13) Classes end 12/10.
Submit the e-Portfolio Group Research Project. Due on 12/6 or before.

Have a Wonderful Holiday!!