Course Description:
Why are some people in some countries so much healthier than others? This course will explore the factors that explain the unequal distribution of health and disease in the world. The course will begin with an introduction to the language of global health: the burden of disease, epidemiology, cost-effectiveness, and health systems. It will then analyze the rationale for and modes of intervention to improve global health by exploring a number of high-profile topics, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, malaria, access to pharmaceuticals, human resources for health, corruption, health reform, and maternal and child health. The course will incorporate knowledge and views from multiple academic disciplines (public health, economics, politics, management, sociology, etc.) and does not require any background knowledge. It is open to students in all degree concentrations.

Objectives:
• To introduce key concepts and frameworks used in examining global health issues
• To understand the distribution of health and disability around the world and to understand the individual, social, and institutional factors that affect the burden of disease
• To explore issues and controversies in global health in an interdisciplinary manner
• To introduce the key actors in the global health system
• To learn to articulate the policy relevance of complex global health issues

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Office Hours: Tentatively 2:30-4:30 on Mondays, but email me to schedule a time to meet

Meeting time and location: Monday, 4:55-6:35 p.m., Meyer Hall, Room 122

Grading:
• 3 policy memos (10% each for a total of 30% of final grade)
• 2 blog postings (5% each for a total of 10% of final grade)
• In-class debate (10% for position paper and 10% for presentation, 20% of final grade)
• Final policy paper (5% for paper outline, 25% for completed paper, 30% of final grade)
• Class participation (10% of final grade)
Assignments:

Policy memos:
An important skill for anyone interested in working in public policy is the ability to summarize complex issues and to articulate concise arguments. During the semester you will be asked to write three - 2 page (max!) policy memos (minimum 11 point font, minimum 1.5 spaced, reasonable margins). The policy memos will be due throughout the course. Memo assignments will be posted online 1-2 weeks before they are due and need to be handed in at the start of the assigned class. Late memos will lose 10% of potential grade every 24 hours it is late. Please email me your memo before class and bring a hard copy to class. A handout on how to write a policy memo will be circulated, sample memos will be posted on blackboard, and you can also look at the Wagner Guidelines on how to write a memo: (http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/services/files/WritingMemos.pdf).

Blog postings:
Our course has its own blog (https://globalhealthpolicyynu.wordpress.com/) and you are the bloggers. At the beginning of the term, I will circulate a list of the classes and topics for each class. Students will sign up in advance for two sessions. During your assigned week, and by midnight Sunday night before class, you must upload one blog posting broadly related to the week’s theme. You could explore one of the readings, talk about recent developments in this area, or express a viewpoint. Your grade will depend on how useful the posting was and either how informative and/or how well you articulate your position. Be prepared to talk briefly about your blog post at the start of the lecture. A one page overview of how to post will also be circulated at the beginning of class and will be available on the course website. Students must each post at least twice for full grades but there is no maximum number of postings. Your grade will be based on the two highest postings. Late postings are subject to a 10% penalty per 24 hours.

In-class debate:
During the second half of the semester, we will have 4-5 case discussions on important current global health policy issues. Students will sign up to represent one stakeholder in one debate for a given topic by early October (cases and key stakeholders will be circulated shortly). Students will prepare a short position statement (3-4 pages) outlining their position on the issue and which will serve as the basis for their statement in class. The statement is due at the start of the class. Students will then have 5 minutes in class to present their position on the issue. The class will then discuss the arguments and the relative strengths of a given argument. You must present an argument based on the perspective of the stakeholder you represent – even if you personally do not agree with this position! More detailed information on the debates will be circulated on the first day of class.

Final Paper:
The final piece of evaluation in this course will be a final policy analysis paper of a key topic in global health. You may select any topic remotely relevant to global health, and you are encouraged to try to use a topic that is related to your professional or academic interests. For the topic, I would like you to write a 10-20 page paper (double spaced) outlining why you think this is an important topic that should receive more attention from global health policy makers,
provide some rationale for intervention, outline potential policy options to address the issue, and either discuss what might be some of the barriers or challenges to the adoption of these interventions or discuss the evidence of benefits of the particular policy options. More details will be distributed in class during the first few weeks of class. A short outline, worth 5% of your final grade, will be due around midterm. The final paper will be due during the last week of class.

Class participation:
I reserve 10% of your grade to reflect the general effort you put into the course, including your participation in class, your discussion on the blog, discussion during my office hours, your demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject matter and attendance. I realize that you are all busy adults and sometimes things come prevent you from attending class, but I hope you can try to minimize such events, and generally appreciate an explanation for your absence. Also please notify me if you need to miss class for religious reasons and also let me know in advance if I have scheduled an event related to your evaluation during a class that you will have to miss for religious reasons so that we can reschedule the evaluation. Please see NYU’s policy on Religious Holidays:
http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html

Textbooks:
There is no official textbook for this course. Instead the course will use chapters from textbooks that have been available and free of charge online and readings from the academic literature. All of the readings will be made available on the course blackboard website, however, you are responsible for all printing of the readings.

Section One: Introduction to Global Health Policy

1. September 13: An Introduction to Global Health Policy and Course Specifics

Topics covered:
• What is global health? Why should the world care about improving global health?
• What are some of the key challenges and assumptions in global health?
• What are some of the biases and misconceptions common in global health dialogues?
• Overview of course requirements

Key learning concept: Basic epidemiological and demographic concepts

Readings:


2. September 20: How healthy (or sick) is the world?

Topics covered:
• What is the global burden of disease?
• What are the major patterns of distribution of disease in the world?
• How is health defined and measured at the population level?
• What are some of the normative implications of how we measure health?
• How is global health data collected? How might this affect our understanding of global health?

Key learning concept: Population health summary measures, construction of the DALY

Mini-Assignment: Before class go to the following website ([http://gbdsurvey.org/](http://gbdsurvey.org/)) and complete the survey. Come prepared to discuss your experience.

Readings:


3. September 27: What factors explain the distribution of health in the world?

Topics covered:
• What is the epidemiological transition?
• How did health in developed countries improve over time?
• What contribution do income, education, and other factors make to health?
• What are the social determinants of health?
• What explains the variation in the global burden of disease across countries?
• How do we attribute causation in health?

Key learning concepts: Epidemiological transition, correlation vs. causation and observational vs. experimental studies
Readings:

4. October 4: How are priorities set in global health?

Topics covered:
• How are priorities in global health defined and set?
• What is cost-effectiveness and how can it be used to define priorities?
• What are health and human rights?
• What other frameworks have influenced global health priorities?

Key learning concept: Cost-effectiveness analysis, human rights,

Readings:

Section Two: The Organization of Global Health Delivery

5. October 18: Organizing Health: Systems, Actors, and Debates

Topics covered:
• What is a health system?
• How do we measure health system performance? What are limits of this approach?
• Individual vs. population health services
• The role of primary health care vs. tertiary health care
• Horizontal vs. vertical health service delivery
• Public vs. private health care

Readings:

6. October 25: Global health governance

Topics covered:
• What role do international actors play in health service delivery in developing countries?
• How are national priorities influenced by international priorities?
• How has development assistance for health evolved?
• What is the role of non-governmental actors (both international and domestic) in health service delivery?

Readings:

7. November 1: Financing health services and access to health technologies

Topics covered:
• Options for financing health services in developing countries
• The concept of access
• Drug development and the global intellectual property regime

Readings:

8. **November 8: Health service delivery - demand side issues**

Topics covered:
• What factors affect the demand for health services in developing countries?
• How do households select among health care providers?
• How does quality affect the demand for health care services in developing countries?
• What is the impact of user fees on the demand for health services?
• What is the rational for expanding access to health insurance in developing countries?

Readings:

9. **November 15: Guest Lecture: John Gershman**

10. **November 22: Health service delivery – supply side issues**

Topics covered:
• The distribution of human resources for health
• Incentives of health care providers
• Quality of health care providers
• The migration of health care providers

Readings:
• Das, J, Hammer, J. “Location, Location, Location: Residence, Wealth, and the Quality of Medical Care in Delhi, India.” *Health Affairs*: w338. March 27, 2007.

**Section 3: Analysis of current global health issues**

Readings:

12. December 6: Malaria

Readings:
• Shah, S. TBA

13. December 13: Reproductive health

Readings:

14. December 15: Corruption and health

Readings: