

**SPPH 531**  
**Health Care Systems Analysis**  
UBC School of Population and Public Health  
SPPH B138 | Tuesdays 9am-noon

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**Course Description**

This course provides a theoretical and practical foundation for health care systems research and evaluation. The theory will cover how we think about the performance of health care systems and how the relevant concepts of performance (e.g. quality, continuity) might be measured. The practical part of the course will cover the use of administrative data to conduct health care systems research, in particular to develop variables that represent the concepts of interest using SAS. This course also provides an overview of ethics and privacy issues related to research uses of administrative data.

This course uses a problem-based learning approach to introduce students to the evaluation of health care systems. Each week of the course will build on the last. This course is not specifically about health care system policies or health research study design / statistical methods. The material covered here will be complementary to other SPPH courses, building health services research competencies such as knowledge of health care system frameworks, critical and analytic thinking, and skills in quantitative analysis.

This course is open to any student who is interested in working with administrative data. It is aimed most directly at students who anticipate research careers in areas related to health care services and systems, including health services research and health policy / program evaluation.

There are no prerequisites for this course, but it is intended to be a 2<sup>nd</sup> (or subsequent) (graduate-level) year course.

**Purpose and Objectives:**

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand, describe, and use basic concepts in health system analysis
2. Identify and apply health system classification terminology and concepts
3. Articulate privacy issues and protections as they relate to the analysis of administrative health data for research purposes
4. Develop an actionable plan for creating an algorithm to use administrative data to measure a concept related to health system performance
5. Create comprehensive documentation for your algorithm that aids both replicability and use of that algorithm
6. Use SAS software for relatively complex data management tasks
7. Use SAS for (relatively simple) data analysis
8. Troubleshoot, test and interpret findings
9. Present findings showing the policy relevance of your research

**Attaining Course Competencies:**

The course competencies will be attained in five ways: readings, video resources, lecture, class discussion and student writing / project(s). Reviewing required material prior to each class

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is a critical part of successful learning and effective class participation. To aid in directed reading of the course material, we will discuss the purpose of next week's readings at the end of each class session. The ongoing student projects are meant to assist with developing both theoretical and practical knowledge. Students are expected to use their project work as a means to explore the application of theories and concepts they are learning and to provide a basis for class participation.

**Instructor:**

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778-998-3821 | [kmcgrail@chspr.ubc.ca](mailto:kmcgrail@chspr.ubc.ca) | Office hours by appointment

**Class Time & Location:** Tuesdays 9am-noon, SPPH Room B138. *Class will start promptly at 9am, and students are expected to attend (except under extenuating circumstances) and to arrive on time.*

**Evaluation**

Privacy test:	<i>required but not counted towards marks</i>
Framework presentation	10%
Proposed algorithm	10%
Metadata	10%
Student topic presentation	20%
Flowchart part 1: Proposed flowchart	5%
Flowchart part 2: Completed flowchart + SAS code	20%
Final paper / presentation on chosen health system topic	25%

There will be penalties for assignments submitted late. Typically the penalty will be 10% per day. Extensions of the due date for the written assignments will be considered pending extenuating circumstances. Assignments are to be emailed / submitted on the SRTL by midnight on the designated due date.

Students are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism, to understand that plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct, and that such misconduct is subject to penalty. Please review the Student Discipline section of the UBC Calendar (available on on-line at [www.ubc.ca](http://www.ubc.ca)).

*Please note: The course outline and readings are in draft and are subject to change. They will in fact almost certainly change at least somewhat, as this is intended as a Problem Based Learning course, so the flow over the term will to some degree be directed by the participants.*

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**Class Schedule**

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Jan 3	Introduction to the course and setting out the “problem”/ Discussion of Week 2 assignment
2	Jan 10	Key concepts in evaluating health care system performance / emergent properties / Population Data BC
3	Jan 17	Frameworks for health system analysis and development of algorithm topics <b>Graded assignment 1 due – Framework presentation</b>
4	Jan 24	Introduction to linked administrative data / privacy and ethics / introduction to the Secure Research Environment (SRE)
5	Jan 31	Preparing metadata / SAS intro and basic commands (Modules 1 & 2) <b>Graded assignment 2 due – Proposed algorithm</b>
6	Feb 7	Student topics, part 1 / SAS intermediate commands, debugging programs (Modules 3 & 4)
7	Feb 14	Student topics, part 2 / SAS intermediate statistics / variable attributes (Modules 5 & 6) <b>Graded assignment 3 due – Metadata</b>
8	Feb 28	Student topics, part 3 / SAS intermediate data management / combining data sets (Module 7 & 8) <b>Graded assignment 4 due – Proposed flowchart</b>
9	Mar 7	Student topics, part 4 / stratification and sensitivity
10	Mar 14	Student topics, part 5 / SAS review, trouble-shooting, student led questions
11	Mar 21	Macros / reading raw data into SAS <b>Graded assignment 5 due – Completed flowchart and SAS code</b>
12	Mar 28	Student presentations summarizing what we’ve learned individually / putting it all together
13	April 4	TO BE DISCUSSED <b>Final paper due Monday morning following the last class</b>

**Week 1: Introduction to the course**

During the first class session we will:

- Have class introductions, to people and resources

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- Review the syllabus and administrative issues
- Discuss grading and grading criteria
- Establish the overarching problem / question the course will try to address

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (RECOMMENDED READING)**

Donabedian, A. (1966). Evaluating the quality of medical care. *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 44(3). Retrieve from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3348969>

Berwick D, Nolan T and Whittington J. *The Triple Aim: Care, Health and Cost*. Health Affairs. 27(3):759-760. 2008 <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/27/3/759.full>

A TEDx talk by Dr. Bill Ghali from Alberta on the “crisis” in health care performance:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNs\\_eH6Z4ps](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNs_eH6Z4ps)

**Week 2: Concepts and theories in health care systems research; emergent properties**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Articulate the major concepts around health system performance
- Provide examples of emergent properties as they relate to health system performance
- Read required information and complete PopData privacy training

**READINGS and RESOURCES**

Institute of Medicine 2001. Crossing the quality chasm: a new health system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2001/Crossing-the-Quality-Chasm-A-New-Health-System-for-the-21st-Century.aspx> (Executive Summary, and specifically pages 1-9)

Rickles, Hawe and Shiell. A simple guide to chaos and complexity. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2007 61: 933-937. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2465602/pdf/933.pdf>

Ian Sommerville. Emergent properties of sociotechnical systems.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCBaQpEq1U8>

**PRIVACY TEST:** Review privacy material provided by PopData, and take the PopData test. Must pass with a score of 80% or higher before continuing.

**Submit:** On-line, automatic submission once the privacy test is completed. The test and access to it will only be available after you have read through the privacy information provided on this site:  
<https://portal.popdata.bc.ca/static/privacy/privacyhome.html>

**Description/Instructions:**

You will need a login and password in order to complete the test. This will be emailed to you by PopData staff. If you do not have this information, please let me know. You will receive a score immediately, and PopData will report the score to the course instructor as well.

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**Grading Criteria:** Automatic, generated by the PopData website, based on answers to multiple-choice questions.

***Week 3: Frameworks for health system analysis and development of research questions***

- Various frameworks for health systems analysis / performance (e.g. CIHI, OECD)
- What the frameworks address; how they are organized
- What is the level of analysis? What do they cover and not cover?
- Do these frameworks appear complete? Suitable for a Canadian environment?
- Are they theoretical or practical?
- What makes a “good” health care system performance /analysis framework?

**Graded assignment 1 – Framework presentation**

Each student will be responsible for all required readings, and then will take particular responsibility for leading the discussion on one framework. This will include summarizing the main points, relating the framework to other approaches, and relating the framework back to the required readings. Grading rubric will be provided on the first day of class.

**READINGS - FRAMEWORKS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. World Health Organization. 2000. Chapter One: Why Do Health Systems Matter? The World Health Report 2000 - Health Systems: Improving Performance. Geneva, Switzerland. <http://www.who.int/whr/2000/en/> (specific focus on pages 3-11)
2. Canadian Institute for Healthcare Information. A performance measurement framework for the Canadian health system. May 2013. [https://secure.cihi.ca/free\\_products/HSP-Framework-ENweb.pdf](https://secure.cihi.ca/free_products/HSP-Framework-ENweb.pdf)
3. Bureau of Health Information. 2014. *Describing and Assessing Performance in Health Care: An Integrated Framework*. April 2014. [http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/217030/Spotlight\\_on\\_measurement\\_APR\\_2013.pdf](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0013/217030/Spotlight_on_measurement_APR_2013.pdf) (overview on pages 3-16 sufficient for those not presenting this framework)
4. Conference Board of Canada. Measuring Success: A Framework for Benchmarking Health Care System performance. September 2012. [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/216325d6-6c2c-40b4-adda-0cea7f3fcedd/13-080\\_benchmarkinghealthcare-cashc.pdf](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/216325d6-6c2c-40b4-adda-0cea7f3fcedd/13-080_benchmarkinghealthcare-cashc.pdf) (specific focus on Chapters 3 and 4)

AND

Conference Board of Canada. Paving the Road to Higher Performance: Benchmarking Provincial Health Systems. May 2013. [http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/8c1b69ec-5b2c-42b5-a723-5351353107d8/13-305\\_provhealthbenchmarking\\_cashc.pdf](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/8c1b69ec-5b2c-42b5-a723-5351353107d8/13-305_provhealthbenchmarking_cashc.pdf) (specific focus on Chapters 1-3)

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (RECOMMENDED READING)**

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1. Health Council of Canada 2013. Better Health, Better Care, Better Value for All: Refocusing health care reform in Canada.  
[http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/content\\_bh.php?mnu=2&mnu1=48&mnu2=30&mnu3=53](http://www.healthcouncilcanada.ca/content_bh.php?mnu=2&mnu1=48&mnu2=30&mnu3=53)
2. Bitran R, Gomez P, Escobar L, Berman P. 2010. Review of World Bank's Experience with Country-Level Health System Analysis. Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) Discussion Paper. Washington, DC.  
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/HEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/Resources/281627-1095698140167/REVIEWOFWORLDBANKSEXPERIENCEWITHCOUNTRYLEVELHEALTHSYSTEMANALYSIS.pdf>  
Murray CL and Frenk J. A framework for assessing the performance of health systems. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. 78(6): 717-731. 2000.  
[http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/78\(6\)717.pdf](http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/78(6)717.pdf)
3. Gregory P. Marchildon. 2013. Canada: Health system review. *Health Systems in Transition*; 15(1): 1-179 [http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/181955/e96759.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/181955/e96759.pdf)
1. OECD.StatExtracts: Health. URL:  
[http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=HEALTH\\_STAT](http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=HEALTH_STAT) (specific focus on pages 6-16)

**Week 4: Introduction to linked administrative data / emergent properties / Introduction to the Secure Research Environment (SRE)**

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- Describe administrative data, identify sources of administrative data, and describe appropriate research uses of these data
- Describe data linkage methods, review data linkage systems around the world, and introduce Population Data BC
- Review and understand ethical issues in the use of administrative data
- Understand both what the Secure Research Environment is and how to use it

**READINGS:**

Jutte DP, LL Roos, MD Brownell. Administrative Record Linkage as a Tool for Public Health Research. *Annual Review of Public Health* 2011; 32:91-108

Population Data BC website, including the Overview video and Data Linkage sections:  
<http://www.popdata.bc.ca/aboutus>

Canadian Standards Association Model Code for Protection of Personal Information  
<http://cmcweb.ca/epic/internet/incmc-cmc.nsf/en/fe00076e.html>

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans, chapters other than 1 & 5:  
<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/>

Panel on Research Ethics tutorial on the Tri-Council policy statement referred to above. This will be very useful for people who want more in-depth information on research involving human subjects. It is required for students who wish to conduct research at a University. <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial/>

**Additional Resources**

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<http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/technology/internet/privacy/medical-records-privacy.pdf>

***Week 5: Preparing metadata / Introduction to SAS***

By the end of this week students will be able to:

- Develop metadata describing the data set needed to create their proposed algorithm
- Use the SAS interface and issue basic SAS commands
- Complete assignment due before the start of class week 6 (Metadata)

**READINGS / ON-LINE RESOURCES**

For the rest of the term we will be asking you to view videos and read material prior to attending class. The videos are part of an on-line learning resources established by Population Data BC, which is here: <https://my.popdata.bc.ca/> → Login → Education & Training tab → Statistical Analysis, STAN 101 SAS Tutorials

For this week: STAN 101 Modules 1 and 2

***Week 6: Student topics part 1 / SAS intermediate commands and debugging***

Learning objectives:

- More facility with SAS!

**Readings / class prep**

STAN 101 Modules 3 & 4

Review / use SAS learning activities (on SRTL under course\_files)

***Week 7: Student topics, part 2 / SAS intermediate statistics / variable attributes***

**READINGS / ON-LINE RESOURCES**

STAN 101 Modules 5 & 6

Review / use SAS learning activities (on SRTL under course\_files)

***Week 8: Student topics, part 3 / SAS intermediate data management / combining data sets***

**READINGS / ON-LINE RESOURCES**

Winter Term 2017

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STAN 101 Modules 7 & 8

Review / use SAS learning activities (on SRTL under course\_files)

**Week 9: Student topics, part 4 / SAS review, troubleshooting and macros**

**READINGS / ON-LINE RESOURCES**

Review / use SAS learning activities (on SRTL under course\_files)

**Week 10: Student topics, part 5 / Univariate statistics / stratification and sensitivity analyses**

**Week 11: Descriptive statistics / preliminary findings / writing up methods and results**

**Week 12: Student presentations summarizing what we've learned individually / Putting it all together – learning across projects for the system as a whole**

By the end of this week students will:

- Have a much deeper understanding of several concepts that relate to health care system performance
- Feel comfortable engaging in debates about health care system performance – both how it is measured and how Canada fares
- Reflect on our chosen conceptual framework and comment on similarity / differences in interpretation of performance depending on the concept involved

**Final paper / presentation**

Part of your grade for the final presentation (5% of your overall course mark) will be based on the slides / material and presentation of your topic provided in the final class session. The rest of this grade (20% of your overall course mark) will be based on a summary of your findings written in the style of an academic paper. The format and grading rubrics for these will be provided well in advance of the due dates. This will be due by 9am of the Monday following the last week of classes.

**Course Evaluation**

You will receive a link to a course evaluation at the end of the semester. Your responses will be anonymous, with feedback provided in the aggregate after all grades for the course are submitted. Open-ended comments will be shared with instructors, but not identified with individual students. Your participation in course evaluation is an expectation, since providing constructive feedback is

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a professional obligation. Feedback is critical, moreover, to improving the quality of our courses, as well as for instructor assessment.

**Optional SAS Resources**

- SAS e-learning tutorials (<https://support.sas.com/edu/viewmyelearn.html>):
  - SAS(R) Programming Introduction: Basic Concepts
    - Chapter 1: Getting Started with SAS Programming
    - Chapter 2: Understanding SAS Programming Basics
    - Chapter 3: Navigating and Using the SAS Interface
    - Chapter 4: Working with SAS Libraries, Data Sets and the Import Wizard
  - SAS(R) Programming 1: Essentials
    - Chapter 1: Getting Started with SAS Programming
    - Chapter 2: Navigating and Using the SAS Interface
    - Chapter 3: Working with SAS Code
    - Chapter 4: Working with SAS Libraries and SAS Data Sets
- SAS tutorial, accessed in SAS from the Help menu, select *Getting Started with SAS Software*, then select *New SAS programmer (quick-start guide)*.
- Online SAS documentation at: <http://support.sas.com/onlinedoc/913/docMainpage.jsp>
- UCLA Resources to help you learn and use SAS: <http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/sas/>
- MCHP Resources to help you learn and use SAS:  
[http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/units/community\\_health\\_sciences/departmental\\_units/mchp/education/sas/index.html](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/units/community_health_sciences/departmental_units/mchp/education/sas/index.html)