**Use of historical death certificates as a tool to study the changing dynamics of human populations**

**Project Guidelines and rubriC**

**I. Project Challenge**

You will be using historical death certificate data to generate epidemiological research questions using the Arizona Genealogy Birth and Death Certificates (AGBDC) website <http://genealogy.az.gov>. Because of the large size of the database and the population diversity of the state of Arizona, a number of potential topics have been suggested and listed below. Although there is great research value in investigating historical death certificates, it is also important to recognize the limitation of using these documents as a source of epidemiological data. Before you decide on the topic of your project, there are several things that you need to consider:

* First, learn about your population, the history of Arizona, and the history of public health in Arizona.
* Public health issues 1870-1969 (list of potential topics below).
* Consider advantages and limitations of death certificates; re-examine certificate between 1870-1969 to make sure that the data that you are interested in can be extracted from the documents.
* In the proposal, provide a public health-related justification for the study (not just because it is interesting).
* Recognize the limitations of the data and challenges of the study.
* Study design and data analysis methods need to be part of the proposal.

**II. Project Proposal**

The research proposal needs to be written in an abstract form. To present the essential meaning and process of your project, the proposal should include:

**a)** the title of your project

**b)** summary of the significance or need of the work (i.e., background information)

**c)** research question(s) and hypothesis

**d)** major objectives of the project

**e)** the methods (i.e., study design) to be followed to accomplish the objectives

**f)** the potential impact of the research.

Length of the abstract: minimum of \_\_\_\_\_\_ words.

**III. DRAFT Report**

Every group will be submitting a draft report due by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. If it often helpful for students to get input from their instructor on their ongoing projects. The submission of a draft will not only allow for instructor input, but an assessment on their performance on the project at that point. The draft report should include the:

**a)** Introduction section

**b)** Methods section

**c)** Raw data

**IV. Final Written Report**

The final report should include the following element:

**a) Introduction:** including background information

**b) Study questions and hypothesis:** include some context on the study questions and

hypothesis.

**c) Study Methods:** Description and justification of research method (study design, risk

factors examined, biostatistical analysis, measures of association, data adjustment

used, etc.;)

**d) Results:** Include processed data (graphs, tables, and statistical analysis)

**e) Discussion:** Use a minimum of three (3) peer-reviewed papers to compare and contrast

with your data. You could use more references, if needed.

**f) References:** use Cell format for references (you could use the Citation Machine

<http://www.citationmachine.net/the-journal-of-cell-biology>)

**g)** **Appendix:** your report should also include,

* Maps (minimum of 2)
* Statistical analysis (minimum of 2)
* Tables (minimum of 2)
* Graph (minimum of 2)
* Measures of association (2)

**V. Report Presentations**

Every group will be required to present in front of the class a summary of their project during the last lab session on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Presentations should be 10-15 minutes long. Use of PowerPoint is strongly recommended. All elements required in the written report (introduction, methods, results, etc.) should be part of the presentation.

**VI. Important Notes on Assessment Project Management**

* The project groups will be advised in the beginning for accuracy of design.
* It is highly recommended that before you decide on a topic for your study, that you explore the potential data availability at the AGBDC website.
* Group projects will be evaluated, not only on the written and presentation reports, but also on project management and participation. Your instructor will assess the quality of project management based on interactions and individual consultation meetings with groups.
* It is advised that project tasks will be fairly split between members, which will be up to each group to decide. Group members are expected to work together, coordinate the project tasks, and prepare the report and presentation.

**VII. FINAL SCORE DISTRIBUTION (%)**

**If students are required a final presentation only**

* Proposal = 30%
* Final Presentation = 70%

**If students are required a final presentation only**

* Proposal = 10%
* Draft Written Report = 20%
* Final Project Report = 40%
* Final Presentation = 30%