Writing Assignments for
“What is Public Health and How Does it Impact Me?”
A 2013 First-Year Seminar
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Assignment #1 – What is Public Health? – due 9/10/2012

Bring your answers to class.
Reflecting on today’s reading, viewings and lecture please answer the following questions:
• What are three things you learned about public health?

• What are two questions you have in regard to public health?

• What is one thing that surprised you about public health

Assignment #3 – Children’s Bicycle Helmet Laws – Reaction paper – due 9/24/2012

Bring your paper to class.
In class we discussed automotive safety, including seat belts, as well as the controversy surrounding laws mandating motorcycle helmet use in Iowa. Now I’d like you to think about another controversy, laws mandating the use of bicycle helmets for children under 18.
Please answer the following questions. You will need to do some research to answer some of them.
• How many states have laws regarding bicycle helmets for children under 18?

• What are the arguments for having laws requiring bicycle helmets for children under 18?

• What are the arguments against such a law?

• As a public health professional, what would be some strategies you could use to help communities implement a bicycle helmet law for children?

Assignment #4 – Environmental Health – due 10/1/2012

Bring your answers to class.
Reflecting on today’s reading and lecture please answer the following questions:
• What are three things you learned about environmental health that you didn’t know before?

• Discuss two environmental health issues that will have an effect on you personally in the next year and why.

• Discuss two environmental health issues that will have an effect on the United States in the next five years and why.

• Discuss two environmental health issues that will have an effect on the world in the next ten years and why.
Assignment #5 - Infectious Disease — Controversy in public health - due 10/8/2012

Bring assignment to class
Write a short paper (about 1 page single-spaced) focused on one of the following questions. Consider as many sides of the argument as possible, critically analyze the situation, and defend your opinion.

○ In states like Iowa with high rates of Chlamydia or gonorrhea, should there be a “sex police” to enforce protected sex? Would you have the same response if Iowa had an extremely high rate of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)?

○ In the U.S., public health professionals do not have police power – in other words, they cannot make people stay in their homes or force them into quarantine if they have an infectious disease. Do you think public health professionals should have this type of power? Why or why not?

○ If parents choose not to vaccinate their children, should they be liable for any illness or hardship their children cause others? For example, if a child causes her kindergarten class to break out with the measles, should that child’s parents be required to pay for all the other children’s medical bills, funerals, or their parents’ missed time from work?

○ Should the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine become part of the mandatory vaccination schedule for children? The HPV vaccine has been shown to increase immunity against HPV, which has been shown to cause cervical cancer. On the other hand, HPV is a sexually-transmitted disease

Assignment #8 – Final Assignment – What does public health mean to you? - Due 12/10/2012 by 5:00 p.m.

This assignment is to be sent via e-mail to tanya-uden-holman@uiowa.edu
This reflection is meant to help you think about how far you’ve come in your understanding of public health. This piece should display how far you have come in your education over the course of the semester – a self-assessment rather than a final exam or research paper.
The following questions should be answered in your reflection paper:
• What is different about my initial thoughts about public health and my thoughts now?

• What are my final thoughts about public health as I leave this course?

• What was I surprised to learn?

• How have I learned to think about public health problems?

• Give some examples of how you can see public health at work in your daily life, your school, your community, your country.

Your paper should reflect that you have given some in-depth thought to your answers.