HUM6930: Special Topics - Arts, Public Health and Community Impact
Meeting Times and Location: Online, asynchronous course
Credit Hours: 3
Instructor: David Denton, MPH
Instructor's Office Location and Hours: As this is an Independent Study, a meeting can be scheduled upon request.
Instructor Contact Information: ddenton@ufl.edu

"The grass is greener on the other side…GENTRIFIED, 2020" by David Denton

Course Description:

This Independent Study explores the intersection of the arts and public health, examining how creative expression influences health outcomes, serves as a counter-narrative to dominant discourses, and fosters community-driven solutions. The course will explore arts-based research methods, participatory approaches, and case studies from different cultural contexts, highlighting how various art forms support health advocacy, improve accessibility, and strengthen community resilience. By critically

engaging with these themes, students will gain a deeper understanding of the power of the arts in shaping public health policy, practice, and communication globally.

Course Learning Objectives:

- Identify historical and modern examples of how the arts and creative expression has influenced community well-being and public health outcomes.
- Assess the role of art in fostering dialogue, strengthening social connections, and mobilizing collective action for health improvement.
- Explore participatory arts-based research approaches such as Photovoice, body mapping, dance, murals and community theater as tools for understanding and addressing health issues globally.
- Investigate ways to collaborate with communities to implement creative health messaging that is culturally relevant and accessible.
- Examine real-world examples where artistic interventions have improved health outcomes and patient experiences.
- Reflect on ways to sustain engagement with arts-based public health initiatives beyond the course.

"CHAPTER 51: THE GARDEN", 2021 by David Denton

Course Pre-Requisites / Co-Requisites:

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves and reviewing all materials in [Graduate Central](#), which is the Arts in Medicine student portal located in Canvas. All students are added to Graduate Central upon admission to the program. Email your instructor *immediately* if you do not have access. For this course, students will need to know the information in the "Start Here," "New Student Orientation," and "Resources" modules.

Required Texts

All core readings are provided by instructor on Canvas, via link (in the syllabus) or PDF (in Files). A list of "Recommendations for Further Reading," designed to support enhanced/continued learning, is available under "Pages" on the course's Canvas site. As this is an Independent Study, students are encouraged to browse this page at the beginning of the course, so that you know what extra readings are available to you. You are also urged to search for other materials that will support you in your learning process and the development of your culminating assignment.

Student Expectations:

Arts, Public Health and Community Impact is being offered as an Independent Study, which means there are no class meetings or discussions. Students are responsible for keeping up with their readings, planning their project, and ensuring they are able to complete it with thoroughness and rigor. Students are also expected to connect with the Independent Study instructor as needed to ensure completion of the study.

Any independent study requires *excellent* personal time-management. The course is three credits and is only eight (8) weeks long, so it is an intensive, fast-paced investment. **Students should expect to apply approximately 16 hours of work per week to this course**. This will include readings, videos, discussion boards and generating your midterm and final assignments.

Attainment of course objectives will be evaluated through a single culminating project.

Regarding communication with the instructor, David Denton makes every effort to respond to student emails within 36 hours between M-F. (Emails sent over the weekend may not be seen until the following Monday.) If you do not receive a reply within this expected timeframe, please email again.

"Introduction Exhale Internal Disruption: A Review", 2023 by David Denton

Course Outline:

Students will pursue the course objectives by engaging in two primary areas of activity:

    I.   **Critical Engagement and Independent Exploration**
        a. Students will apply critical research and reading skills to identify and present additional resources, such as case studies, journal articles, or multimedia materials, to enrich the learning experience.
        b. Engagement will take place through written discussion posts allowing students to express their ideas in varied formats.

II. Application of Tools and Creative Integration

    a. Students will explore various methodologies and analyze how these tools can be effectively applied in real-world public health initiatives.

    b. Throughout the course, students will develop components of a program plan for an arts in public health project, integrating course concepts and best practices.

Details are available under "Assignment Evaluation and Grading" below.

"GRAS-Fed (Generally Recognized As Safe)", 2021 by David Denton

Weekly Topics and Assignments

Important: The weekly order and allocation of readings/activities is suggested based on previous versions of this course. It is designed to support your time management; however, you may need to adjust it to align with your own plans for tackling your final project, and with any additional readings you add.

Your only course deadline is for your culminating projects and discussion boards:

Week	Topic	Readings/Materials
1	Introduction – Art as a Public Health Tool	Description: We begin by exploring the fundamental connections between art and public health, examining how creative expression has historically influenced health communication, healing practices, and social change. From traditional storytelling to contemporary public health campaigns, we will analyze how artistic practices shape our understanding of well-being and social determinants of health. This week introduces key concepts that will guide our exploration, including cultural narratives, the power of visual and performing arts in shaping public discourse, and the role of creative expression in influencing health behaviors, policies, and community engagement. By examining historical and modern examples, we will consider how the arts continue to serve as a vital tool in fostering awareness, resilience, and innovation in public health efforts. Readings: - A history of the use of arts in health - The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review - "The Arts and Public Health: Changing the Conversation on Health" - "Collaborative Art: A Transformational Force within Communities" - "From Recovery-Oriented Care to Public Health: Case Studies of Participatory Public Art as a Pathway to Wellness for Persons with Behavioral Health Challenges" - The world's future: A question of art and health Review: - How to Become a Critical Reader - Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in America Repository - Creating Healthy Communities: Arts + Public Health in American webinar series - Art as a Tool for Public Health Engagement Watch: - Arts & Health Webinar - Worth 1000 Words: Public Art as a Public Health Communication Tool - The Arts as a Tool for Healing and Wellness

| 2 | Creative Methods and Arts-Based Research in Public Health | Description: While data serves as a cornerstone in public health, affording invaluable insights into the well-being of a population, the arts introduce an innovative and complementary layer to the interpretation and communication of this data. Arts-based research methods provide innovative ways to capture lived experiences, engage communities, and generate new insights into public health challenges. This week, we will explore approaches such as Photovoice, digital storytelling, body mapping, and theater, discussing how these methods bring attention to personal and collective experiences with health. We will also address methodological rigor and the challenges of integrating artistic inquiry into traditional public health research.

Readings:

- Arts-based methods in health research: A systematic review of the literature
- Arts-based approaches to public engagement with research
- "Body Mapping: Embodying the Self Living with HIV/AIDS"
- "A Multidimensional Approach to Inform Family Planning Needs, Preferences and Behaviours Amongst Women in South Africa Through Body Mapping"
- "Virtual Photovoice With Older Adults: Methodological Reflections During the COVID-19 Pandemic"
- "Young Migrants' Experiences and Conditions for Health: A Photovoice Study"
- "Flint Photovoice: Community Building Among Youths, Adults, and Policymakers"
- Performing arts as a health resource? An umbrella review of the health impacts of music and dance participation
- Health Design Thinking: An Innovative Approach in Public Health to Defining Problems and Finding Solutions
- A Community Mural Tour: Facilitating Experiential Learning About Social Determinants of Health
- The impact of a community-based music intervention on the health and well-being of young people: A realist evaluation
- The Power of Digital Storytelling as a Culturally Relevant Health Promotion Tool
- Dance for Health: An intergenerational program to increase access to physical activity

Review:

- Hip Hop Public Health
- Mural Arts Philadelphia
- 100cameras |

		- Dance4Life
		Watch
		- The Promise and Power of Arts-Based Research with Prof. Patricia Leavy
3	The Arts as Resistance and the Counter-Narrative	Description: Throughout history, art has been a powerful catalyst for challenging dominant narratives, amplifying marginalized voices, and reimagining possibilities for health and community well-being. This week, we will explore how creative expressions have been harnessed to confront barriers to care, dismantle stigma, and ignite conversations around pressing public health issues such as chronic illness, mental health, environmental justice, and healthcare access. By analyzing compelling case studies across diverse artistic disciplines including murals, spoken word poetry, music across all genres, and documentary filmmaking, we will investigate how art fosters critical dialogue, inspires action, and broadens our understanding of complex health challenges. This exploration will highlight the transformative role of artistic expression in shaping public perception, mobilizing communities, and driving changes in public health.

Readings:

- "Challenging Perceptions of Disability Through Performance Poetry Methods: The 'Seen but Seldom Heard' Project"
- "Poetics of Justice: Using Art as Action and Analysis in Participatory Action Research"
- "The Spoken Word Project: Using Poetry in Community Dialogue and Mobilization for HIV Prevention"
- "We Came Back with Empty Hands: Understanding the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration of Children Formerly Associated with Armed Groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo"
- "A Review of Hip Hop-Based Interventions for Health Literacy, Health Behaviors, and Mental Health"
- The Performative is Political: Using Counter-Storytelling through Theater to Create Spaces for Implicated Witnessing

Review:

- "The Art of Healthy Communities"
- Rhyme, Rhythm, and Resistance: Enacting the Art of Dissent
- Art for Impact? The Counter//Narratives of Higher Education Pilot Project

Watch:

- Counternarratives: Native American Artists In Our Own Words |

		- Counter Narrative - Captured Culture: An Introduction
4	Participatory Methods, Community Engagement and Public Health Messaging	Description: Consider the unique vantage point of your community: what do you perceive as the emerging public health challenges it faces? This week our attention is dedicated to the essential principles Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), aimed at establishing authentic and equitable partnerships with communities. Through a 'by the community, for the community' philosophy, we will delve into strategies for collaboratively crafting public health interventions that give utmost importance to the voices, requirements, and dreams of the community. Engagement in artistic practices has been shown to promote individual and collective well-being, and strengthen social connections by creating spaces for healing, dialogue, and liberation. Performance-based art forms such as theater, dance, and music offer dynamic ways to convey public health messages, encourage behavior change, foster empathy and how it engages audiences in ways that traditional health communication methods often cannot, making abstract or stigmatized health topics more accessible and impactful. Readings: - A review of strategies and levels of community engagement in strengths-based and needs-based health communication interventions - "Take a walk in someone else's shoes": the role of participatory arts for health research development and training - A Community's Response to Suicide Through Public Art: Stakeholder Perspectives from the Finding the Light Within Project - "Performing Arts as a Social Technology for Community Health Promotion in Northern Ghana" - "Hip Hop as an Agent for Health and Wellbeing in Schools: A Narrative Synthesis of Existing Research" - Using creative methods for public health messaging - Research Into Action: Exploring Arts-Based Interventions for Youth Substance Use Prevention - From art to health action: lessons from a community-based, culturally tailored arts-meets-health educational campaign in Hispanic communities - The arts and health messaging: Exploring the evidence and lessons from the 2014 Ebola outbreak - Watch:

		- "Art, the Pandemic, and Public Health": Jill Sonke, Maryrose Flanigan, and Nicholas Allen - Enhancing health communication through the arts: Michelle J Kwan at TEDxRyersonU - How does public art represent and empower communities of color? - Building a Public Health Communication Campaign - Designing Infographics for Public Health
5	Ethics, Bias, and Representation in Arts and Public Health	Description: Art has the power to amplify voices, challenge perspectives, and inspire change but it also carries ethical responsibilities. This week, we will explore the ethical considerations involved in using art as a tool for public health, including issues of representation, consent, and cultural sensitivity. We will examine how artistic projects can unintentionally reinforce biases, misrepresent communities, or perpetuate stereotypes, and discuss strategies for creating inclusive, respectful, and community-driven work. Additionally, we will analyze the role of gatekeeping in the arts and the implications of whose stories get told, by whom, and for what purpose. Through case studies and discussions, we will critically assess how public health initiatives can harness the power of art ethically while ensuring that creative interventions are equitable, participatory, and truly reflective of the communities they aim to serve. Readings: - Ethical questioning in arts and health-based research: propositions and reflections - Ethical issues in participatory arts methods for young people with adverse childhood experiences - What Arts-and-Health Practices Teach Us About Participation, Re-presentation, and Risk - Guilt, fear, stigma and knowledge gaps: ethical issues in public health communication interventions - Cultural Safety in Participatory Arts-Based Research: How Can We Do Better? - Does Art Reduce Bias Among Healthcare Providers? - Feminist Data Set: Using Art, Design, and Technology to Combat Bias // Applied AI Virtual Meetup Watch: - Dr. Caroline Lenette: "Are participatory arts-based methods culturally safe?"

		- [Challenging Bias, Stereotypes and Social Injustice Through Art](#) - [An Introduction to the Ecological Model in Public Health](#)
6	Measuring the Impact of Arts in Public Health – Challenges and Possibilities	Description: Despite its profound influence on well-being, the role of the arts in public health has often been undervalued, overshadowed by more traditional, data-driven interventions. This week, we will explore how public health professionals and researchers can effectively evaluate arts-based initiatives, considering both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Additionally, we will examine why arts-based approaches continue to struggle for legitimacy in mainstream public health and how shifting evaluation models could better capture their transformative potential. Through case studies, we will analyze successful arts and health collaborations and explore how they navigated issues of funding, policy recognition, and long-term sustainability. Ultimately, we will ask: How do we make the case for the arts as a vital, evidence-based component of public health? Readings: - [Creative arts as a public health resource: moving from practice-based research to evidence-based practice](#) - ['It makes me feel happy and joyful': the evaluation of arts-based social interventions in public health](#) - [Creative and credible evaluation for arts, health and well-being: opportunities and challenges of co-production](#) - [Realizing potentials for arts-based sustainability science](#) - [The Sustainability of Evidence-Based Interventions and Practices in Public Health and Health Care](#) - [Artists Support Improved Public Health in Communities: Rhode Island's Arts & Health Innovations](#) - [Arts in Public Health: Pedagogy, Practice, Research, and Policy](#) - [The arts in public health policy: progress and opportunities](#) Review: - [Arts-Based Evaluation](#)
7	Art, Design, and Healing Spaces in Healthcare	Description: Hospitals and healthcare facilities are more than just places for medical treatment—they are environments that can either enhance or hinder healing. This week, we will explore the role of art, architecture, and spatial design in shaping patient experiences, reducing stress, and improving health outcomes. From murals in pediatric wards to nature-inspired installations in mental health facilities, we will examine how visual

		and interactive art contributes to emotional resilience, pain management, and overall well-being. By analyzing real-world examples of art-infused healthcare spaces, we will consider how creative interventions can transform clinical environments into places of comfort, dignity, and holistic healing.
		Readings:
		- [A history of art in hospitals](#)
		- [Healthcare professionals' perceptions of the value and impact of the arts in healthcare settings: A critical review of the literature](#)
		- [Sustainable Arts and Health](#)
		- [Arts on Prescription: Embracing a New Culture of Health with "Social Prescribing"](#)
		Watch:
		- [Healing Through Art: Bridging Hospitals, Nonprofits and Artists](#)
8	Synthesis, Reflection, and Future Directions	Description: In our final week, we will reflect on the themes explored throughout the course and discuss the future of arts-based approaches in public health. We will explore opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, funding, and policy integration, considering how creative strategies can be embedded in public health practice on local, national, and global levels. Each participant will present their final project, sharing insights, challenges, and takeaways from their work. As we conclude, we will discuss ways to continue engaging with arts-based public health initiatives beyond the course, fostering sustainable and impactful creative health interventions.
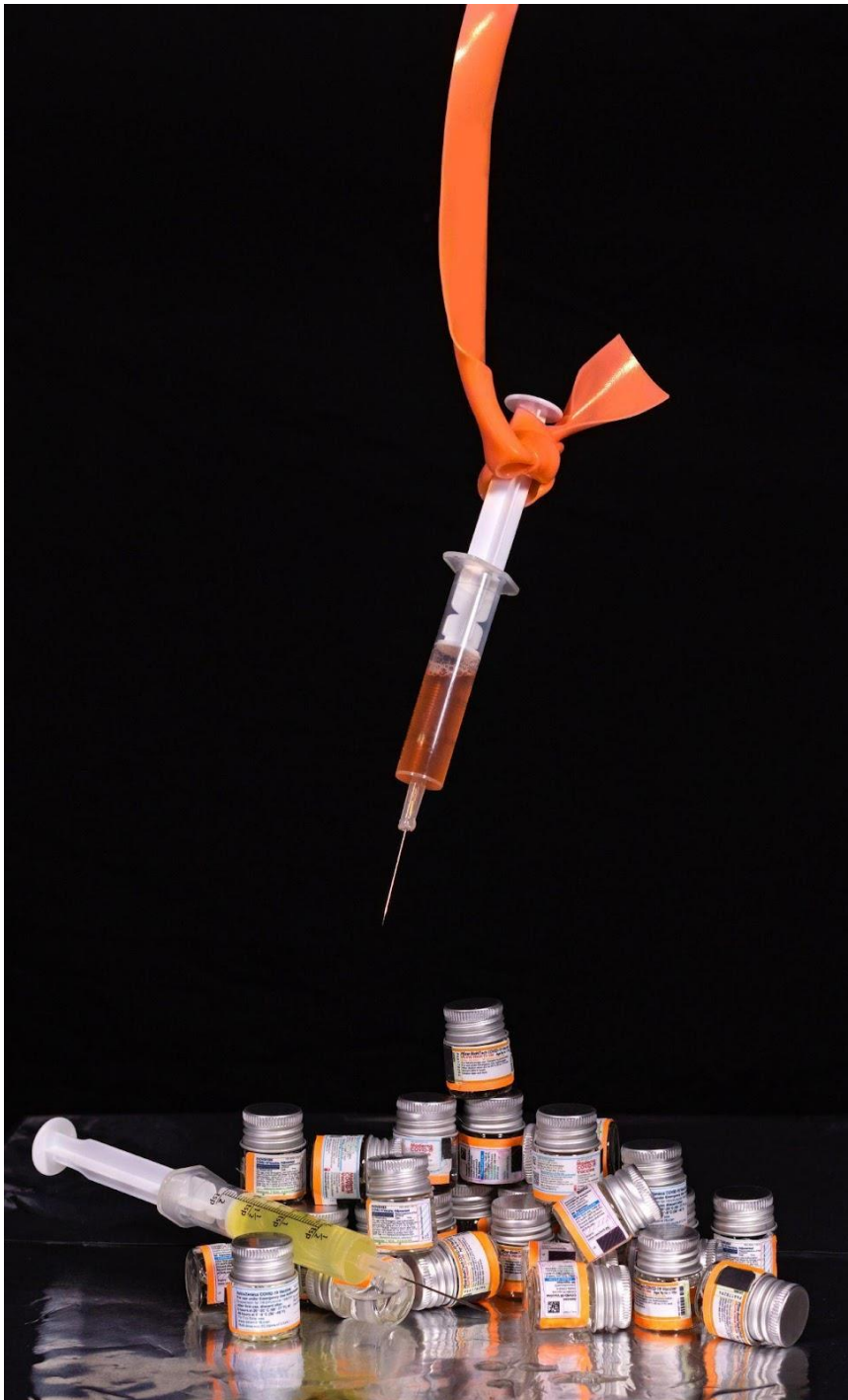
"Eligibility Overdose", 2022 by David Denton

Midterm Projects

Students will choose one of the following midterm projects to complete by the designated deadline. Each project should showcase a strong understanding of the intersection between arts and public health, integrating key concepts from the course while highlighting the role of creative expression in health advocacy, education, and community engagement.

Option 1: Presentation on an Arts-Based Research Method

Students will select an arts-based research method (e.g., Photovoice, digital storytelling, mural projects, dance, participatory theater) and create a presentation that provides:

- An overview of the method: Origins, purpose, and how it has been used in public health research
- A step-by-step "How-To" guide for conducting research using this method
- A hands-on activity: Students must design and explain an interactive activity demonstrating how this method could be used to address a specific public health issue (e.g., using Photovoice to explore food insecurity in a community)

Format: 30 minute recorded or live presentation with slides, interactive components, and supporting materials

Option 2: Critical Analysis of an Individual Art Piece

Students will choose a single piece of art (painting, photograph, film, poem, dance, music—single song or entire album) and conduct a critical analysis, considering its relationship to public health themes. The analysis should include:

- A description of the artwork, including historical context and artistic elements
- An examination of the public health issue(s) addressed in the piece
- Connections to arts-based methods and theories discussed in the course
- A reflection on the impact of the piece—who the audience is, what message it conveys, and how it serves as a counter-narrative or advocacy tool

Format: 3-page written paper

"The Grocery List", 2021 by David Denton

Final Projects

Students will choose one of the following final projects to complete by the end of the course. Each project should demonstrate a deep understanding of the relationship between arts and public health, incorporate concepts covered in the course, and reflect on the role of creative expression in health advocacy, education, or community engagement.

Option 1: Research Paper on an Arts-Based Public Health Initiative

Students will conduct an in-depth analysis of an arts-based public health initiative, examining its methodology, impact, and significance within a community. The paper should include:

- A detailed overview of the initiative, including its origins, goals, and target population
- An analysis of the arts-based methods used (e.g., theater, murals, poetry, participatory research)
- A discussion of outcomes and effectiveness, supported by research and case studies
- An evaluation of limitations and challenges faced in implementation
- A reflection on how this initiative contributes to public health discourse and potential adaptations for other communities

Length: 5-7 pages, APA format, with at least five scholarly or reputable sources

Option 2: Creative Public Health Project

Students will create an original piece of art aimed at addressing a public health issue. The project should use an arts-based method covered in class and be accompanied by a written analysis. Examples include:

- A short film or digital storytelling piece focusing on mental health awareness
- A mural or visual art piece illustrating racial health disparities
- A poetry or spoken word performance on the lived experience of chronic illness
- A song or musical composition that conveys a public health message

Students must submit:

1. The artistic work itself (video, image, written, or recorded form)
2. A 3–5-page artist's statement explaining:
   - The public health issue addressed
   - The artistic choices made and their intended impact
   - Theoretical connections to course materials
   - Reflections on the creative process and audience engagement

Option 3: Proposal for an Arts-Based Public Health Intervention

Students will develop a comprehensive proposal for a new arts-based intervention aimed at addressing a specific public health issue in a community. This proposal should include:

- A background section on the public health issue, its social determinants, and affected populations
- A detailed description of the intervention, including the type of art used and the participatory methods incorporated
- A step-by-step implementation plan (target audience, logistics, community engagement strategies)
- An evaluation plan to measure success and impact
- A discussion of potential barriers and ethical considerations
- A budget estimate and potential funding sources

Length: 5-7 pages, APA format, with supporting research and appendices if needed

Overview of Topics.

Important: The weekly order and allocation of readings is suggested based on previous versions of this course. It is designed to support your time management; however, you may need to adjust it to align with your own plans for tackling your final project, and with any additional readings you add.

Assignment Evaluation and Grading

This fully online, asynchronous course is structured around ongoing discussions and major assignments to assess your engagement and understanding. You will complete two major assignments—a Midterm Project due on **March 25th** and a Final Project due on **April 22th**—along with participation in eight weekly discussion boards.

The Midterm Project will serve as a checkpoint to apply and reflect on key concepts from the first half of the course, while the Final Project will be a comprehensive demonstration of your learning and application of course themes. Be sure to stay engaged in discussions, utilize available resources, and manage your time effectively to set yourself up for success!
Total course points: 100

Grading Scale

Please note that a C- is no longer an acceptable grade for any course in which a 2.0 GPA is required, for example, any course in the major. UF grading policy website:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 GPA Scale
A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0

B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C- *	70-72	1.7
E, I, NG, S-U, WF		0.0

"Artificial Isolation", 2023 by David Denton

Communication

Written communication and electronic interaction are central to online interaction and learning. Please see the "**Netiquette Guide**" posted in "Files" on Canvas for university expectations regarding written and electronic interactions, including email messages and threaded discussions.

It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor promptly concerning any circumstances that might affect their participation in the course. Please do not let any questions or concerns you have go unattended! If you need to reach out, email the instructor directly at the address at the top of this syllabus. It is the instructor's intention to respond to all email

communication within 36 hours, excluding weekends.

Education is a space for deep thinking, critical debate, and challenging ideas. The Center for Arts in Medicine wants you to engage deeply and critically in your thinking and your discussions, and to help generate a collective space that is respectful of and attentive to all voices.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.disability.ufl.edu) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor- code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with your instructor.

Course Evaluations
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/.

Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/."

"Sustain(un)able", 2022 by David Denton

Campus Resources for Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

*Counseling and Wellness Ce*nter: https://counseling.ufl.edu/, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department: 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
http://www.police.ufl.edu/

Campus Resources for Academic Support

If you have difficulty accessing online course reading or materials, please reference the citation or document name and author in a Google Search to locate the document before contacting the instructor or the Help Desk.

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning support@ufl.edu. https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. *https://career.ufl.edu/*

Library Support, http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

Student Complaints On-Campus: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor- code-student conduct-code/

On-Line Students Complaints: http://distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/ UF

Computer Help Desk can be reached at helpdesk@ufl.edu and/or https://helpdesk.ufl.edu.