



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Department of Global and Community Health

HAP 201-DL1, DL2: Introduction to Careers in the Health Professions
SPRING 2026 Syllabus

Class Information:

Time: Asynchronous distance
learning class via Canvas
Location: Canvas, off-site
Dates: SPRING 2026 Semester
Credits: 3

Instructor Information:

Dr. Secili DeStefano PT, DPT
Email: sdestef2@gmu.edu
Office hours: By appointment. (send
an email and we may coordinate a
virtual date and time. I will create a
Zoom link that will be sent to your
email for us to talk.) Office hours can
be made to discuss course materials,
assignments, grading, etc.

TA Information:

Dr. Aya Abdo PT, DPT, MPH
Email: aabdo4@gmu.edu

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

Overview and Course Description:

Acquaints students early in their college education with a variety of health professions careers. Provides overview of the health care system, and identifies the current supply and demand for health care professionals. Presents information about educational and licensing requirements as well as expected salaries. Defines professionalism and outlines the principal rights and responsibilities of being a health care professional.

Course Learning Objectives:

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

1. Command a basic understanding of the health care system
2. Compare and contrast the roles of various health professions and be familiar with the various career opportunities in the health professions
3. Assess their own interests, values, personality and abilities as they relate to a career in the health professions
4. Gain an understanding of the competency, professionalism, decision-making necessary to succeed in a health profession and integrate the knowledge acquired to develop goals and an action plan pertinent to planning a health professions career
5. Explain the rights and responsibilities of being a health care professional and model the behavior of a health professional

Academic Standards: Use of AI Tools

AI (Artificial Intelligence): Uses of AI that Violate Standing Policies at George Mason University

As AI technologies evolve in their capabilities, the following list of uses of AI that violate standing policies at George Mason University cannot be exhaustive. For all university-related AI activities, utilize university-approved platforms and resources. When in doubt, contact your unit lead before integrating and/or using an AI tool in your activities.

- **Data Privacy and Confidentiality Violations:** Do not enter confidential information, including proprietary data, student data, personal information, or any other data that is considered private or sensitive into publicly available AI tools. Do not access, share, or manipulate personal or institutional data without proper authorization. Be aware of the risks of using free services. Free online services typically monetize your data, identity, and how the service is being used. Several university policies, including University Policy Number 1114, lay out responsibilities of units and individuals of George Mason University regarding data stewardship.
- **Security Violations:** Do not use AI for any activity that could compromise university systems or networks, including hacking, breaching security measures, or exploiting vulnerabilities. These activities have serious legal and disciplinary repercussions per University Policy Number 1301 on the responsible use of computing.
- **Malicious Content:** Do not use AI to create or distribute malicious content, including malware, viruses, phishing emails, or any other content designed to harm individuals, systems, or networks. Such uses are prohibited under University Policy Number 1301 on the responsible use of computing.
- **Intellectual Property Infringement:** Do not use AI to create or distribute content that violates copyright or intellectual property laws per University Policy Number 1104 on copyrighted materials. Be aware that the use of AI-generated images in official university materials and any AI-generated materials produced using university resources currently bear high intellectual property risks and could expose the university to liability.
- **Deception and Misinformation:** Do not use AI to deceive others. This includes creating false communication, such as fake news articles, fabricated messages, or misleading information, with the intent to deceive or manipulate others. Do not use AI to alter or fabricate data to support false claims or mislead. This includes using AI for spamming or phishing activities. Such uses are prohibited under University Policy Number 1301 on the responsible use of computing, as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia's DHRM Policy 1.75: Use of Electronic Communications and Social Media.
- **Unauthorized Surveillance:** Do not use AI for any form of unauthorized surveillance of individuals on university grounds or within university systems. This includes using AI for surveillance of students, faculty, or staff, tracking individual movements or activities, and monitoring private conversations or communications. Such uses are prohibited by University Policy Number 1301 on the responsible use of computing.
- **Harassment and Abuse:** Do not use AI to harass, bully, or intimidate. This includes using AI to generate offensive content, such as hate speech, threats, or discriminatory remarks, directed towards individuals or groups. Do not use AI to create or distribute content that promotes or incites violence, harassment, or discrimination. Remember, words, even when AI-generated, have power. Failure to do so risks violating several University Policies, such as Policy Number 1202, and the Commonwealth of

Virginia's DHRM Policy 1.60: Standards of Conduct.

- **Discrimination:** Do not use AI in a manner that discriminates against individuals based on race, gender, disability, or any other protected characteristic. Failure to do so risks violation of the George Mason University Non-Discrimination Policy (Policy Number 1201).
- **Academic Integrity Violations:** Do not use AI in any way that compromises academic integrity and violates university policies or guidelines. George Mason University's Academic Standards Policy prohibits students from cheating, plagiarism, stealing, and lying in academic work.
- **Unethical Research Practices:** Do not employ AI in research without adhering to ethical guidelines and obtaining necessary approvals. Failure to do so risks violating the George Mason University Misconduct in Research and Scholarship Policy.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (See [Disability Services](#)).

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email:ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Academic Integrity:

Students must be responsible for their own work, and students and faculty must take on the responsibility of dealing explicitly with violations. The tenet must be a foundation of our university culture. (See [Academic Integrity https://oai.gmu.edu/](https://oai.gmu.edu/)).

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Academic Standards:

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice. As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, coauthored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. The process for

reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's academic standards procedures. Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community. This document is updated annually and maintained by the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, in cooperation with GMU Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the Disability Services website for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474.

Student responsibility: Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of education records for eligible students and is an essential aspect of any course. Students must use their GMU email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address. **Student responsibility:** Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the "Complainant") will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see University Policy 1202: Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence. Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to

TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373. Student opportunity: If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential employees in Student Support and Advocacy (SSAC), Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Health Services (SHS), and/or the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

GRADING SCALE:

<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
95-100	A
90-94.9	A-
87.5-89.9	B+
83.5-87.4	B
80.0-83.4	B-
70.0-79.9	C
<70.0	F

ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment	Percent of final grade
Weekly Discussion Participation 3 points x 14 weeks = 45 points total	45
Health care presentation 25 points total (you will submit your presentation on your assigned week between the weeks of week 4-Week 8)	25
Weekly Reflections (week 4-week 8) 4 points x 5 week= 20 points total	20
Interprofessional Event – Attend a job fair, professional event, presentation in the field, sit in on a research conference or poster presentation, etc. (reach out by email to check if the event you attend/plan on attending can be considered) After attending your interprofessional event write up your interprofessional Event reflection assignment/short paper	10
Total	100

COURSE SCHEDULE
(Syllabus subject to change)

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Week 1 1/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Indicate your top 3 professions for health professions presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check future announcements for assigned topics. • Watch Empathy: The Human Connection to Patient Care” video • Discussion Board: Empathy and Patient Care, One minute paper overview on a myth about health administration and policy

Week 2 1/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Positives and negatives of health care, Complete LinkedIn Learning
Week 3 2/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Oxford Debate: ACA or No ACA; Health, aging, and advocacy
Week 4 2/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Health Professions Presentation Videos for grading to the Assignments tab under “Health Professions Presentation” AND to Kultura Course Gallery if it is your assigned week to present. (**see note below). • Reflect on one Health Care Professions Presentation from the Kultura Course Gallery. • Continue to work on Health Professions Presentation (until your assigned week to present has passed) • Discussion Board: Opioid Crisis, Pain point in health care
Week 5 2/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Health Professions Presentation Videos for grading to the Assignments tab under “Health Professions Presentation” AND to Kultura Course Gallery if it is your assigned week to present • Reflect on one Health Care Professions Presentation from the Kultura Course Gallery. • Continue to work on Health Professions Presentation (until your assigned week to present has passed) • Discussion Board: VA case study, Motivation
Week 6 2/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Health Professions Presentation Videos for grading to the Assignments tab under “Health Professions Presentation” AND to Kultura Course Gallery if it is your assigned week to present • Reflect on one Health Care Professions Presentation from the Kultura Course Gallery. • Continue to Work on Your Health Professions Presentation Videos (until your assigned week to present has passed) • Discussion Board: Specialty Care Facility, Team Success
Week 7 3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Health Professions Presentation Videos for grading to the Assignments tab under “Health Professions Presentation” AND to Kultura Course Gallery if it is your assigned week to present • Reflect on one Health Care Professions Presentation from the Kultura Course Gallery. • Continue to Work on Your Health Professions Presentation Videos (until your assigned week to present has passed) • Discussion Board: AI in healthcare, Experience with AI
SPRING RECESS: NO CLASSES 3/9-3/15 😊	
Week 8 3/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Health Professions Presentation Videos for grading to the Assignments tab under “Health Professions Presentation” AND to Kultura Course Gallery if it is your assigned week to present • Reflect on one Health Care Professions Presentation from the Kultura Course Gallery. • Discussion Board: Case study on telehealth, Trends in digital health
Week 9 3/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Increasing health care costs, Reflection on health care spending/coding and billing models/insurance

Week 10 4/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Case student on a suburban hospital, cultural competency vs cultural humility
Week 11 4/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Health care shortages, Nursing shortages
Week 12 4/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Cyber threat challenges, preventing cyber threats
Week 13 4/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Administrative burden, Burnout/mental health crises
Week 14 4/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board: Opportunities/growth/health care marketing/health and wellness
Week 15 5/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the last week, please make sure to attend your interprofessional event and to submit your reflection on your experience.

****Health Professions presentation video assignment is to be submitted to the Presentation Submissions link and the Course Video Gallery during the week you are assigned. i.e. if you are assigned for a week 6 presentation then you will only submit during that week.**

- Reminders to submit the Health professions presentation video are given on a weekly basis (between the weeks 4-8) because students are assigned in different weeks.

Instructions for each of the assignments:

1) Requirements for the weekly discussion board posts, which are worth 3 points each week.

1. You are expected to post a response by Thursday at 11:59pm to the two discussion posts assigned.
2. Post a reply response to two of your classmates by Sunday at 11:59pm
3. Each of your discussion board posts should be a minimum of two short paragraph and a maximum of three paragraphs. Your work count for each post should be around 200-300 words. Include a reference, link, or citation when appropriate in your post.
4. Be organized in your thoughts and ideas. Ensure to be thoughtful in your responses or interactions.
5. Be aware of grammar and sentence mechanics.
6. Use proper etiquette. Remember that being respectful is critical.

2) Interpersonal event reflection assignment/short paper:

In a 1-2 page paper write about:

- What event you attended, location, affiliation?
- Briefly describe what the event is about.
- How it relates to interests, coursework, or future career?
- What did you take away from this experience?
 - The event can be online or virtual. It does not have to be related to the course but something that is enriching, helps you in future job search or networking, educational, etc. Our hope is you attend an event even if it's a virtual seminar, networking event, related to job search, educational. It also does not have to be held with GMU affiliation.

3) Health Professions Presentation: (please submit to the assignments tab and to Kaltura Course Gallery)

- In this assignment, you will prepare and submit a presentation on an assigned profession, starting Week 4-Week 8. You will also perform a reflection of a presentation each week. Because the presentations will occur for 5 weeks, you will be required to complete 5 reflections (and you will still be required to reflect on a presentation even if it is your week to present).
- You will present (in the form of a video) on an assigned profession the week (Week 4-Week 8) you are assigned to present.
- The dates of the presentation will be assigned and the professions will be assigned.
- You have been assigned one health care profession and must include:
 - Component 1: Trends in educational and licensing requirements. Trends in employment opportunities, job growth and occupation requirements. What are the work opportunities in a variety of healthcare settings?
 - Component 2: Availability of education programs in the D.C. metropolitan area, the average length of time spent in training and the cost of the training. What is the return on investment considering the cost of education and the salary? Number of current job openings in Northern Virginia. (include salary range)
 - Component 3: The greatest rewards and challenges in practicing this profession. A personal interview with someone in the assigned health profession that should be incorporated into the presentation.
- **A personal interview with the assigned health professional is required for the presentation in component 3.**
- It is not expected that you will obtain all the information for your presentation from this interview. You will need to do additional research.
- Please include your references cited and a short bio of your interviewee both for your paper and presentation.
- The week your presentation is due, you will add your video.

- All students will provide peer feedback to one of the videos from presenting that week (in a discussion).
- Use phone or web conferencing, or may in-person to conduct your interview. Feel free to take notes during the interview and incorporate it into your presentations

4) Reflections on the Health Care Presentations (you can find your classmates' presentations located in the Kultura Course Gallery, there are a total of 5 discussions, can be found under the assignments tab)

- Look at the video presentations for the past week
- Select a presentation to reflect on
- Include the Health Profession on which you are reflecting at the top of your reflection post
- In 200-300 words reflect on the following questions:
 - What are the pros related to this profession?
 - What are the cons related to this profession?
 - Could you see yourself in this profession? Please explain.