

SOCIAL FACTORS IN HEALTH, MHS

General Program Information

The Master of Health Science (MHS) in Social Factors in Health (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/mhs-in-social-factors-in-health/>) is an advanced research degree for students with undergraduate exposure to social and behavioral sciences and/or public health who are interested in further training in the theory and methods in this area. The degree is intended to prepare students either for further doctoral training in public health or to work in a public health research, policy, or practice position. The focus of the MHS in Social Factors program in the Department of Health, Behavior, and Society is on integrating and applying a broad range of knowledge and analytical skills in social aspects of public health with an emphasis on contemporary health problems.

Graduates of the program will be prepared to embark on doctoral training in public health or pursue careers in research, policy, and practice positions in local, state, national, and international agencies, organizations, and institutions.

The curriculum provides broad foundational training in public health, as well as specific training to build substantive knowledge and analytic skills as social scientists in public health with the ability to understand problems and to design and implement solutions. The program focuses on understanding and influencing the societal structures and behaviors that create risk for disease and illness, as well as social factors that are protective and health-enhancing. Rigorous training in applied research methods is also a key element of the curriculum.

Bachelor's/MHS

The Bachelor's/Master of Health Science (MHS) in Social Factors in Health is designed exclusively for undergraduate students currently enrolled at Johns Hopkins University (JHU).

JHU undergraduate students have the unique opportunity to seek early admission to the MHS degree. The combined Bachelor's/Master of Health Science (MHS) in Social Factors in Health program is intended to prepare students for either further doctoral training in public health or work in public health research or policy. The MHS in Social Factors in Health is an advanced research degree, which focuses on integrating and applying a broad range of knowledge and analytical skills in social aspects of public health with an emphasis on contemporary health problems.

Students may apply up to 16 credits of interdivisional public health coursework counted towards their undergraduate degree to their MHS degree. Students in this program will receive co-advising from both schools to optimize their academic experience.

To learn more, please review the specific program details for the Master of Health Science (MHS) in Social Factors in Health program offered by the Department of Health, Behavior and Society (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/mhs-in-social-factors-in-health/>).

Program Requirements

Course location and modality is found on the BSPH website (<https://www.jhsph.edu/courses/>).

The program consists of one and one-half to two years of full-time study, combining classroom-based coursework, seminars, and independent

study. Students must also complete a mentored research experience, which includes the development of a research plan. Students must also write a master's research thesis presenting original research (in most cases based on the mentored research experience). The research experience, planned with the guidance of the student's academic adviser, may begin after successful completion of 64 credits, typically at the end of the first year, and must include the equivalent of 600 hours of activity in a paid or unpaid position.

After the completion of 64 credits, students in good academic standing are eligible for a Master's Tuition Scholarship (MTS) from the School. The MTS provides 75 percent tuition support during year two of the program.

Academic Progress

The Department expects students to maintain satisfactory academic progress for the duration of the degree program. In the Department, satisfactory academic progress is defined as follows:

- Maintaining a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75. Students falling below this minimum will have one term (or 12 additional units of coursework if part-time) to raise their GPA above 2.75.
- Earning a grade of "C" or higher in program-specific core courses. Students earning lower grades must repeat the course.
- Adhering to the time frame for completion of the degree, defined as two years for all program requirements (coursework, placement, and written assignment). Extensions are possible but must be formally approved by the Department and Committee on Academic Standards.

Maintaining a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75. Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by any of the criteria above may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Course/Credit Load

The Department strongly encourages students to register for fewer than 19 credits (including special studies and thesis research) in any one academic term. While a credit registration of more than 18 credits is possible through the registration system, departmental faculty think that the additional course burden prohibits students from dedicating the appropriate time needed for the educational activities being undertaken. Any decision to register for more than 18 credits should be carefully considered and discussed with the student's adviser prior to registering. The Department encourages students to register for a minimum of 16 credits each term. The School requires a minimum of 12 credits to maintain full-time status and a maximum of 22 credits.

Course of Study

Students will complete a minimum of 96 total units of credit hours, in six to eight full-time terms, graduating at the end of the second year. Students must attend the MHS in Social Factors Seminar for all of the terms in which they are registered, including a minimum of two terms in their second year program. It is also expected that MHS students will attend HBS seminar series events.

Students planning to take online courses must first take the free, non-credit mini-course "Introduction to Online Learning (IOL)." Students are now required to take IOL before beginning their first term.

All students are required to complete the Academic and Research Ethics course (550.860) during their first term.

In the first year, the four full-time terms of study will consist of academic coursework in classroom and seminar settings. A total of 64 academic units must be completed prior to beginning the research practicum, typically within the first four terms of study. HBS students typically register for 16 credits or more each term in the first year to complete the required total of 64 credits and to be eligible for the Master's Tuition Scholarship in the second year (though enrollment may vary slightly from term to term, the 64 credit hour requirement cannot be changed). Audited courses may not be applied toward the full-time enrollment requirement or toward the required 64 credits. All required courses must be taken for a letter grade unless the course is only offered for Pass/Fail. It is anticipated that students will complete a significant portion of their research practicum activities during the summer between first and second year.

In the second year, HBS students register for 16 credits each term for a course of study that will include remaining courses and thesis research hours with their adviser (or another JHU faculty member) as they work to complete their mentored research experience and compose their research thesis. Students may be eligible to complete all requirements for graduation by the end of the second term or the beginning of the third term of their second year, depending on the timing of their research experience and final approval of their thesis.

The final requirement of the program is that the student must perform a public presentation of their placement and associated research. Typically, this presentation will take place in the second and third quarters of the second year.

Course location and modality is found on the BSPH website (<https://www.jhsph.edu/courses/>).

Methodologic and Research Training

Epidemiology

Students must take a minimum of five credit hours in epidemiology, starting with Epidemiological Inference in Public Health. This course should be taken in Term 1 of Year 1.

Code	Title	Credits
PH.340.721	Epidemiologic Inference in Public Health I (Term 1)	5
Total Credits		5

Biostatistics

MHS students must take all 4 of the following courses:

Code	Title	Credits
PH.140.621	Statistical Methods in Public Health I (Term 1) ¹	4
PH.140.622	Statistical Methods in Public Health II (Term 2) ¹	4
PH.140.623	Statistical Methods in Public Health III (Term 3) ¹	4
PH.140.624	Statistical Methods in Public Health IV (Term 4) ¹	4
Total Credits		16

¹ The more advanced Biostatistics series PH.140.651 Methods in Biostatistics I – PH.140.654 Methods in Biostatistics IV may be substituted.

Social Science Research Methods

Students must take:

Code	Title	Credits
PH.410.615	Research Design in the Social and Behavioral Sciences (Term 2)	3
PH.410.631	Introduction to Community-Based Participatory Research: Principles and Methods (Term 2)	3
MHS in Social Factors Seminar – (1 unit per term, 6 terms minimum)		6
PH.410.881	MHS Seminar in Social Factors in Health I (1st term of first year)	
PH.410.882	MHS Seminar in Social Factors in Health II (2nd term of first year)	
PH.410.883	MHS in Social Factors in Health Seminar III (3rd term of first year)	
PH.410.884	MHS Seminar in Social Factors in Health IV (4th term of first year)	
Total Credits		12

Students must take the above courses. In addition, students must take at least 1 course in each of 2 areas: quantitative methods and qualitative methods. Students should carefully choose methods training, considering both their previous training and future research goals. One course in each of the two areas is considered the minimum; students are encouraged to build their methodological expertise in all areas relevant to their proposed research activities and scientific areas of interest. It is valuable for students to seek both breadth and depth in methods training. Therefore, we strongly recommend that students also elect an area of methodological focus and take multiple courses in this area.

Quantitative Methods Courses

Code	Title	Credits
Select at least two of the following:		6-10
PH.410.686	Advanced Quantitative Methods in The Social and Behavioral Sciences: A Practical Introduction (Term 4)	
PH.410.733	Communication Network Analysis in Public Health Programs (Term 1)	
PH.140.658	Statistics for Psychosocial Research: Structural Models (Term 2)	
PH.140.698	Spatial Analysis III: Spatial Statistics	
PH.140.699	Spatial Analysis IV: Spatial Design and Application	
PH.309.616	Introduction to Methods for Health Services Research and Evaluation I (Terms 3 & 4)	
PH.330.657	Statistics for Psychosocial Research: Measurement (Term 1)	
PH.340.696	Spatial Analysis I: ArcGIS	
PH.340.697	Spatial Analysis II: Spatial Data Technologies	
Total Credits		6-10

Qualitative Methods Courses

Code	Title	Credits
PH.410.690	Ethnographic Fieldwork	3
PH.410.710	Concepts in Qualitative Research for Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
PH.410.712	Theory and Practice in Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation for The Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
PH.550.604	Qualitative Reasoning in Public Health	2

‡Students who intend to take 410.712 should also take 410.710 (Concepts in Qualitative Research) or be able to demonstrate exposure to qualitative research methods through prior coursework or work experience. 550.604 (Qualitative Reasoning) does not meet the prerequisites for this course. Qualitative Reasoning is designed to foster an appreciation of a qualitative approach but does not teach skills necessary for qualitative data collection.

Strongly recommended:

Code	Title	Credits
PH.410.638 & PH.410.639	Scientific Writing in Health Sciences: Developing A Manuscript for Publication I and Scientific Writing in Health Sciences: Developing A Manuscript for Publication II (Terms 3 & 4)	6

Public Health Core Competencies

All students matriculating into a graduate program in an accredited school of public health (such as BSPH) are required to take courses that expose them to content that covers 12 'introductory learning objectives' before graduation. For MHS students in HBS, some of these exposures will come through regular program courses, and others will come through ½ credit "Cells to Society" (C2S) online modules developed by the school. The C2S modules will be offered at least twice a year and will be taken in the first 4 weeks of the term in which they are held. Some courses fulfill more than one learning objective. HBS MHS students will fulfill some CEPH requirements through coursework in other domains. Other CEPH requirements will be fulfilled by taking the following courses:

Code	Title	Credits
PH.552.601	Foundational Principles of Public Health	0.5
PH.552.607	Essentials of Environmental Health	0.5
PH.552.609	Psychological and Behavioral Factors That Affect A Population's Health	0.5
PH.552.611	Globalization and Population Health	0.5
PH.552.612	Essentials of One Health	0.5
PH.552.608	Biologic, Genetic and Infectious Bases of Human Disease	0.5
Total Credits		3

Required of all PhD/ScD students, ScM students, and MHS students enrolled in academic/advanced study programs. Students may obtain waivers if they have:

1. completed an MPH, professional MHS, or MSPH degree at a domestic institution within the last ten years,
2. enrolled in an MSPH program in the DrPH program, or
3. taken and passed with a B or better graduate-level courses in the five CEPH core areas which are biostatistics, epidemiology, social and behavioral sciences, environmental health sciences, and health systems administration.

Requests for waivers should be addressed to Maryann Smith (mksmith@jhsph.edu (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/malto:mksmith@jhsph.edu>)).

Lecture times: Not applicable (online); LiveTalk sessions: Wednesdays at 12:00 noon or 5:30 PM online.

Social Science Theory as Applied to Public Health Fundamentals of Social Theory in Public Health

Students must take:

Code	Title	Credits
PH.410.600	Fundamentals of Health, Behavior and Society (Term 1)	4
PH.410.611	Under Pressure: Health, Wealth & Poverty (Term 3)	3
PH.410.612	Sociological Perspectives on Health (Term 1)	3
PH.550.609	Life and Death in Charm City: Histories of Public Health in Baltimore, 1750 to the Present (or)	3
PH.221.605	History of International Health and Development (or)	2
PH.410.679	Decoloniality and Global Health Communication (or)	3
Total Credits		18

Policy Courses

In addition, students must take at least 1 of the following policy courses:

Code	Title	Credits
Select one of the following:		3-4
PH.300.600	Introduction to Health Policy (Terms 1 & 2)	
PH.300.650	Crisis and Response in Public Health Policy and Practice (Term 3)	
PH.318.623	Social Policy for Vulnerable Populations in the U.S. (Term 2)	
PH.318.636	Urban Policy (Term 1)	
Total Credits		3-4

Social Science Applications in Public Health

Students must take at least 12 credit hours from the following list. Alternate courses may be substituted with permission from the program director.

Code	Title	Credits
Select at least 12 credit hours from the following:		12
PH.410.613	Psychosocial Factors in Health and Illness (Term 3)	
PH.410.620	Program Planning for Health Behavior Change (Terms 1 & 4)	
PH.410.630	Implementation and Sustainability of Community-Based Health Programs (Term 4)	
PH.410.635	Applications of innovative Methods in Local and Global Health Equity Research	
PH.410.645	Applying the Social Ecological Model in Tobacco Control and Climate Change	
PH.410.650	Introduction to Persuasive Communications: Theories and Practice	
PH.410.668	Policy Interventions for Health Behavior Change (Term 2)	
PH.410.679	Decoloniality and Global Health Communication (Term 2)	
PH.224.689	Health Behavior Change At the Individual, Household and Community Levels (Term 2)	
PH.300.652	Politics of Health Policy (Term 4)	
PH.306.650	Public Health and the Law (Term 3)	

PH.306.662	Public Health Agencies: Law, Policy and Practice
PH.306.660	Legal and Public Health Issues in the Regulation of intimacy (Term 4)
PH.308.610	The Political Economy of Social inequalities and Its Consequences for Health and Quality of Life (Terms 2 & 4)
PH.313.601	Economic Evaluation I
PH.318.636	Urban Policy (Term 1)
PH.330.634	Stigma and Public Health: Issues and Interventions
PH.330.661	Social, Psychological, and Developmental Processes in the Etiology of Mental Disorders
PH.340.666	Foundations of Social Epidemiology (Term 4, Offered every other year)
PH.380.600	Principles of Population Change (Term 2)
PH.380.604	Life Course Perspectives on Health (Terms 1 & 2)
PH.380.611	Fundamentals of Program Evaluation (Term 3)
PH.550.601	Implementation Research and Practice

Total Credits **12**

Public Health Priority Populations, Issues, and Solutions

MHS in Social Factors students must take at least 12 credit hours from the following list. Alternate courses may be substituted with permission from the program director.

Code	Title	Credits
Select at least 12 credit hours from the following:		12
PH.410.604	Harm Reduction: A Framework for Evidence-Based Policy and Practice (Term 2)	
PH.410.610	Housing Insecurity and Health (Term 3)	
PH.410.626	The Epidemiology of LGBTQ Health (Term 4)	
PH.410.640	Global Tobacco Control (Term 2)	
PH.410.660	Latino Health: Measures and Predictors (Term 4)	
PH.410.663	Media Advocacy and Public Health: Theory and Practice (Term 4)	
PH.410.677	Theory and Practice in Campaigning and Organizing for Public Health I (Term 3)	
PH.410.680	Social Ecological Approaches to Health Regimen Adherence in Chronic Conditions (Term 4)	
PH.410.681	Gay, Bisexual and Other Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) and HIV: Theoretical Perspectives on the Us Epidemic (Term 4)	
PH.410.683	Global Perspectives on LGBT Health (Term 3)	
PH.410.752	Children, Media, and Health (Term 3)	
PH.188.682	A Built Environment for A Healthy and Sustainable Future	
PH.221.643	Armed Conflict and Health (Term 3)	
PH.221.645	Large-scale Effectiveness Evaluations of Health Programs (Terms 2 & 4)	
PH.222.654	Food, Culture, and Nutrition (Term 4)	
PH.222.657	Food and Nutrition Policy (Term 1)	
PH.300.615	The Tools of Public Health Practice (Term 2)	
PH.301.615	Seminar in Health Disparities	
PH.301.627	Understanding and Preventing Violence (Term 2)	
PH.301.645	Health Advocacy (Term 4)	

PH.305.684	Health Impact Assessment (Term 3)
PH.306.663	Legal and Ethical Issues in Health Services Management
PH.306.665	Research Ethics and integrity (Term 3)
PH.308.615	The Opioid Crisis: Problem Solving Seminar (Term 1)
PH.309.605	Health Issues for Aging Populations (Term 2)
PH.317.600	Introduction to the Risk Sciences and Public Policy (Terms 1 & 3)
PH.330.607	PREVENTION of MENTAL DISORDERS: PUBLIC HEALTH InterVENTIONS
PH.330.623	Brain and Behavior in Mental Disorders
PH.330.639	The Intersection of Mental and Physical Health
PH.330.664	Introduction to Mental Health Services (Term 1)
PH.330.667	Mental Health and the Law (Term 3)
PH.330.674	Suicide As A Public Health Problem (Terms 3 & 4)
PH.330.680	Promoting Mental Health and Preventing Mental Disorders in Low- and Middle-income Countries (Term 4)
PH.340.692	Prisons, Public Health, and Human Rights
PH.380.624	Maternal and Child Health Legislation and Programs (Term 2)
PH.380.640	Children in Crisis: An Asset-Based Approach to Working With Vulnerable Youth (Term 3)
PH.380.663	Gender-Based Violence Research, Practice and Policy: Issues and Current Controversies (Term 3)
PH.380.665	Family Planning Policies and Programs (Term 3)
PH.380.666	Women's Health (Term 3)
PH.380.667	Women's Health Policy (Term 4)
PH.380.720	Masculinity, Sexual Behavior & Health: Adolescence & Beyond (Term 2)
PH.380.721	Schools and Health (Term 4)
PH.380.725	The Social Context of Adolescent Health and Development (Term 4)
PH.380.744	Nutrition and Growth in Maternal and Child Health (Term 1)
PH.380.750	Migration and Health: Concepts, Rates, and Relationships (Term 3)
PH.380.762	HIV Infection in Women, Children, and Adolescents (Term 4)
PH.380.767	Couples and Reproductive Health (Variable credits, Term 1)
PH.380.768	Selected Topics in Women's Health and Women's Health Policy (Term 1)
PH.550.609	Life and Death in Charm City: Histories of Public Health in Baltimore, 1750 to the Present (Term 1)

Total Credits **12**

MHS Degree Policy and Procedure Manual (https://my.jhsph.edu/Resources/PoliciesProcedures/ppm/PolicyProcedureMemoranda/Academic_Programs_08_Master_of_Health_Science_Degree_071417.pdf)

Milestones for the MHS in Social Factors in Health Program

Key Dates	Task/Event
First Year	
Term 1	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Term 2	
Before Drop/Add	Advisor Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Term 3	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Research Practicum Options
Term 4	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Research Practicum Options/ Selection
	Completed 64 credits (minimum)
	Master Tuition Scholarship Certification
Second Year	
First Term	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
	Satisfactory progress in research practicum
	Satisfactory progress in Final Paper
Term 2	
Before Drop/Add	Adviser Meeting
Before Drop/Add	Course Selections
	Satisfactory academic progress
Term of completion	
	Completion of Final Paper
	Successful Presentation of Work in Seminar

Timetable for Completion of Degree Requirements

Please direct questions regarding the timetable for completion of degree requirements to Office of Records & Registration (JHSPH.Registra@jhu.edu).

MHS Program Policies

For a full list of program policies, please visit the MHS in Social Factors in Health (<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/academics/mhs-in-social-factors-in-health/>) page where students can find our handbook.

MHS Program Prerequisites

1. In order to take required online courses, students must complete Introduction to Online Learning, which is offered through the Center for Teaching and Learning at the Bloomberg School. This non-credit course is a prerequisite that **must be completed in the summer prior to matriculation**.
2. All students must take the required course *PH.550.860* Academic & Research Ethics at BSPH. This is an online offering that **must be completed in the summer prior to matriculation**. Failure to complete this course will prevent students from registering for 2nd term.

Master's Tuition Scholarship

The MTS provides eligible second year MHS students with a 75% tuition scholarship for up to four consecutive terms. Students are eligible if they have successfully completed all Year 1 required coursework, are in good academic standing, and have accumulated a minimum of 64 credits.

Once the scholarship has been awarded, the student must maintain full# time registration for the entire period of the award. Upon completion of the final written assignment, the MTS will be concluded. Students will not be permitted to enroll in courses using the MTS once they have been certified as complete in the MHS program.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

The Department expects students to maintain satisfactory academic progress for the duration of the degree program. For the MHS program, satisfactory academic progress is defined as follows:

- Maintaining a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75. Students falling below this minimum will have one term (or 12 additional units of coursework if part-time) to raise their GPA above 2.75.
- Earning a grade of "C" or higher in program-specific core courses. (Students earning lower grades must repeat the course.)
- Adhering to the timeframe for completion of the degree, defined as four years for all program requirements (coursework, placement, and written assignment). Extensions are possible but must be formally approved by the Department and Committee on Academic Standards.

Failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress as defined by any of the criteria above may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

HBS Policy on Course Waivers

Waiving or substituting a course that the faculty have determined essential to the program is a serious consideration. Students should discuss this thoroughly with their adviser well in advance of the start of the term in which the required course is offered. Course waivers are rare and are appropriate only when the student has completed the course or one very similar to it in prior graduate-level training. Course substitutions may be appropriate if the student can provide a rationale for why an alternate course is preferred to the required one. (NB: The alternate course must cover much of the same content as the required course.) If the student and the adviser agree that a waiver or substitution is warranted, a memo from the student (co-signed by the adviser) to the program directors, requesting the waiver should be submitted to the HBS Academic Program Administrator no later than the first day of the term of the course in question.

All requests for course substitutions must be submitted in writing using the required form to the program directors and student's adviser prior to course enrollment and should include the following information: Proposed competency area for substitution; Proposed course name,

number, number of credits, and description; Rationale for substitution, including a demonstrated match between course objectives and relevant training competency. Substitutions for coursework in Methodologic and Research Training will only be considered with evidence of prior equivalent coursework. No substitutions can be made for coursework in Section 1d (Public Health Core Competencies).

Concentration Competencies

1. Describe the methods and processes of designing a research study to answer social science questions relevant to public health.
2. Apply sociological perspectives to different public health issues.
3. Critique the application of community-based participatory research (CBPR) in planning, implementation, dissemination, and translation via a review of CBPR case examples.
4. Evaluate public health interventions to identify their theoretical foundations and assess how they address health determinants outlined by the socioecological model.
5. Select the appropriate research methods to answer a public health question.

According to the requirements of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH), all BSPH degree students must be grounded in foundational public health knowledge. Please view the list of specific CEPH requirements by degree type (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/public-health/ceph-requirements/>).