

EPID 805: CLINICAL EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH METHODS
EPID 806: CLINICAL EPIDEMIOLOGIC RESEARCH SKILLS

Fall Semester, 2007

Instructors: Laura Hanson (Course Director)
lhanson@med.unc.edu

Bradley Gaynes (Co-Director)
bradley_gaynes@med.unc.edu

David Ransohoff
ransohof@med.unc.edu

Ada Adimora
adimora@med.unc.edu

William Miller
Bill_Miller@unc.edu

Time: 2:00 – 3:50; Monday & Friday

Place: 133 MacNider, except as noted

Website: <http://blackboard.unc.edu> (You must have a UNC ONYEN account to access the website)

Objectives:

- 1) Provide knowledge and skills necessary for the development of clinical research questions and hypotheses, and the application of epidemiologic methods to answer these questions.
- 2) Provide an introduction to the proposal development process that is an essential component of a clinical research career.
- 3) To address key aspects of professional development.

EPID 896: All participants in EPID 805/806 should also be active participants in the K30 program, including the K30 Seminar (EPID 896). The K30 seminar meets on Fridays, alternating 12-1 (first and third Fridays) and 12-2 (second and fourth Fridays).

Description: The course comprises seminar/lecture sessions and small group sessions. The seminars are presented by a variety of expert faculty. Each seminar or lecture session includes required readings prior to the class. Most sessions are interactive, and students are expected to contribute to discussion.

Small group sessions are focused on the development of research questions, hypotheses and methods written in the form of a research proposal (see below). During small group sessions, each student presents a series of written assignments. Students and faculty provide peer review and discussion for each participant's ideas. With faculty guidance, students will review the work of their peers and receive reviews of their work.

Handouts: Any required readings or handouts will be posted on the class website for downloading a minimum of 2 days before a class.

Reading: Reading will be posted to the website along with the handouts. Please make every effort to read the assigned readings. The quality of seminar discussions will be enhanced substantially if all class members can participate actively.

Participation: Regular class attendance is a key expectation of both courses. Attendance at lecture and seminar sessions and small groups is recorded, and included as part of the student evaluation. For seminars, it is expected that students will display basic courtesy to the instructors by coming on time to class. Similarly, attendance at small groups is essential to ensure that all students have the maximal experience. The small groups sessions involve an exchange of ideas that can only be successful with full participation. If you will be missing a small group, please inform the course directors (Hanson and Gaynes) at least 2 weeks prior.

Proposal: A major expectation of the course is the development of a 10-25 page single spaced research project proposal. The type and sophistication of proposal will vary based on each student's level of training. This proposal may be a pilot study, a career development award (K-23, K08, foundation award), or an NIH-style research grant (R-01, R-03, R-21, etc). Proposal writing is an integral part of an academic career and students of all stages should be considering the development of a research proposal. In addition, writing demands clarity and rigor as each student formulates research questions, hypotheses, and methods to test those hypotheses.

We encourage every participant to identify a funding mechanism that is an appropriate target for their project proposal. The goal is to have the proposal in a form that is nearly ready for submission at the end of the academic year (completion of 806). The appropriate mechanism should be identified through discussions with your mentor and, to a lesser extent, your small group leader. We recognize that, in some cases, circumstances may change over the course of the year, leading to changes in the proposal.

We expect that all students will have a research mentor who will actively participate in the development of the research proposal. It is essential that the mentor provide feedback on the substantive aspects of the proposal. In addition, the mentor will be asked to provide at least one review of another student's proposal during the school year.

During the course of the year, students will provide peer review of other students' proposals. This process is an important learning experience. At times, you will be asked to review proposals that are not in your area of expertise. We expect all proposals to be written at a level that an intelligent, educated clinical researcher can understand – and you are that intelligent, educated researcher. The process of peer review allows students to apply what they are learning about research methods to study questions that are not of their own design.

Grades: Students will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a) Completion and quality of **specific aims (EPID 805) or entire research proposal (EPID 806)** – 50%
- b) Completeness and quality of reviews of other students' proposals (30%)
- c) Class participation and attendance (20%)

Evaluations: Please complete the evaluations at the end of each section of the course. These evaluations provide us with critical information to improve the course in future years.