Part A  Course Outline

Introduction

Course - NURS 1043 Contemporary Issues in Nursing & Health Care

Welcome to Contemporary Issues in Nursing and Health Care.

This is a one-semester postgraduate course which provides an opportunity for registered nurses to review, discuss and analyse a number of key Australian contemporary health issues and relate them to their nursing practice. Analysis is made of the impact of demographic, ideological, economic and technological changes on current health policies and health care practice. The ambit of health care includes both mental and physical health and in keeping with current emphases in nursing practice, there is a particular focus on disease prevention and on policies which promote the maintenance of wellness in the community.

Key Areas for analysis:

- The health status of Australians
- The Australian health care system
- Program planning and evaluation
- The nurse as program planner
- The health of indigenous Australians
- Complementary & alternative health therapies
- The obesity epidemic
- The new challenges from infectious disease
- The mental health of young people
Garry McLoughlin completed his nursing training at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1980. He then worked in community health centres in Melbourne as a community health nurse and as a coordinator of health promotion activities. He is also a registered psychiatric nurse. He has a Bachelor of Arts (Social Sciences), a Graduate Diploma in Community Health, and a Master's Degree in Nursing. His practice and research interests include public health and health policy.

Garry is particularly interested in how societal factors as well as policy changes can affect nursing practice and in how nurses who work in different areas of practice deal with these factors and changes.

Contact Details:
Name: Garry McLoughlin
Address: Division of Nursing & Midwifery
School of Health Sciences
RMIT University (Bundoora Campus)
Plenty Rd. Bundoora, Vic. 3083
Professor Gay Edgecombe obtained her nursing qualifications in Western Australia (general nursing, child health and Ph.D), Scotland (midwifery) and the United States (Master of Science, Community Nursing). Currently, she holds the position of Professor and Clinical Chair, Community Child Health Nursing at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. Her background is in public health nursing. During the 1970s she worked as a generalist public health nurse in metropolitan, rural and remote regions of Western Australia. From 1981 to the late 1980s she worked as the Regional Director of Community Nursing (Eastern Goldfields Public Health Region) and then as state Assistant Director of Community Nursing Services for the Health Department of Western Australia. Currently, she is working closely with two State-wide programs in Victoria, the Maternal and Child Health Service and School Nursing Program. She is involved with a number of projects related to child health, women’s health, fathers, parenting, standard development, quality improvement, and program evaluation.

**Conceptual Background**

This course assumes that you:

- have completed a Bachelor of Nursing degree from an Australian university or a recognised overseas university.
- hold or are eligible to hold a current practising certificate as a Division 1 or Division 3 nurse in at least one Australian state.
- have a minimum of two-three years of professional experience.
• have successfully completed a research course at an undergraduate level
• have basic computer skills and reliable internet access

Progress Through the Course

Use the Planning and Time Management chart at the end of Part A to assist you in working through the course. The chart lists all your topics and their learning outcomes, and the activities and assessments to complete. Make sure you use the Time Management chart as a way of scheduling your time, and assessing your progress.

You will be studying this course over a suggested duration of 13 weeks (approximately 3 hours per week).

When you have completed the course Learning Guide, put aside some time for review before the examination. You will be informed of the examination time by your course coordinator via the Online Classroom.

Communicating with your Course Coordinator

Whenever you have a problem or a question, you will be able to contact your coordinator via email. The email contact is available through http://www.rmit.edu.au/online using the Online Classroom.
Resources

Computer Access:

You will be able to have online access as a student of RMIT University. You will be given a generic password, which you can then change if you wish.

This will enable you to:

- Ask your coordinator questions via email
- Register and send your assessments when indicated in the Learning Guide
- Access programs online where indicated in the Learning Guide
- Talk to students at other campuses in forums or as part of a group activity
- Access announcements relevant to your study. Make sure you access announcements at least once a week.

Resources:

There is no prescribed text for this course. Each of the six topics has their own list of references. Many of these readings are included in Part C and any other readings will be accessible online.

Weblinks:

Throughout this course you will be directed to many websites to enhance your studies by using the resources of the Internet. While some of these websites are provided as additional to your study, we recommend that you look at them at least briefly. They have been selected for their quality and innovative approach to the material you are studying. You should find many of them to be interesting and illuminating.

If you are studying online you will be able to click on a weblink to go immediately to the website and the document of interest at that website. In a few cases you may be linked to a Home Page from which you will have to follow a number of prescribed steps to get to the document we would like you to look at.

If you are not studying online you will need to type in the weblink name (its URL) to your browser’s Location (Netscape) or Address (Internet Explorer) bar. You may find it useful to add the website to a
Bookmarks (Netscape) or Favourites (Internet Explorer) folder for future reference after you have opened the website.

As with all websites there may be occasions when you try to open the website but are unable to do so. You should consider this no different to when you get busy tone when trying to make a telephone call. Your best advice is to wait a little while and try again. From time to time, however, websites do change and sometimes a resource is withdrawn. We will be monitoring all websites recommended during this course, and if any of them are permanently taken down we will advise you.

Further readings:


Study Needs

Although studying can be difficult at times, you can help yourself by being organised and allocating specific times for your study. There are some general guidelines which may help you:

- Plan your week. Schedule the times when you will be working through the Learning Guide. Use the suggested time allocation in the chart above to estimate how long to plan for each session of study.

- Ask questions of your tutor and institution. Don’t wait until you feel swamped or overwhelmed. Ask questions when you first have a problem.

- Use your student group as a network and assistance. It has been proven many times that a group of students can help each other to keep motivated and working to schedule.

Course-specific Study Needs

Feedback will be provided in the following manner:

General comments of relevance to all students undertaking the course will be posted on the Course Discussion Board via the Online Classroom.

Specific comments of relevance to a particular group or student will be sent directly via Student Emails.

Submission of Assessment

You will be submitting your assessments and activities as indicated by the Learning Guide, through the Online Classroom. Your coordinator will provide feedback through the Online Classroom as well.

All work must be presented as specified in the instructions and guidelines in Part B: Assessment. You are required to be professional in both presentation and attitude, including meeting of deadlines. Please check the plagiarism statement in the Course Outlines online, and ensure that you follow the guidelines provided.

A schedule of when assessments are due can be found at the start of Part B: Assessments.
Plagiarism

RMIT University requires that you present your own work for assessment. The rules against plagiarism – representing the work of others (published or unpublished) as your own – are strict and will be enforced diligently. Here is the RMIT’s current plagiarism statement. Read it and make sure you understand its importance.

Plagiarism statement

Plagiarism is a form of cheating in assessment. Plagiarism may occur in oral, written or visual presentations. It is the presentation of the work, idea or creation of another person, without appropriate referencing, as though it is your own. Plagiarism is not acceptable. The use of another person's work or ideas must be acknowledged. The penalties for cheating in assessment are severe, whether the cheating involves plagiarism, fabrication, falsification of data, copyright infringement or some other method. Penalties can include chargers of academic misconduct, cancellation of results and exclusion from your course. It is also a disciplinary offence for you to allow your work to be plagiarised by another student. You are responsible for keeping your work in a secure place.

Legal Office (university solicitor)

You can keep informed about the University’s plagiarism requirements at http://mams.rmit.edu.au/1oavdg0bdd1.pdf.

Evaluation Process

There is an evaluation form available at the Online Classroom on the RMIT website. Please complete and return as indicated at relevant times indicated by your coordinator. Your comments will assist us in improving and refining the materials and resources.

Feedback

Each Learning Outcome in this course is associated with a set of activities to help you master the knowledge and skills required. Some of these activities are self-assessment questions for which answers are provided so that you can assess your achievement throughout your
study. We encourage you to attempt these questions before looking at the provided solutions, which you will find at the end of Part C of this Learning Package. (For those studying online you will be able to link directly to the provided solution.)

In some cases activities will be exercises set from your prescribed readings. Answers to these questions will, in most cases be found in Part D.

You may be asked to prepare descriptive answers to some self-assessment questions. Since there is no one perfect answer to such questions, the provided answer will be an indication of a good response against which you can judge your own response. The provided answer may be a list of key points that your answer should cover, rather than a descriptive answer.
Use of Icons

The following icons have been used throughout this Learning Guide to indicate what you need to do next.

Reference/reading/resource/research – this may be printed and available in Part D: Resources, an additional recommended text, audio or video tape or web site.

Individual Activity – may be self assessment questions, problem solving, demonstration, simulation, lab, checklist/short answer after reading, case study. Complete the activity following instructions given.

Group Activity – may be problem solving, lab, case study, demonstration. Complete the activity following instructions given.

Feedback – turn to Feedback section at end of Part C: Learning Guide to check answers and responses for the activities.

Frequently Asked Questions – provides some responses to key areas students have highlighted as queries or difficulties.

Summary and Outcome Checklist – what has been learnt, in preparation for assessment

Assessment – must be achieved to pass topic or group of topics. Turn to Part B: Assessment for details of assessment requirements.

Additional reading and research to extend knowledge of key area

Evaluation – tool to gain student feedback on course content, structure and/or implementation issues
Generic Attributes of Graduates

The general aims and objectives of this course are consistent with the RMIT University Strategic Plan, the RMIT University Teaching Learning Strategy, and the RMIT University Graduate Attributes.

The graduate capabilities incorporate the Australian Nursing Council (ANC) National Competencies and at the end of this course you should be able to:

- Apply advanced skills in assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation in a variety of clinical care settings and contexts.
- Analyse and synthesise the integration of knowledge and application to practice.
- Demonstrate advanced knowledge in specialised areas.
- Demonstrate professional responsibility and accountability that enables you to make ethical decisions.
- Apply an evidence-based approach to advanced practice.
- Operate as a team member to lead, manage and contribute to an enabling environment that promotes safety, health and human dignity.
- Facilitate the empowerment of others including diverse groups, through effective and therapeutic communication.
- Engage in reflective practices and professional development of self and others.

The overall program develops and demonstrates these attributes. This course integrates a range of these attributes into the various topics, as indicated through outcomes stated at the beginning and statements in the Summary and Outcome Checklist for each topic.
## Planning and Time Management Guide:
### Contemporary Issues in Nursing and Health Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week(s) of study</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Approx. hours</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment submission week:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td><strong>Topic 1 A</strong>&lt;br&gt;The nurse as program planner in the health care system</td>
<td>Interpret the current life expectancies for males and females in Australia.&lt;br&gt;Give rationales for selecting four key health issues.&lt;br&gt;Name five important self-selected contemporary issues in nursing and health care.&lt;br&gt;Compare expenditures by different areas of the health system.&lt;br&gt;Critically evaluate disparities in funding.&lt;br&gt;Identify five principles for reform of the health system outlined at the Australian Health Care Summit (2003).</td>
<td>13 hours</td>
<td>Activity 1A – An overview of Australia’s health&lt;br&gt;Activity 1B – Health care spending and plans for reform&lt;br&gt;Activity 1C – Changes to the health system&lt;br&gt;Activity 1D – Resource allocation&lt;br&gt;Activity 1E – Nursing leadership</td>
<td>Week 1 Commence assignment one</td>
<td>Assignment one, an Analytical Literature Review due: Friday of Week 7, by 5pm AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment one, an Analytical Literature Review due: Friday of Week 7, by 5pm AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th><strong>Topic 1 B</strong>&lt;br&gt;The nurse as program planner in the health care system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe five significant changes that are currently affecting the Australian health system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prioritise health care expenditures from a given scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elaborate on the criteria used in establishing spending priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the links between the nursing process and the program planning and evaluation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe the seven step process of program planning and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyse the principles underlying the prioritising of needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State examples of objectives which are challenging, attainable, measurable and relevant within a given scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hypothesise examples of three types of evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 1F – The planning and evaluation framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 1G – Setting priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 1J – Developing criteria for measuring outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue working on assignment one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continue working on assignment one
from a given scenario.
State two criteria that are used for measuring the health status of Australians.
Design examples of how changes in knowledge and attitudes could be assessed.
Design examples of how changes in people’s behaviour could be assessed.
Design examples of how changes in policy could be assessed.

| Week 3 | **Topic 2 Part A** | Present a brief demographic profile of Indigenous Australians. | 13 hours | Activity 2A – Demographic profile and health status
Activity 2B – Indigenous health status
Activity 2C – Understanding historical, social, political and economic factors impacting on Indigenous health | Continue working on assignment one |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
|        | The Health of Indigenous Australians | Compare this profile to that of the general Australian population. Discuss the implications of this profile for Indigenous health status. Summarise the main causes of death among Australia’s Indigenous |         |                                                                                   |

**Activity 2A – Demographic profile and health status**

**Activity 2B – Indigenous health status**

**Activity 2C – Understanding historical, social, political and economic factors impacting on Indigenous health**

Continue working on assignment one
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th><strong>Topic 2 Part B</strong></th>
<th>Briefly describe the role of the ACAT.</th>
<th>13 hours</th>
<th><strong>Activity 2D – Responses to indigenous health statistics</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Give examples of comparative rates of infectious diseases among indigenous and non-indigenous populations.

Explain why diabetes and renal disease are major contributions to indigenous ill-health.

Describe three historical reasons for the lowered health status of indigenous Australians.

Give examples of how social, political and economic influences have affected indigenous health status.

Evaluate four areas of improvement in indigenous health noted by the authors.

Compare indigenous health in Australian to that of other indigenous populations.
| The Health of Indigenous Australians | Hypothesise the role of the nurse within the ACAT. Describe five rights of clients being assessed by an ACAT. Formulate reasons why indigenous clients might have difficulties in accepting hospitalisation or admission to a nursing home. Describe factors important in communicating with indigenous clients Analyse myths about indigenous clients that a non-indigenous nurse might have. Formulate five strategies useful for a nurse dealing with indigenous clients Describe briefly key issues pertaining to the role of the indigenous health worker Describe the principal features of the | Activity 2F – Nursing indigenous people Activity 2G – Nursing indigenous people Activity 2H – Issues faced by indigenous health workers Activity 2I – The empowerment model of health promotion |
### Week 5

#### Topic 3 Part A
**Complementary and alternative health care**

- Summarize the extent of usage of complementary and alternative forms of health care in Australia.
- Describe the principles underlying complementary and alternative health care practices.
- Analyse the reasons for people turning to complementary health practices.
- Debate the differences between orthodox and alternative forms of health care.
- Analyse the links between evidence-based practice and complementary health care practices.
- Analyse the relationships between contemporary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>The rise in the usage of CAM therapies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>Examples of CAM therapies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Principles underlying CAM therapies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>Female users of alternative health practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E</td>
<td>The relationship between CAM and orthodox medicine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 hours

Continue working on assignment one
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th><strong>Topic 3 Part B</strong></th>
<th>Complementary and alternative health care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Briefly describe the usage by nurses of CAM therapies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compare the role of the maternal and child health nurse to other nursing roles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe future directions for incorporating CAM therapies into nursing practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain how the immunization process is carried out in your local area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain how a maternal &amp; child health nurse deals with clients who have misgivings about their child being immunized.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate the relevant strengths and weaknesses of the arguments for homeopathic immunization.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe four</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3F – Nursing practice and CAM therapies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3G – The role of the maternal and child health nurse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3H – Parents concerns about immunization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3I – Parents concerns about immunization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3J – The nurse using CAM therapies with a client</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity 3K – CAM and holistic nursing practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue working on assignment one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 7

| Topic 4 Part A | Define and calculate two measures of being ‘overweight.’
|               | Analyse the scope and implications of Australia’s obesity profile.
|               | Analyse the extent, implications and causes of childhood obesity.
|               | Identify the major diseases associated with obesity.
|               | Analyse the key findings of a study linking 13 hours
| Activity 4A – Calculation of BMI | Activity 4B – Evaluating the obesity epidemic
| Activity 4C – Understanding childhood obesity | Activity 4D – Diabetes and childhood obesity
| Finalise your work on assignment one | Submit Assignment one, an Analytical Literature Review due: Friday of Week 7, by 5pm AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time).
| Week 8 | **Topic 4 Part B**  
The ‘Obesity epidemic’ | Compare and contrast two broad approaches to the prevention of obesity.  
Evaluate the behaviour modification approach to prevention.  
Evaluate the public health policy approach to prevention.  
Describe the four key roles and duties of the school nurse.  
Describe the principal gaps in the literature about the health promoting role of the school nurse.  
Summarise the key features of the Health Promoting Schools framework.  
Describe four school nursing strategies to help prevent childhood obesity.  
Describe four types of benefits of the ‘Walking’ activity. | 13 hours | Activity 4E – The behaviour modification approach  
Activity 4F – The public health policy approach  
Activity 4G – Nick and the obesity warrior  
Activity 4H - The health promotion roles of the school nurse  
**Week 9**

**Topic 5 Part A**

**The return of the infectious diseases**

- Describe the principal features of the epidemiological triad model.
- Analyse the model in terms of a range of specific diseases.
- Compare three theories of disease causation.
- Analyse ways in which human culture can affect infectious disease transmission.
- Describe three methods that humans have developed to combat infections.
- Briefly describe the principal mechanisms for antibiotic resistance.
- Describe three ecological changes currently

- Activity 5A - The epidemiological triad
- Activity 5B - Human ecology and infectious disease
- Activity 5C - The importance of close settlement and domestication of animals in the history of human infection
- Activity 5D - The case of avian flu

**Continue working on assignment two**
happening which place humans at increased risk of infections.
Describe two historical reasons given for the emergence of new infectious diseases in human beings.
Describe four stages by which newly emerging infectious diseases cross over from animal to human populations.
Apply the principles of epidemiology to the case of ‘avian flu.”
Describe what is meant by the term antigenic ‘shift’.
Describe four measures to minimize an outbreak of avian flu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 10</th>
<th>Topic 5 Part B</th>
<th>Activity 5E – Antibiotic resistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The return of the infectious diseases</td>
<td>Activity 5F – Acquired hospital infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyse ways in which hospital nurses can influence antibiotic resistance.</td>
<td>Continue working on assignment two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe three ways in which antibiotics are effective against pathogens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 11 | **Topic 6 Part A**  
The mental health of young people | Summarise the health status of young Australians.  
Analyse five risk factors for young people developing a mental health problem. | 13 hours | Activity 6A – Health profile of young Australian  
Activity 6B – Young people and recreational drug use  
Activity 6C – Cannabis | Continue working on assignment two |

Describe two treatment factors which contribute to mutations in bacteria.  
Describe a range of solutions to antibiotic resistance.  
Describe the most common sites for hospital-acquired infections in Australia.  
Analyse the two main strategies required to prevent hospital-based infections.  
Describe a range of evidence-based practices for limiting hospital infections.  
Apply the components of a prevention program to your own professional practice.
Describe the prevalence of cannabis use by young Australians.

Describe a selected short and long term effects of drug abuse by young Australians.

Describe a range of factors interrelating with drug abuse.

Analyse the relationship between cannabis use and the development of psychotic symptoms.

Debate the case for a specific ‘cannabis psychosis.’

Analyse the relationship between cannabis use and schizophrenia.

Define an ‘at risk mental state.’

Describe risk factors for psychotic illness in young people.

Summarise the arguments in favour of early intervention.

Activity 6D – The case for early intervention
| Week 12 | **Topic 6 Part B** | Describe the key management strategies for dealing with a patient in an acute psychotic episode.  
Summarise the key points of a risk management plan formulated by a Clinical Nurse Consultant (Mental Health).  
Compare the assessment skills of nurses working in EDs.  
Describe three models of mental health practice and how they relate to EDs.  
Analyse the principal features of the multidisciplinary mental health liaison team model of crisis management.  
Compare the advantages and disadvantages of three models of psychiatric case management.  
Evaluate the Psychiatric Emergency Centre model | 13 hours | Activity 6E – Managing acute psychosis in the Emergency Department  
Activity 6F – Crisis management  
Activity 6G – Models of case management in the emergency department  
Activity 6H – Mental health in the emergency department | Finalise your work on assignment two | Assignment two, an Analytical Report due: Friday of **Week 12**, by 5pm AEST (Australian Eastern Standard Time). |
| Week 13 | **Pulling it all together, overview of the course** | **Summarise the six topics and pull together common themes.** | **13 hours** | **Activity – Develop an action plan for a nurse contributing to the further development of one of the above six topics** | **An action plan template will be made available to you on the web site** |

of case management.

Compare the findings of two evaluation studies of the roles of mental health liaison nurses.

Analyse the positive aspects of the roles as described by the staff of hospital emergency departments.

Design a model of case management appropriate to an emergency department scenario.