

Noncommunicable Diseases in Global Health

Dates: 28 September 2026 to 6 December 2026

Location: [online](#)

Description

Explore the complex world of global health through the lens of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Designed for working professionals in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), **Noncommunicable Diseases in Global Health: From Burden to Action** focuses on the major NCDs (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer) and examines how they intersect with other pressing health issues such as infectious diseases, mental health, violence, and injury.

You'll learn what works in real settings: life-course prevention, integrated primary-care models, essential medicines access, "best buy" policies, and community-based programs. At the end of the course, you will take away a clear grasp of current and emerging NCD priorities, practical advocacy skills, and ready-to-use, evidence-based intervention frameworks you can adapt to your setting. *(Please note: This is not a clinical certification.)*

Instructors

Sarah Masyuko, PhD, MPH, MBChB

Assistant Professor, Global Health
University of Washington

Dr. Sarah Masyuko (she/her) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Global Health whose research focuses on implementation science and translating evidence into policy and practice for HIV prevention and noncommunicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries.

David Watkins, MD, MPH

Professor, Medicine--General Internal Medicine
Professor, Global Health
University of Washington

Dr. David Watkins (he/him) is a professor of Medicine and Global Health whose research examines health system reform, universal health coverage, and policy approaches to address noncommunicable diseases in low- and middle-income countries.

Student Support

If you have any questions, please reach out to edgh@uw.edu. Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff are ready to assist you promptly.

Course Announcements for System Issues

If you experience broken links or system-wide problems (e.g., videos not playing), please check the course Announcements first. The eDGH support team will post updates and fixes there.

Course Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Describe how to use a life course approach to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and explain the link to other health challenges.
- Explain the magnitude and epidemiological trends of NCDs at the global and regional level, using key metrics and data visualizations to compare burden across countries and regions.
- Examine the interrelation between the social, environmental, commercial, and political determinants of NCDs and their major behavioral and environmental risk factors and identify country variations.
- Describe the policies and strategic directions for addressing NCDs at the global and national levels, including both All-of-Government/multisectoral approaches and essential healthcare interventions.
- Explain the importance of comorbidities and integrated approaches for delivering care for persons who have NCDs as well as comorbid mental disorders, infectious diseases, or exposure to violence and injury.
- Critically analyze country experiences in tackling NCDs and outline the basic components of national or subnational programs to address NCDs.
- Explore knowledge gaps and discuss research priorities to address these gaps, with special emphasis on policy and implementation research.
- Apply different research methods to design and implement effective NCD programs and interventions.
- Develop a policy brief advocating for an intervention likely to make an impact for NCDs in your country.

Course Topics

Module 1: Defining the Problem

- NCD terminology and major NCD categories
- Global NCD burden and trends
- GBD Compare and NCD data interpretation

Module 2: Economic and Commercial Drivers of NCDs

- NCDs, health systems, and economic development
- Commercial determinants of health
- Policy options to address commercial drivers

Module 3: Tobacco and Alcohol Control

- Global trends in tobacco and alcohol use
- Health, social, and economic consequences
- Fiscal and regulatory “best buy” policies

Module 4: Air Pollution, Climate Change, and NCDs

- Air pollution and NCD burden
- Climate change pathways and NCD risk
- Mitigation and adaptation strategies

Module 5: Dietary Risk Factors and Physical Inactivity

- Diet, physical activity, obesity, and NCD risk

Module 6: NCD Outcomes Across the Life Course

- Life course approaches to NCD prevention and control
- Age, period, and cohort effects
- Early-life exposures and later NCD outcomes

Module 7: Health Systems and NCDs

- Health system functions for NCD prevention and care
- Quality NCD care and long-term management
- Essential medicines, UHC, and priority setting

Module 8: Primary Care Approaches to NCDs

- Primary care models for NCD services
- WHO PEN and local adaptation
- Community systems, task-sharing, and referral

Module 9: Specialized Care Approaches to NCDs

- Specialized NCD services in low-resource settings
- District hospitals and the PEN-Plus model
- Referral systems for complex NCD conditions

Module 10: International and National Policy Landscapes

- Global and national NCD policy agendas

- Food systems and equity
- Policy options for healthier diets and active living
- Targets, indicators, monitoring, and accountability
- NCD financing and care during crises

Target Audience

This course is designed for working professionals who are based in low- and middle-income countries, or whose work focuses on NCD prevention, care, policy, research, or programming in LMIC settings. Participants come from many countries and may include clinicians, health care workers, public health practitioners, early- to mid-career clinical and public health managers, program leads, program directors, researchers, policy staff, and advocates. Prior NCD specialization is not required.

Format

This is a self-paced, online modular course divided into 10 weeks. It will be delivered entirely online.

Participants are expected to review the pre-recorded weekly lectures, complete assigned readings and activities, and participate in discussion via the discussion forums. Most participants will also meet with a local study group that is led by a site facilitator. This is meant to increase opportunities for discussion about the relevance of the material to the local setting.

If you have any questions, please look at the course FAQ. If your question isn't answered there, please email edgh@uw.edu.

Materials

All reading materials for this course are provided in PDF form or by linking to online sources.

Grading

To be successful in the course, you will need to complete all learning activities listed.

Activity	Percentage
Course Project Assignments (5 parts: 8, 8, 10, 10, and 14 points; 50 total)	50%
Quizzes (10 quizzes, 4 points each; 40 total)	40%
Discussion Forums (5 forums, 2 points each; 10 total)	10%
Total	100%

Submitting Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Moodle. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline.

Viewing Grades in Moodle

Points you receive for graded activities will be posted to the Moodle Grade Book.

Quizzes will be graded upon submission. Grades are posted by the end of the day Monday after an assignment is due. If you submit your assignment late (after the due date), please allow at least 24 hours for your grade to be updated. We do not update late submission grades over the weekend.

Participants have access to their course for a defined period, which includes a four-week period after the course ends. During this time, scores on graded activities can be viewed and downloaded from within the course platform. After access ends, grades are no longer available and cannot be retrieved.

Please note:

- eDGH does not retain or provide grade reports after course access ends.
- eDGH does not issue academic transcripts.
- Certificates of completion serve as the official record of participation and include CEUs (Continuing Education Units) earned.

We recommend downloading your grades during the course or shortly after it ends if you wish to retain a personal copy.

Assignments

Course Project

For the course project, you will apply what you have learned to an NCD issue in your own country or setting. You will take on the role of a local advocate or technical expert and develop a focused, evidence-informed case for action.

Your final product will be a **1–2 page policy brief** that makes a compelling case for the Ministry of Health, or another relevant decision-maker, to prioritize one high-impact intervention for NCD prevention or care. The intervention should address a critical gap in your setting, such as low hypertension control rates, limited access to cancer treatment, gaps in diabetes care, or another important NCD challenge.

This is an individual assignment completed in five parts, with one submission due every other week. Each part builds on the last, helping you move from understanding the problem to identifying a practical intervention and making a clear case for change.

The five parts of the assignment are:

- Part 1: Assess NCD Burden and Trends
- Part 2: Identify Drivers and Determinants
- Part 3: Conduct a Gap Analysis
- Part 4: Identify One Priority Intervention
- Part 5: Policy Brief Final, Make the Case for Action

By the end of the course, you will have developed a practical, evidence-based policy brief that you could adapt for use in your own work or setting. For more information, visit the [Course Project Overview](#) in the General Information section of the course.

Discussion Forums

Your participation in the discussion forums is an important part of the course. The discussions give you space to reflect on course concepts, connect them to your own country or setting, and learn from classmates working in different health systems and contexts.

Discussion forums are due every other week, starting in Week 1. Please refer to the information on [posting to discussion forums](#) to read about expectations for posting.

Quizzes

Quizzes are designed to help you check your understanding of the module lectures and readings. They focus on the main concepts, terms, and applications covered in each module.

Quizzes will open when the module opens. You will have two attempts on each quiz, and the learning management system will record your highest score.

Certificate of Completion

Active participation is required in order to receive a Certificate of Completion for the course. To receive a Certificate of Completion from the University of Washington, USA, you must pass the course, which means getting a final score of 70% or higher on all graded activities. Certificates will be [distributed digitally](#) after completion requirements have been verified.

If you are a site participant, you must earn a qualifying score and attend 3 of the site meetings your site will hold. Attendance at more, if offered, is encouraged but not required to meet the site participation requirement. After the course, site participant certificates will be sent to site coordinators for distribution.

Late Work Policy

We will NOT accept assignments submitted by email or posted in discussion forums. Additionally, no assignments will be accepted after the course has ended.

Commitment to Academic Integrity

Commit to Integrity

As a participant in this course, you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class and also integrity in your behavior in and out of the classroom.

Definitions

“Plagiarism is defined as the use of the words, ideas, diagrams, etc., of publicly available work without appropriately acknowledging the sources of these materials. This definition constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional and whether it is the work of another or your own, previously published work. Plagiarism is a very serious offense that the University of Washington's eDGH Program does not tolerate.”

Enforcement

Corroborated reports of plagiarism, cheating, or other misconduct will result in no credit on that assignment and may result in suspension from the course and ban from participation in future courses.

Library Resources

The University of Washington offers a comprehensive collection of resources for continuing education participants, providing access to valuable research materials, academic databases, and global health tools. These resources can help expand knowledge, support research, and facilitate lifelong learning.

- **Unpaywall:** A free, legal browser extension that helps you find open-access versions of research articles. If an article is behind a paywall, Unpaywall searches for an openly available copy in institutional repositories or preprint servers.
- **PubMed Central (PMC):** A free full-text archive of biomedical and life sciences literature from the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH). PMC provides unrestricted access to millions of peer-reviewed articles.
- **PubMed:** A widely used search engine for scientific and medical research. To access free articles, use the "Free full text" filter on the left-hand side of the search results page.
- **Global Health Toolkit:** A UW curated collection of global health resources. Articles and tools without a lock icon are freely accessible to the public, making it a valuable reference for global health professionals and researchers.

Use of AI Tools in This Course

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Bard) can be useful for tasks such as clarifying complex concepts or refining your writing for better readability. You are welcome to use AI in these ways to support your learning.

However, using AI to generate or significantly revise responses for course assignments, activities, or discussion posts is not permitted and constitutes academic misconduct. Copying and pasting AI-generated content or feeding assignment prompts into AI tools is not allowed. These practices undermine your learning, as this course is designed to help you develop your own skills and express your own ideas.

Grammar, spelling, and phrasing will not be graded in this course; the focus is on the clarity and depth of your ideas rather than perfect language.

Keep in mind that AI-generated content can contain factual inaccuracies or misinterpretations, particularly in complex scientific discussions. Always verify information before using it. If you have any questions about the appropriate use of AI in this course, please reach out for clarification.

[Watch this video](#) for more information and resources.

Disability Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to the teaching team. As per the policy and practice of the University of Washington, we are committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments in accordance with federal and state law.

If you require accommodations for a disability or have specific accessibility needs, please contact edgh@uw.edu to discuss your requirements.

We are dedicated to working with you to ensure that you have equal access to all aspects of the course and to providing reasonable accommodations as needed. We value your feedback on the accessibility of this class. If you encounter any barriers or have suggestions for improvement, please reach out to us.

Religious Accommodations

eDGH uses the UW's [policy on religious accommodations](#) for participants who need to make special arrangements in meeting course deadlines due to reasons of faith or conscience or for religious activities. Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course by contacting edgh@uw.edu.

Copyright Statement

All content associated with this course is copyrighted. This includes the syllabus, assignments, reading lists, and lectures, as well as any material generated by your fellow students. Within the constraints of "fair use", you may copy these materials for your personal use in support of your education. For example, you may download materials to your computer for study, but you may not copy the materials and distribute or upload to a website. Such "fair use" by you does not include further distribution by any means of copying, performance or presentation beyond the circle of your close acquaintances, student colleagues in this class and your family.

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