Epidemiology Preliminary Exam

Population  Prospective  Probability  False Negative  Cross-Sectional
Independent  Trend  Cohort  Odds Ratio
Effect  Modification
Specificity  DAG  Confounding
Outcome  P-value
Predictor  Observational
Selection  Bias  Hazard  Dependent
Interpretation  Prevalence  Error
Differential  Generalizability  Retrospective  Risk
Estimation  Logistic  Incidence  Attributable Risk
Confidence Interval  Sensitivity  Clinical Trial  Binary
Hypothesis  Case-Control  Interaction  Precision  Mortality  Dependent Sample  Morbidity  Risk Ratio  Positive Predictive Value  Linear
Exam Dates

JANUARY 3, 2018
BACK-UP DATE: JANUARY 4, 2018*

Intent forms due: November 1, 2017

MAY 16, 2018
BACK-UP DATE: MAY 17, 2018*

Intent forms due: March 9, 2018

*Back-up Date – in case there is a closure at any campus on exam day, this will be the alternate. All students MUST plan to be available both days.
Preliminary Exam
Intent Form &
Other
Documentation
PhD and DrPH
Intent Form

• # credits in doctoral program (typically ~18-27)
• Required course checklist
  • Approved waivers (if applicable)
  • Document remediation if grade <B (if applicable)
• Unofficial transcript from *myUTH*
  • Update at end of semester if taking required courses (*student must send ASAP after semester*)
## Required Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PH 2710</td>
<td>Epidemiology III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH 2711</td>
<td>Epidemiology IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH 1830</td>
<td>Categorical Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or PH 1831</td>
<td>Analysis of Survival Time Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PH 2712</td>
<td>Experimental Methods in Epidemiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One elective course in Epidemiology (2-4 credits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- B or higher (or P in P/F course)
- Provide “Approved Waiver” for required courses taken outside of UTSPH
Requirements for students matriculating prior to Fall 2017:
1. PH 2710: Epidemiology III
2. PH 2711: Epidemiology IV
3. PH 1830: Categorical Data Analysis OR PH 1831: Analysis of Survival Time Data
5. One elective course in Epidemiology

Requirements for students matriculating in Fall 2017 or after:
1. PH 2710: Epidemiology III
2. PH 2711: Epidemiology IV
3. PH 1830: Categorical Data Analysis OR PH 1831: Analysis of Survival Time Data
4. PH 2712: Experimental Methods in Epidemiology
5. One elective course in Epidemiology
Waiver - for required courses
Exam Content

3 Articles / different epidemiologic study designs

- 10-15 multi-part questions per article
- General epidemiology & article specific questions & hypothetical questions
- Focus on article methods, results & interpretation (not topic)
- Short answer & calculations
- Length of answers specified
- *Epi “speak” - Clear & concise articulation of answers*
Style of Questions

Recall
- Definitions & concepts

Application
- Go beyond definitions – use & identify concepts

Calculations
- Use data in article

Interpretation
- Data results & application
- Statistics – understanding, applying, interpreting

Hypothetical
- Apply concepts to different scenarios
Questions

Study design and its assumptions
Study population
Ascertainment of sample
Conduct of study
Analysis approach
Results – data in tables in figures
Discussion - interpretations
Any concepts mentioned in article are “fair game” for questions
Format

Articles provided by email 24 hours in advance
  ◦ For individual review – not discussion!
  ◦ Clean copies of articles provided on day of exam

In-class exam - proctored at home campus

5 hour exam
  ◦ Allows for in-class breaks (lunch, snacks)

No computer – exam is hand written
  ◦ Bring pen
  ◦ No notes/books – scratch paper provided
  ◦ Basic calculator (not phone or mini computer!)
Exam Development

- Committee selects study designs & articles
- Develops questions & answers
- Revises questions & answers
  - 3 internal reviews by 7 epidemiologists
  - 3 external epidemiologists provide review
  - 10 faculty involved in creating each exam
Grading

Process

- 2 committee members /article (blinded, only ID)
  - Grade independently
  - Then, confer to resolve discrepancies

- Full committee – combine results (blinded, only ID)

Pass / Fail

- Weighted average of 3 designs $\geq 80\%$  OR
- Weighted average of 3 designs $<80\%$ but $\geq 75\%$ AND all sections $\geq 70\%$
ADA Accommodations

Committee Chair
◦ Dr. Susie Day

Office of Student Affairs
◦ Dr. Mary Ann Smith
Results

Pass
◦ Letter (by email) to student with copy to Advisor

1st Fail
◦ Exam Chair contacts Advisor
◦ Advisor contacts student
  ◦ Advisor meets with student to develop Remediation plan
    ◦ Must retake exam at next offering

2nd Fail
◦ Exam Chair contacts Assistant Dean for Students
◦ Advisor, Assistant Dean for Students meet with student
  ◦ Student does not continue in the doctoral program
Remediation Plan

Students work with advisor to develop plan
  ◦ Complete a plan of action – see forms on Web

Possible approach
  ◦ Independent study
  ◦ Courses – new or retake
  ◦ Study groups
  ◦ Tutors
  ◦ Other...

“…..ultimately the student’s responsibility to assess his/her educational needs, develop a plan of action, and ensure that the plan is completed prior to the next offering of the preliminary exam.”
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