

Foundations of Public Health

Facilitators

Prof. Arnaud CHIOLERO, MD PhD is an epidemiologist and public health physician. He is professor of public health and Director of the Population Health Laboratory (#PopHealthLab) at the University of Fribourg and adjunct professor in the School of Population and Global Health of McGill University. He works also as epidemiologist at the Observatoire Valaisan de la Santé (OVS) in Sion, Switzerland. He leads population health research with a focus on the epidemiology and surveillance of chronic diseases. Expertise: public health, surveillance, chronic diseases, life course epidemiology, prevention.

PD Dr. Stephane CULLATI, PhD, is a health sociologist and Senior Lecturer in epidemiology and public health Population Health Laboratory (#PopHealthLab) at the University of Fribourg. His research topics are health inequalities and life course epidemiology. He is also senior researcher at the University Hospitals of Geneva where he leads health care services research. He is President of the European Society for Health and Medical Sociology. Expertise: life course epidemiology, health sociology, health care services, prevention.

Prof. Dr. Kaspar STAUB, PhD, is a historian and epidemiologist. He leads the research group "Anthropometrics and Historical Epidemiology" at the Institute of Evolutionary Medicine at the University of Zurich. He is a faculty member of SSPH+ and a Research Associate at the Institute of History at the University of Bern. In his research, he combines modern and historical data on current health problems. He is also an expert in historical epidemiology and the history of public health, and he tackles the question of how experiential knowledge from the past can be better integrated in the public health field in the sense of knowledge transfer.

Prof. L. Suzanne SUGGS, PhD, MS, CHES, is a Full Professor of Social Marketing in the Faculty of Communication, Culture, and Society Sciences, at the Università della Svizzera italiana. She is Vice-President of the SSPH; Dean of the SSPH Lugano Summer School, Visiting Reader in the Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College London; Co-Speaker of the Swiss Academies (A+) expert group on Science Communication; Past member and co-chair of the Public Health group of

the Swiss National COVID-19 Science Task Force; and Senior Editor of the International Journal of Public Health. Expertise: public health, health promotion, behavior, and communication.

Description

Public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals.” — CEA Winslow (CDC, 2021).

But what constitutes public health sciences? This course is foundational for all those seeking a doctorate in any of the fields of public health sciences. Concept, definition, and history of public health, population health sciences, and applied public health will be addressed. It introduces students to the basics of public health surveillance, population health monitoring, and prevention sciences.

The aim is to make sure that all public health graduates in Switzerland can understand how their specific focus fits within the broader and interdisciplinary nature and long tradition of public health sciences and can communicate about public health sciences with health scientists and public health stakeholders.

Objectives

Through this course, participants will understand the principles of public health sciences. Lessons will help students situate public health sciences within public health practice, epidemiological research, surveillance, prevention sciences, and their long history. To make the link between topics and illustrate how public health sciences come together, participants will work in groups on selected public health issues (e.g., smoking, obesity, cancer, measles) and address how to assess the burden, identify which evidence for prevention is available or needed, identify what type of communication is needed for which stakeholders, and propose policy to improve the situation. The historical perspective of these approaches is also included, as well as the question of how recent and long-ago experiential knowledge can be most beneficially incorporated. Students will make a presentation at the end of the week.

After the course participants should know:

- What is(are) public health science(s) and the relationship with population health sciences, epidemiology, prevention, policy making, and communication
- The history of public health and the importance of integrating experiential knowledge from the past

Understand:

- Public health traditions in various countries, settings, and historical contexts
- Principles of evidence-based public health and of public health surveillance
- Principles of population-based prevention and promotion strategies
- The importance of making the case for public health activities

Dates

16 – 20 November 2026

Eligibility

Open to SSPH+ PhD students and health professionals interested in public health.

Course Structure

The course will consist of lectures, discussions, and group work.

Assessment

Participation in class and presentations.

Credits

2 ECTS: 15h of preparation work and 35 h of in class lectures, workshops & group work

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

Location

University of Zurich

Course Fees

	2 ECTS
SSPH+IGC PhD and MD Students	30 CHF
Postdocs from SSPH+ Partner Institutes	30 CHF
External PhD Students, External MD Students and Swiss Public Health Doctors in Training	600 CHF
Others	1'600 CHF

Registration

<https://www.conftool.com/ssph-phd-courses2026/>

Deadline for registration

16 October 2026

