

**Improving Worker Health: Social Movements, Policy Debates, and Public Health  
Community Health Sciences CM470, Environmental Health Sciences M471, Labor &  
Workplace Studies M170, Urban Planning M470**

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**Instructor:**

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**Units:** 4 units  
**Course Location:** School of Public Health, Room CHS 61-269  
**Course Schedule:** Thursdays, 9:00 am – 11:50 am  
**Class web site:** <https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/17S-LBRWSM170-1>

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Studies indicate that we are spending more time at work and that changes in the nature of work create job insecurity. Despite these trends, health researchers, policymakers and practitioners too often ignore the impact of work on health status. This course introduces the field of occupational health and safety in the larger public health and social justice arena, examining historical trends, social movements to advance worker health and safety, and current controversies in the context of threats to workers and public health.

Course readings and discussions will provide a theoretical and practical foundation to understand the intersection between the work environment and health, to analyze the cause of health disparities or inequities, and to debate the philosophies underlying current occupational health policies and interventions.

**PREREQUISITES**

This course is geared to students interested in: the sociopolitical and historic origins underlying the effect of work on health and the current threats to worker health; worker, community and environmental justice organizing; community-based interventions to improve workers' health; and current policy debates in occupational health and safety including the intersection of science, public health and labor, and public policy.

Course topics focus on issues of interest to graduate students in Public Health (Community Health Sciences, Environmental Health Sciences and others interested in worker health policy and advocacy), Public Policy, Urban Planning and Social Welfare. Objectives for the

course and related public health competences are listed in the chart below. The course is also open to upper level undergraduate students (juniors/seniors). It will be of particular interest to those with a minor in Labor and Workplace Studies.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES & PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETENCIES**

<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES (Students will...)</b>	<b>MPH PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETENCIES FOR CHS AND EHS*</b>
<p>1. Examine the role of work and the work environment as a determinant of health and wellbeing.</p>	<p><u>CHS:</u> H3: Identify and explain how social, cultural and behavioral factors affect the health of individuals, communities and populations.</p> <p><u>EHS:</u> I1.1: Describe major direct and indirect human health and safety effects of major environmental or occupational agents or conditions. I3.1: Describe how humans are exposed to chemical, physical, and biological agents in the workplace and environment and how exposures are determined. I3.2: Describe how exposures can be controlled through administrative procedures, personal protective equipment, various engineering technologies, and social interventions.</p>
<p>2. Analyze occupational health disparities and inequities by gender, race/ethnicity, and class and the influence of policies and advocacy on worker health equity.</p>	<p><u>CHS:</u> H4: Describe how health inequities are related to historical and contemporary structural inequities in power and privilege.</p> <p><u>EHS:</u> I1.2: Identify the most important disease burdens with major environmental or occupational risk factors and the environmental or occupational risk factors that produce the most disease burden in either the general population or in heavily affected subgroups. I7.1: Define environmental justice and give examples of environmental exposures that are distributed unequally with regard to race/ethnicity and/or socio economic status.</p>
<p>3. Investigate historical trends and sociopolitical factors that shape occupational health research, policy debates and decisions.</p>	<p><u>CHS:</u> H4: See above</p> <p><u>EHS:</u> I6.2: Identify major state, federal, international regulatory programs or authorities for occupational or environmental health.</p>
<p>4. Explore the theoretical underpinnings of occupational health and worksite health promotion programs.</p>	<p><u>CHS:</u> H6: Recognize when existing approaches may not be culturally appropriate for a particular population and collaborate with communities and others to design, implement and evaluate more suitable health programs.</p>
<p>All (Objectives 1-4)</p>	<p><u>CHS:</u> H1: Access and understand the public health literature and information and apply it to community health. H10: Behave in an ethical manner in practice and research and in interactions with others.</p> <p><u>EHS:</u> I12.1: Present cogent and well substantiated arguments for actions to address environmental health concerns.</p>

\*Source: UCLA Fielding School of Public Health Competencies for Graduate Degree Programs. May 8, 2015. H: Discipline Specific Competencies for MPH in Community Health Sciences; I: Discipline Specific Competencies for MPH in Environmental Health Sciences

## **COURSE GRADING, REQUIREMENTS**

This year's class will focus on several fundamental threats to workers' rights and worker health in the current sociopolitical climate as well as opportunities for education and advocacy campaigns nationwide and in California:

- 1) Budget cuts to OSHA, the primary US worker health and safety agency, and rollbacks of standards to protect workers and to accurately report data about worker injuries and illness.
- 2) Elimination of funds for worker health and safety education and environmental justice programs that support outreach to low-wage immigrant workers and to workers in high hazard industries.
- 3) Fear of detention and deportation among immigrant workers, creating a chilling effect on workers' willingness to exercise their rights and limiting health and safety and labor standards enforcement.
- 4) Curtailing workers' voice through obstacles to organizing and union representation.

The assignments, taken together, are designed to explore these threats to worker health; contribute to campaigns to educate, organize and advocate for workers to have a voice; and analyze the role of the media and relevant policy initiatives. Details for each assignment will be provided in class and class time allocated throughout the quarter to discuss and work with others on the assignments.

### **Class Participation, Weekly Readings and Assignments (20% of grade)**

**Assign. #1: Family Work History Interviews and Analysis (15% of grade)**  
5-6 page paper, Due Wk. 3

**Assign. #2: Worker Advocacy: Coalitions and Social Movements (10% of grade)**  
Participate in a worker health/workers' rights advocacy event.  
3 page paper, Due Wk. 5

**Assign. #3: Media Messages and Advocacy (15% of grade)**  
2 page paper and one page letter to the editor or press release, Due Wk. 7

**Assign. #4: Policy Advocacy/Public Health Intervention Beyond the Classroom (20 % of grade)**  
8-10 hours fieldwork or research to support community/labor organization  
2- page log of activities. Due Wk. 9

**Assign. #5: Class Presentations (20% of grade)**  
Group PPT presentation and individual 4-5 page paper; Due Wk. 10

## **Class Participation, Weekly Readings and Assignments**

All required course readings will be posted on the website along with other relevant supplemental references. Students are expected to complete required readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them based on questions distributed in advance. Graduate students will work in teams of two to facilitate part of a class session developing a summary of readings for the session and leading an interactive class discussion. A resource textbook by Levy, Wegman et al. is available at the LOSH library in the Ueberroth building along with a number of other reference books and resources.

Note: The course schedule will be flexible as needed to accommodate guest speakers and a worksite visit.

### **Assign. #1: Family Work History Interview and Paper: Due Wk. 3**

Students in the class are from different backgrounds and bring a variety of experience and perspectives. The first assignment is designed to acknowledge the value of those experiences as a foundation to examine job hazards and to analyze work as a social determinant of health and wellbeing. See interview questions and guidelines for the paper on the website.

Interview two members of your family, ideally from different generations. Summarize results of the interviews and analyze factors that might influence job satisfaction, exposure to hazards, access to resources, and avenues to have a voice in occupational health and safety policies at work and beyond. Submit a 5-6 page paper Wk. 3 with a summary and analysis.

### **Assign. #2: Worker Advocacy: Coalitions and Social Movements: Due Wk. 5**

Proposed policies of the current administration have led to mass rallies, the formation of rapid response networks to respond to attacks against immigrants, and more. Los Angeles has been the center of considerable activity with several events focused on workers scheduled during the Spring Quarter. Choose one of the following events (we will discuss carpools in class.)

- Workers' Memorial Week of Action activities (Wk. leading up to April 28)
- May Day Rally – downtown LA (May 1)
- CLEAN Car Wash Worker 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event (Thurs. 6 p.m. April 20)

Interview at least 4 people at the event you choose, write a 3-page paper summarizing the issue(s) of concern as expressed by speakers and interviewees; describe the stakeholders and coalition partners; and identify key messages conveyed at the events and proposed strategies to advocate for workers. Submit 3-page paper Wk. 5

### **Assign. #3: Media Messages and Advocacy: Due Wk. 7**

Choose one of the threats to worker health mentioned above. Identify at least two sources of media coverage on the issue as it relates to worker health and analyze the perspective of the media source (support, oppose, rational nuanced coverage?). Identify and analyze a related policy initiative using resources discussed in class. Write a one page letter to the editor or a

press release with your key message(s) to highlight your perspective as a worker advocate supporting or opposing the policy initiative. Guides to creating media messages and analyzing legislation and other policies will be posted on the website. Submit 2-page paper Wk. 7 summarizing media coverage and the policy initiative accompanied by letter to the editor or press release.

**Assign. #4: Policy Advocacy/Public Health Intervention: Due Wk. 9**

The Los Angeles region is home to a large and diverse workforce with innovative labor, worker center and environmental justice organizations, campaigns and policy initiatives. A key component of this class is to examine the context and forces that shape current workplace health and safety policies **and** to extend learning beyond the classroom by contributing to a campaign, educational activity and/or current policy debate. This assignment includes 8-10 hours of field work or research and a 2-page log of activities.

Choose one of the following opportunities to support worker engagement in health and safety policy change in the workplace or in the broader policy arena. The field assignment should be conducted in teams of 4-6 people with time in class to discuss the group's goals and to coordinate each person's role which can be fieldwork or supporting research.

- Congressional Delegation: Advocating for Public Health and a Worker Health & Safety Platform
- Janitors' Worksite Education Program: Health Promotion and Hazard Control in an Immigrant Workforce (Spanish required)
- Worker Voice on the Job – Labor Management Health & Safety Committees

8-10 hours fieldwork or supporting research and 2-page log of activities. Due Wk. 9

**Assign. #5: Class Presentations: Due Wk. 10**

Group PPT presentation and individual 4-5 page paper based on guidelines discussed in class. Analysis of advocacy/public health intervention fieldwork project within the current context of threats to workers' rights and worker health and safety. Presentation and papers will consist of a summary and analysis of key themes discussed in class as they apply to the policy advocacy campaign or public health intervention your group contributed to. PPT presentation and papers due Wk. 10.

**Paper Format and Grading**

Format papers as follows:

- Double spaced, 1 inch margins, page numbers bottom of page
- References: (Author, Date) in text and alphabetized list at end
- First page should include: Name, Date, Course, Title of Assignment
- Save paper with filename format: last name – assign# - date
- Upload papers to the website as a word document by the deadline.

Papers will be graded based on five criteria:

- Analysis (paper should not be just descriptive),
- Organization (clear structure with intro and conclusion, easy to follow),
- Content (knowledge, quality and creativity),
- Citations and sources (adequate citations, number and diversity of sources, consistent formatting of citations and works cited),
- Quality of writing (basic writing skills, formatting such as page numbers, Proofread paper before submitting!)

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you wish to request an accommodation due to a suspected or documented disability, please inform your instructor and contact the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible at A255 Murphy Hall, (310) 825-1501, (310) 206-6083 (telephone device for the deaf). Website: [www.osd.ucla.edu](http://www.osd.ucla.edu). This information will be treated as confidential.

**NOTE about email communication:** Please send any emails with **Worker Health** in the subject line so I can easily search if I am not able to respond immediately and need to find emails later. (It can be very difficult to find emails when searching for the sender since email addresses often do not reflect the sender's name!)

## COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

**Note:** Readings will be posted on the website. Reading designated for a specific week should be read prior to that class session.

Class Session	Topic	Readings/Assignments
1 4/6	<p><b>Work and Health – What is the connection?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction &amp; overview of course in current context</li> <li>• Public health outcomes – What role for work?/Scope of the problem</li> <li>• Policy debates and research: No data, no problem? What we know and what we don't: Limitations of OSH data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign 1: Begin Family Work History</li> </ul>
2 4/13	<p><b>Social Determinants of Work &amp; Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of OHS: Can't Take No More; Those who Know Don't Tell</li> <li>• Case study: Safety and the Las Vegas Construction Boom</li> <li>• Social production of work-related injuries and illness</li> <li>• Cliff analogy of worker health and health equity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Levy, Wegman et al, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed, 2011, Chpt. 1, Occupational and Environmental Health: Twenty-First Century Challenges and Opportunities, pp. 3-21 (note especially Figure 1-7 on pg. 12)</li> <li>▪ Levy, Wegman et al, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed, 2005 Chpt. 2, "The social context of occupational and environmental health." pp. 21-38</li> <li>▪ Azaroff, Lenore S., Charles Levenstein and David H. Wegman, "Occupational injury and illness surveillance: Conceptual filters explain underreporting," <i>American J of Public Health</i>, Vol. 92, No. 9, Sept. 2002.</li> <li>▪ Watch 30 minute video 1980, "Can't Take No More" <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v2JTQjiCdc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7v2JTQjiCdc</a>- see Wk 1 PPT for assignment</li> </ul>
3 4/20  Assign. 1 Due	<p><b>Health Disparities – Health Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing work, Changing workforce: health inequities, precarious work, contingent jobs</li> <li>• Case study: Ergonomics, food processing workers and janitors– policy debates and worker campaigns</li> <li>• Policy debate: Does immigration enforcement trump enforcement of labor standards?</li> </ul> <p>Guest speaker: Karen Aragon, Building Skills Partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Levy, Wegman et al., 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2011, Chpt. 4, "Occupational and Environmental Health Equity and Social Justice." pp. 69-97.</li> <li>▪ Okechukwu, C.A., Souza, K., Davis, K.D., &amp; and Butch de Castro, A. Discrimination, harassment, abuse, and bullying in the workplace: Contribution of workplace injustice to occupational health disparities. "<i>American Journal of Industrial Medicine</i>," 57(5), pages 573–586. 2014</li> <li>▪ Brown, Marianne, "Immigrant workers: Do they fear workplace injuries more than they fear their employers?" in <i>Gender, Race, Class &amp; Health</i>, Eds. Schulz, Amy J and Leith Mullings, Jossey-Bass, SF, 2006.</li> <li>▪ Smith R, Avendano A, Martinez Ortega J. "Iced Out: How immigration enforcement has interfered with workers' rights.: Cornell University ILR School DigitalCommons@ILR, 10-2009.</li> </ul>

Class Session	Topic	Readings/Assignments
4 4/27	<p><b>Power Dynamics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing employment structures and models of worker representation</li> <li>• Policy debate: Who are employees in today's economy and what are implications for worker health?</li> <li>• Government agencies – how responsive to workers?</li> <li>• Case study: OSHA ergonomics standard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Siqueira, C.E., Gaydos, M., Monforton, C., Slatin, C., Borkowski, L., Dooley, P., Keifer, M. Effects of social, economic, and labor policies on occupational health disparities. <i>"American Journal of Industrial Medicine,"</i> 57(5), pages 557–572. (2014)</li> <li>▪ Review annual Workers' Memorial Day Reports: Executive Summary and California data from: AFL-CIO Death on the Job Report</li> <li>▪ Delp L and Riley K, "Worker Engagement in the Health and Safety Regulatory Arena under Changing Models of Worker Representation," <i>Labor Studies Journal</i>, 2015</li> <li>▪ Delp L, Mojtabehi Z, Skeikh H, Lemus J, "A Legacy of Struggle: The OSHA Ergonomics Standard and Beyond: Parts I and II." <i>New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy</i>, Vol. 24 No. 3, 2014.</li> </ul>
5 5/4  <b>Assign. 2 Due</b>	<p><b>Worker Advocacy and Social Movements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of unions, labor-management programs and worker centers</li> <li>• Coalitions – alliances and tensions</li> <li>• Guest speaker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Levy, Wegman et al., 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2011, Chpt. 32, "The Roles of Labor Unions," pp. 699-713.</li> <li>▪ Fine, Janice, "Worker Centers", <i>Race, Poverty &amp; the Environment</i>, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 2007), pp 54-57.</li> <li>▪ Minkler et al, "Wage theft as a neglected public health problem: An overview and case study from San Francisco's Chinatown District," <i>AJPH</i> 2014, pp 1010 – 1020.</li> <li>▪ Brown, Marianne, "Labor's critical role in workplace health and safety in California and beyond – as labor shifts priorities, where will health and safety sit?," <i>New Solutions, A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy</i>, Vol. 16, No. 3, pp 249-265, 2006. – Divide sections</li> </ul>
6 5/11	<p><b>Worksite Visit</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Landsbergis, P.A., Grzywacz, J.G., &amp; LaMontagne, A.D. Work organization, job insecurity, and occupational health disparities. <i>"American Journal of Industrial Medicine,"</i> 57(5), pages 495-515. 2014</li> </ul>
7 5/18  <b>Assign. 3 Due</b>	<p><b>The role of Science and Politics in the Occupational Safety &amp; Health Policy Arena</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science, Power, Politics and Regulatory Approaches</li> <li>○ Policy debates: 1) Safe until proven hazardous or Precautionary principle? 2) Weigh the evidence or wait for more evidence?</li> <li>• Case study: –Chemicals at Work and Beyond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michaels, David, and Celeste Monforton, "Manufacturing uncertainty: Contested science and the protection of the public's health and environment," <i>American J of Public Health</i>, Vol. 95, No. S1, 2005.</li> <li>• Ochsner M, Marshall E, et al, "Beyond the Classroom – A Case Study of Immigrant Safety Liaisons in Residential Construction." <i>New Solutions</i>, Vol. 22(3) 365-386, 2012.</li> <li>• Review selected OSH legislative/policy initiatives</li> </ul>
8 5/25	<p><b>Public Health Strategies Community-based Research,</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wallerstein, Nina and Merri Weinger, "Health and safety education for worker empowerment," <i>American Journal of</i></li> </ul>



Class Session	Topic	Readings/Assignments
	<p><b>Education, Organizing to Improve Worker Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles of popular education and community-based action research</li> <li>• Organizing campaigns and intervention strategies to prevent work-related injuries &amp; disease</li> </ul>	<p><i>Industrial Medicine</i>, Vol. 22: 629-635, 1992.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Keith, Margaret., B. Cann, J. Brophy, D. Hellyer, M. Day, S. Egan, K. Mayville, A. Watterson, "Identifying and prioritizing gaming workers' health and safety concerns using mapping for data collection." <i>American J of Industrial Medicine</i>, Vol. 39, pp 42-51, 2001.</li> <li>▪ Tau Lee, Pam and R. Baker, "Las Vegas hotel workers find a voice: The power of a popular education approach to health and safety," in <i>Teaching for Change: Popular Education and the Labor Movement</i>, Eds. L Delp, M Outman-Kramer, S Schurman, K Wong, UCLA Center for Labor Research &amp; Education, 2002.</li> <li>▪ Choose one:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Delp, Linda, Marianne Brown and Alejandra Domenzain, "Fostering youth leadership to address workplace and community environmental health issues: A university-school-community partnership," <i>Health Promotion Practice</i>, Vol. 6, No. 3, July 2005.</li> <li>➤ Riley, Kevin, et al. "From agricultural fields to urban asphalt: the role of worker education to promote California's heat illness prevention standard." <i>New solutions: a journal of environmental and occupational health policy</i> 22(3): 297-323. 2012.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>9 6/1</p> <p><b>Assign. 4 Due</b></p>	<p><b>Current Debates - Promoting health, preventing injury and illness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles of Workers' Compensation</li> <li>• "Total Worker Health" - Debates and innovative approaches to integrating worker health protection and promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pronk, Nicolaas, "Integrated Worker Health Protection and Promotion Programs: Overview and Perspectives on Health and Economic Outcomes," <i>JOEM</i>, Vol 55, No. 12 Supp, Dec. 2013</li> <li>• Champagne N et al, "Obesity/Overweight and the Role of Working Conditions: A Qualitative, Participatory Investigation." Study Report: U Mass Lowell, MassCOSH, Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace. 2012</li> <li>• Baron, S.L., Beard, S., Davis, L.K., Delp, L., Forst, L., Kidd-Taylor, et al. "Promoting integrated approaches to reducing health inequities among low-income workers: Applying a social ecological framework." <i>American Journal of Industrial Medicine</i>, 57(5), pages 539–556. 2014</li> <li>• Choose one:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Punnet, Laura et al, "A Conceptual Framework for Integrating Workplace Health Promotion and Occupational Ergonomics Programs," <i>Public Health Reports</i>, Vol 124, 2009 Supplement</li> <li>➤ Sorensen G, et al, "Reducing Social Disparities in Tobacco Use: A Social-Contextual Model for Reducing Tobacco Use among Blue-Collar Workers, <i>ÁJPH</i> Vol. 94, No. 2, Feb. 2004.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>10 6/8</p> <p><b>Assign. 5 Due</b></p>	<p><b>Presentations</b></p>	<p>Course Evaluations</p>

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- Relevant OSH statistical summaries, news & reports that highlight current debates:
  - AFL-CIO annual statistical report, “Death on the Job,” Available each year for April 28 Workers’ Memorial Day activities with updated statistics from the Bureau of Labor Standards: <http://www.aflcio.org/Issues/Job-Safety>
  - The Pump Handle, <http://scienceblogs.com/thepumphandle/category/occup-health-news-roundup/>
  - The Year in U.S. Occupational Health & Safety. Fall 2015-Summer 2016. Kerson, Krisberg, Monforton.
  - National Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health, [coshnetwork.org](http://coshnetwork.org)
  
- Reference Textbooks (Available in LOSH Library)
  - Occupational Health, Recognizing and Preventing Work-Related Disease and Injury, Barry S. Levy, David H. Wegman, Sherry L. Baron, and Rosemary K. Sokas, Editors. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2011.
  - Dying for Work: Workers’ Safety and Health in Twentieth-Century America, David Rosner and Gerald Markowitz, Editors, Indiana University Press, 1987.