EPIDEMIOLOGY PRELIMINARY EXAM

Exam Dates

- **May 21, 2019**
- **BACK-UP DATE: May 22, 2019**

Intent forms due: March 27, 2019

*Back-up Date – if closure at any campus on exam day
All students MUST plan to be available both days.

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

- **PH 2710: Epidemiology III**
- **PH 2711: Epidemiology IV**
- **PH 1830: Categorical Data Analysis**
  - OR
  - **PH 1831: Analysis of Survival Time Data**
- **PH 2712: Experimental Methods in Epidemiology**
- One elective course in Epidemiology (2-4 credits)

  - 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
Exam Description

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 of paper - pancreatic cancer; violence; etc.)
- Short answer & calculation questions
- Length of answers specified
- *Clear & concise articulation of answers use Epi “speak”*

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 each 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!)

Style of Questions

- **Recall**
  - Definitions & concepts
- **Application**
  - Beyond definitions – use & identify concepts
- **Calculations**
  - Use data in article to calculate measures
- **Interpretation**
  - Data results & application of information
- **Hypothetical**
  - Apply concepts to different scenarios

Question Content

(Note: general areas – not an all inclusive list)

- Causality, validity
- Study designs and assumptions (observational, clinical trials, ecologic, reviews)
- Study populations
- Sampling – ascertainment, approach, criteria for sampling
- Bias, confounding, EMM
- Conduct of study
- Ethics
- Human subjects and research oversight
- Analysis, statistical methods, equations, calculations (risk measures, summary measures, confidence intervals, chi square, sensitivity/specificity, age adjustment, etc.)
- Results in text, tables, figures
- Interpretations, limitations, conclusions
- Any concepts mentioned in article are “fair game” for questions

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 ≥ 80 with no score < 70% on an individual exam section

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.”

ADA Accommodations

Committee Chair

- Dr. Susie Day

Office of Student Affairs

- Dr. Mary Ann Smith

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Thank you!

Questions by email:
Dr. Susie Day, Chair Preliminary Exam Committee
JR Bright, Academic & Admissions Advisor EPI Students