SPPH 581N: From Knowledge to Action in Population Health
Fall 2017, September 5 to November 27: Mondays, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.
Room B112 in the School of Population and Public Health, 2206 East Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3

Instructor: Dr. Paul Kershaw. paul.kershaw@ubc.ca; 604-827-5393.
Office: See reception at Room 440 – 2206 East Mall.
Office hour: By appointment, in person or by Skype as necessary depending on Dr. Kershaw’s travel schedule. Skype handle is: paul.kershaw1. Please be sure to include “581N 2017” in the subject of any email correspondence with me.

Core Readings


All other articles or book chapters listed in the syllabus can be accessed either through ejournals or ebooks available from the UBC library, or via direct urls that are provided below.

Course Summary

Knowledge Translation (KT) has received increased attention in the population health literature over the last two decades, particularly in Canada, in part because granting agencies increasingly ask academics to build KT plans into their research projects. However, the aspiration that knowledge inform action and policy has been a preoccupation for far longer, as have been academic efforts to understand the relation between knowledge and action. Given this longer history, the contemporary population health literature will be critically reviewed in the light of an interdisciplinary tradition that examines how actors, organizations, companies and/or movements mobilize ideas to influence consumers, populations, institutions and policy. Students will be invited to examine critically what we can learn about KT by “thinking about power,” “thinking like a movement” and “thinking like a marketer.” The course will be of particular interest to students in various disciplines who are keen to examine how the findings they and others generate in research settings may contribute to fostering public understanding and in stimulating action for positive change. While the course will focus on systems-level change, the intention is to explore key KT concepts and planning strategies that can be applied to influence action in a range of settings.

The design of this curriculum was supported by the UBC Centre for Community Engaged Learning ([http://students.ubc.ca/about/centre-community-engaged-learning](http://students.ubc.ca/about/centre-community-engaged-learning)). The pedagogy is organized so that students learn about the subject in part by reflecting on a pan-Canadian population health KT and community engagement campaign called Generation Squeeze ([http://gensqueeze.ca](http://gensqueeze.ca)), which the instructor founded from his research and KT lab at the University of BC. Generation Squeeze is also an output of the
A 17 year long, ongoing KT activity organized by the Human Early Learning Partnership (http://earlylearning.ubc.ca) to influence the social determinants of health. This case study will be featured throughout the semester to allow students to apply a critical review of the course readings to the evolution of an actual KT initiative in order to bring the literature to life in a real setting.

With support from the instructor, students will design a KT activity (that they may implement during the semester) to contribute either to a KT initiative of their choosing, or the Generation Squeeze campaign in order to gain practical experience. The latter case study integrates a broad range of Social Determinants of Health themes from which students can choose to focus, including income, education, housing, child development, the environment, etc. Students will then critically reflect on their experiences designing theories of change, tactics and tools for their KT activity in order to apply this learning to develop a KT Field Guide to inform their ongoing research and future professional work. In this way, the course is organized to contribute concretely to students' major projects, theses, etc.

Students are encouraged to work in groups for the purpose of implementing the KT activity.

Given the pedagogical emphasis on learning by doing, the instructor has organized the syllabus to balance book learning with practice. There is a heavier emphasis on readings in the first two-thirds of the semester. The final few weeks introduce very little new reading other than what has already been assigned earlier in the semester in accommodation of the focus on learning by doing. Students will be supported with their assignments throughout the semester by class-time that will be devoted to planning for the first three written assignments due October 17, October 31 and November 21. The research required of the final assignment will be performed primarily while planning and critically reviewing the KT activities supported during the first three assignments.

Approach to Evaluation
All written assignments should be submitted by 4pm on the due date. Please submit in Word Documents by email to paul.kershaw@ubc.ca with the subject “SPPH 581N 2017 Assignment [add number]”.

1. Practice what we can learn about KT by “thinking about power.” Design a “knowledge to action” activity to contribute to a KT initiative of your choosing, or the Gen Squeeze KT case study featured in the class. (15% of grade. Due October 17, 2017).
   Students will be evaluated according to their ability to articulate:
   • the constituency for the KT activity,
   • their shared purpose,
   • a theory of change that motivates the KT initiative to achieve that shared purpose, one that engages with the power dynamics that will mediate the success of the KT initiative, and
   • the selection of tactics by which to launch an activity that is guided by that theory of change.
   A draft assignment is attached at the end of the syllabus.

2. Practice what we can learn about KT by “thinking like a movement.” Create a Public Narrative for the KT initiative, guided by the scholarship of Marshall Ganz. (15% of grade due October 31, 2017)
   Students will be evaluated according to their ability to articulate concisely:
   • A story of Us – who is the shared constituency for the KT activity?
   • A story of Self – what motivates you to contribute to the constituency’s shared purpose?
   • A story of Now – why is it urgent that the constituency act now?
3. Practice what we can learn about KT by “thinking like a marketer.” Perform ‘Basic Training’ for the development of core story elements for your KT initiative, guided by the scholarship of Jonah Sachs. (15% of grade due November 21, 2017). Specifically:
   a. Write a letter from your hero about her broken world (in order to help you better understand your “US”/constituency, along with the “nightmare” if they stay on sidelines)
   b. Write a dialogue that captures the encounter between the brand hero and the mentor (in order to help you anticipate what is your constituency looking for in order to be convinced to get off the sidelines? This is critical for story of “now”)
   c. Write a letter from your Hero Remembering the Journey (in order to help you better understand the “dream”, and what it takes to get there).

Students will be evaluated according to their ability to describe:
- the “hero” in their KT initiative
- what the hero perceives to be “broken” about their world that will motivate them to engage with the KT initiative
- the character with which your KT initiative will “mentor” your “hero” to engage in the KT activities
- how the world will change for the better for your “hero” and her community after she engages in the KT initiative.

4. A maximum 25 page Knowledge to Action Field Guide that critically reviews Assignments #1, #2 and #3 to reveal insights for the design of future KT plans that you can apply to your own research or professional work. A draft assignment is attached at end of syllabus. (35% of grade due December 11, 2017).

Students will be evaluated according to their ability to
- reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the mainstream Population Health KT articles assigned in class.
- reflect on your experience using assignments 1, 2 and 3 to address those weaknesses, noting what you would do again; and what you wouldn’t do. In both cases, justify why.
- be charitable in interpreting the mainstream Population Health KT literature, as well as the complementary literatures designed to help us plan our KT by drawing on the insights of experts in power, social movements and marketing.

5. Class participation: 20% of grade.
- Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions and are encouraged to apply actively concepts and issues being presented in relation to their own research interests.
- Students will be expected to prepare for and participate in a variety of exercises that focus on applying course concepts to their own research interests, presenting these in class, and providing constructive peer feedback. This will include presenting drafts of Assignments 1, 2 and 3 in advance of their due date.
Class Participation

The expectation is that students will come to lectures having read and thought about the material (with exceptions for the first day of the semester). The schedule below shows that students will routinely be expected to deliver short, informal presentations about assigned readings, and responsibility for these presentations will be established at the end of the seminar in the week before the presentations will be given. This approach will support students who have participation styles that thrive on prior preparation. The syllabus also shows that there will regularly be in-class activities that require active participation in the moment. The quality of student presentations, comments and questions will contribute to individuals’ 20% class participation marks.

Attendance

Formal class attendance records will not be kept, although class participation grades will suffer if attendance is erratic. The class size is generally small, so it is conspicuous when you arrive late.

Powerpoint Notes

I use powerpoint notes to facilitate my lectures. They amount to the ‘pen on paper’ notes that many professors traditionally relied upon when instructing classes. I will post the decks on the course website following each seminar. Developing and refining strong note taking skills is a key expertise to be refined at graduate school.

UBC Connect  http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect/

I welcome student suggestions and leadership about if/how to use UBC Connect’s online options. This has not been a venue that I’ve found pedagogically useful when teaching the course in the past. But I welcome new ideas to improve this component of the course design.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Penalties can range from a zero on the assignment, to a zero for the course, to expulsion from the university. Please familiarize yourself with University policy regarding plagiarism at http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959.
Reading Schedule and Thematic Focus, by Seminar (subject to adaptation in response to class needs).

September 5: Week 1. The Role of Intuition and Reasoning in Judgment. Anticipating Implications for KT. No seminar because of Labour Day holiday.

Readings

September 11: Week 2. Course Intro & The Role of Intuition and Reasoning in Judgment. Implications for KT

Readings

In class activity: Introductions. What attracts you to a course on KT? To what issue(s) do you intend to apply ideas and skills gained from the course? Who are the stakeholders/constituents/people for that issue? What problem do they need to solve? What will change if they solve it?

Case study: Generation Squeeze engaging the elephant.
September 18: Week 3. Five Anxieties in the Mainstream Population Health KT Literature

Readings

Other Reference Material that May be of Interest (not assigned reading)

*In class activity:* Students lead discussions of each article.


September 25: Week 4. Generating a Theory of Change: Who has the power to make the change prescribed by the evidence? Generating Tactics: We are organizing Who to What Outcome through How by When?

Readings
In class activity: Ganz et al, pp 46-50, and 56-58. Developing a theory of change to contribute to the Gen Squeeze population health intervention and knowledge mobilization campaign, and for your selected KT topic. *Students will begin to design their KT activity. See 20 Questions that are Assignment 1 (at end of this syllabus). This work in class will contribute directly to Assignment #1 due October 17.

October 2: Week 5. Students present draft Theories of Change, Strategies and Tactics for their Selected KT case study (with emphasis on theories of change).

October 9: Week 6. Thanksgiving. No seminar. Group work activity: Revise assignment 1 in light of feedback from class presentation. Revise Tactics and Timeline for selected KT project. This will include repeating activities from pages 46-50 specifically in preparation for the proposed organizing. The work in this week without a seminar will contribute directly to Assignment #1 due October 17.

October 16: Week 7. Students present draft Strategies and Tactics for their Selected KT case study; and the role of moral taste buds in judgments. Implications for KT

Readings

In class activity: In class activity: Share Strategies and Tactics to Launch selected KT case study.

Student led discussion of each assigned chapter in the book by Haidt.

Case study: Gen Squeeze stimulating moral taste buds. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation stimulating the moral taste buds.

Assignment 1 due October 17, by 4pm. Submit by email to paul.kershaw@ubc.ca as a word document with subject heading “SPPH 581N 2017 Assignment 1”

October 23: Week 8. The role of narrative in disseminating evidence. The role of evidence in selecting narratives.

Readings

In class activity: Short student summaries of Greenhalgh and Russel 2006 and Ganz 2011.

In class activity: Developing your Story of Us & Story of Now. Applying this training to your case study. This class activity will feed into assignment #2 due October 31.

October 30: Week 9. Students Present draft Stories of Us & Now; and Empowerment Marketing: what is its role in KT?

Readings

In class activity: Sharing Stories of Us and Self for class feedback

Assignment 2 due October 31 by 4pm. Send as a word document by email to paul.kershaw@ubc.ca with subject “SPPH 581N 2017 Assignment 2”

November 6: Week 10. Winning the Story Wars

Readings

In class activity: Sachs’ (chapter 6) Basic Training: Design your core story elements. Apply this training to your case study. This class activity will feed into Assignment #3 due November 21.

November 13: Week 11. No seminar due to holiday in lieu of Remembrance Day

Group work in lieu of seminar time: Prepare Basic Training for Assignment #3 due November 21.
November 20: Week 12. Students Present Basic Training for Assignment 3; and Narrative, Marketing, Distribution and Ally Support: What are their roles in KT?

Readings

In class activity: Students present Basic Training for Assignment 3.

Case study: Learning from Gen Squeeze distribution in the media; and modest efforts at story telling.

Assignment #3 due November 21, by 4pm. Submit to paul.kershaw@ubc.ca using subject “581N 2017 Assignment 3.”


Readings

In class activity: Students will reflect on the mainstream population health KT papers that we have already read during the course of the semester. Students present 10 minutes assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a selected article. At the conclusion of the student presentations, the class will synthesize
together an overall evaluation of the population health KT literature in preparation for preparing KT Field Guides as Assignment 4.

December 11: Final assignment due by 4pm. Submit to paul.kershaw@ubc.ca with subject “SPPH 581N 2017 Assignment 4.”
Assignment 1: Design and plan a “knowledge to action” activity to contribute to your selected case study. Due October 17, by 4pm. 15% of grade.

To design and plan this activity, please produce a short report that answers all of the following questions:

**Identify Shared Purpose**
1. Who is our constituency (who are our people)?
2. What problem do we need to solve?
3. How will the world change if we solve it? What does this reveal about our goal?

**Develop Theory of Change**
4. Who are leaders in the constituency? Who are supporters? Who are competition? Who are opposition?
5. Of these, who has the greatest interest in change; greatest interest in achieving our goal?
6. Who has the greatest interest in the status quo?
7. Who is on the sidelines?
8. Who has the resources/power to solve the problem and create the change we want to see? Is it our people? Is it others?
9. Why have we/they not created the change yet? What do we/they want?
10. If the power rests with others, what do we have that they want?
11. How can we leverage our resources to create the change we want?
12. Reflecting on the above, what is our theory of change? State explicitly “If our people do….., then the result will be…, because…”
13. Given this theory of change, our one sentence organizing statement is: We are organizing Who? to achieve What? through How? by When?

**Design a Kickoff Activity that contributes to the Implementation of Our Theory of Change**
14. What is the activity? What will the activity look like? When will it take place? Where?
15. Who will be involved? How many? What will people be doing? What will you be doing?
16. What measurable outcome will you try to achieve with this kickoff activity?
17. How will the activity be motivational for the constituency?
18. Why did you choose this activity from among the other available tactics?
19. For this specific activity, who are the leaders? Who are supporters? Who are competition? Who are opposition? Do any of the latter have the resources/power to prevent the activity? If so, what do they want? And what do we have that they want?

List the things that need to get done between now and the scheduled date of your activity in order to organize it effectively.
Assignment 4: Prepare a Knowledge to Action Field Guide to Apply to Your Future KT Work

The assignment as described in the syllabus:
A maximum 25 page Knowledge to Action Framework that critically reviews Assignments #1, #2 and #3 to reveal insights for the design of future KT plans that you can apply to your own research or professional work. **Due December 11, by 4pm.** 35% of grade. Please submit by email to paul.kershaw@ubc.ca with subject “SPPH 581N 2017 Assignment 4.”

In keeping with the final seminar, use this guidebook as an opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the mainstream Population Health KT articles assigned in class. Strong assignments will engage with **the five anxieties** in the Pop Health KT literature that have motivated the course, along with practical strategies to address these anxieties recommended by literatures that help us to think about power, social movements and marketing.

Throughout the course, the case study has given you opportunities to experiment with a variety of strategies in assignments 1, 2 and 3 to address anxieties/weaknesses in the Population Health KT literature. Reflect on your experience with those tactics, noting what you would do again; and what you wouldn’t do. In both cases, justify why.

Be specific. For example, if the literature is concerned that the science of KT is not generating evidence of “what works” regardless of the context, then document this concern in the literature with reference to articles assigned in class. Then account for what a KT field guide can and cannot do for someone planning a KT campaign.

If there is concern that much of the KT literature in Pop Health presumes an inaccurate understanding of the place of evidence in individual or group judgments, document this concern in the literature with reference to articles assigned in the class. Then provide concrete strategies to address the concern.

If much of the KT literature in Pop Health includes limited attention to power dynamics, then what are practical strategies to map the players and who has the power in any given context?

If much of the KT literature implies theories of change that rely primarily on “putting the evidence out there,” what are practical strategies to generate alternate theories of change that are more comprehensive and/or more attuned to the context?

If KT requires sustained commitments of time, more than may have been anticipated by those presuming theories of change that simply emphasize “putting the evidence out there,” then what are your thoughts about the roles and responsibilities of academics and students in the knowledge mobilization process?

**Be charitable in your read of the mainstream Population Health KT literature. Throughout your guidebook, make note of what you find compelling in this literature, and how that will guide you to think about KT in the future. Show the same charity when reflecting on the complementary literatures designed to help us plan our KT by drawing on the insights of experts in power, social movements and marketing.**