

Public Mental Health: From Mental Illness to Wellbeing

Facilitators

- **Prof. Emiliano Albanese, PhD**
Institute of Public Health, Università della Svizzera italiana (USI)
- **Dr. Anja Lehmann, PhD**
Center of Salutogenesis and Department of Public and Organizational Health, University of Zurich

With contributions from guest lecturers

Description

Mental health and wellbeing are now central to public health. This is not only because mental disorders represent a major component of the global burden of disease, but also because wellbeing, social participation, meaningful relationships, resilience, functioning, and quality of life are fundamental to healthy lives and healthy societies. This course introduces doctoral students to public mental health as an interdisciplinary field integrating psychiatric epidemiology, prevention science, health policy, and wellbeing-oriented approaches.

The course provides a structured conceptual and methodological foundation for understanding mental health, mental illness, and wellbeing as related but non-identical constructs. Students will learn to distinguish illness-, wellbeing-, and functioning-oriented approaches; to interpret epidemiological and burden-of-disease evidence; and to critically appraise how mental health and wellbeing are measured across populations, cultures, and research contexts.

Objectives

After completing the course, students will be able to:

- Explain and distinguish key concepts of mental health, mental illness, and wellbeing.
- Compare selected theoretical frameworks for understanding mental health and wellbeing.
- Interpret population-level mental health evidence and critically reflect on key measurement and methodological limitations.
- Analyze mental health and wellbeing in relation to social, structural, ecological, cultural, and life-course determinants.

- Apply public mental health concepts to a concrete research or practice context, including mental health promotion, prevention, and implications for their own doctoral research.

Dates

25 – 27 October 2027

Eligibility

SSPH+ IGC students and postdocs. External participants are welcome to apply.

Course Structure

Lectures, group discussions, workshops, peer exchange

Assessment

Short reflective assignment

Credits

1 ECTS

Preliminary Work: 3h; Contact time: 21h; Homework: 5h

(1 ECTS corresponds to appr. 25-30 hours workload)

Location

University of Zurich

Course Fees

	1 ECTS
SSPH+ IGC PhD and MD Students	30 CHF
Postdocs from SSPH+ partner institutes with a SSPH+ Faculty Member as line manager	30 CHF
External PhD students, external MD Students, postdocs from SSPH+ partner institutes without a SSPH+ Faculty Member as line manager and Swiss Public Health Doctors in training	300 CHF
Others	800 CHF

Registration

<https://www.conftool.com/ssph-phd-courses2027/>

Deadline for registration

25 September 2027