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 graduate degree concentrations.

Course Competencies

At the end of this course, students should have mastered the following competencies:

· The ability to assess population and community health needs from a public service perspective.

· The ability to examine social and behavioral determinants of health and understand how health systems can address the needs of vulnerable populations.
The ability to understand how policy and delivery processes work, and to consider the demographic, cultural, political and regulatory factors involved in and influencing health policy decision making at the global level.

**Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the distribution of health and disability around the world and to understand the individual, social, and institutional factors that affect the burden of disease;
2. Identify and describe the role of key actors in the global health system as well as the historical foundations of these institutions;
3. Describe the key frameworks that influence the global health priority setting process and apply these different concepts to current global health issues;
4. Understand the concept of a health system and describe the factors that influence the productivity of these systems;
5. Describe current methods of health financing in use globally and articulate the strengths and weaknesses of these various modes of financing;
6. Identify key barriers to health service delivery in developing countries and develop policy recommendations to address these challenges;

**Office Hours**

My office is located on the third floor of the Puck Building (295 Lafayette Street, corner Houston). To enter the building you will need your student ID and you must enter on the second floor. I strongly encourage you to come to my office hours at least once this semester to talk about the course, your assignments, or just to get to know one another better. My regular office hours are Monday afternoons 2-4 p.m. Regular office hour discussions are 20 minutes in length. Please be on time: if there is someone waiting for the next slot we will have to end on time. In addition, I will schedule up to 2 hours of additional office hours per week (or more if more is demanded) to be set at the beginning of each week. I use an online booking system to appointment booking program to book appointments ([http://bit.ly/oFG6O2](http://bit.ly/oFG6O2)). Although I will most likely be in my office on Monday afternoons even if no one schedules a session with me, sometimes important engagements come up and I can’t always be in my office. For this reason, I would encourage you to make an appointment at least a few hours in advance. To book an appointment please use the following link ([http://bit.ly/oFG6O2](http://bit.ly/oFG6O2)) or contact my assistant Vivian (vy8@nyu.edu). Please let me know in the comments section of the invitation the topic for the meeting. If you would rather talk by phone instead, just email me to let me know and a number where I can reach you. If you can’t make the times that are available online, please email me and suggest some times that are more convenient to meet.
**Reference Letter Policy**

I am generally happy to write anyone who takes one of my classes a reference letter for jobs, scholarships, or for other purposes. Bear in mind, however, that in general I tend to report on your written and verbal communication skills, your contributions to the classroom discussions, how well I know you as a person, your demonstrated interest and enthusiasm for the course, and your overall performance in the class. Given these details, it would be best to wait until we are at least halfway into the semester before asking me to write you a letter. Coming to my office hours and speaking up in class are good ways for me to get to know you better and sooner. If you still want me to write this letter, please give me at least 1 week notice, please send me details on the position, your updated CV, a description of the position to which you are applying and some details that you think I might want to mention about your suitability for the position. If I do not think I would be able to provide you with a favorable letter of reference, I will tell you immediately. If you need me to email or mail the letter somewhere please send me those details. In addition, please copy my assistant Vivian Yela (vy8@nyu.edu) on your letter of reference request.

**Grading**

Your final grade in this course will be composed of the following elements:

- 3 policy memos (15% each for a total of 45% of final grade)
- 2 blog postings (5% each for a total of 10% of final grade)
- Group project (5% for outline, 25% for written report, 5% for individual participation to be graded by your peers for a total of 35% of your final grade)
- Class participation (10% of final grade)

**Late Submission of Assignments**

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due online on Blackboard before the start of class (4:55 p.m.). Late assignments will be penalized 10% for every 24 hour period that it is late. If unforeseen circumstances arise and you are unable to hand in your assignment on time, please let me know as soon as possible to discuss an alternative arrangement. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please do not wait until the last minute to write to me to ask for an extension. If assignments have been scheduled on a religious or cultural holiday, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can also find an alternative arrangement for you.

**Assignments**

**Memos.** An important skill for anyone interested in working in global health 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). Memo assignments will be posted online 1-2 weeks before they are due at the start of the assigned class. Each policy memo is worth 15% of your final grade. More details on the expectations from these memos will be distributed on blackboard. Memos should be uploaded onto blackboard before class on the day that they are due.

Blog postings. Our course will have a blog - and you are the bloggers! You are all encouraged to subscribe to this blog to read what other students are also posting on the blog. 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, by midnight the night before class you must upload one blog posting broadly related to the week’s theme. Each post should be about 500 words. You could explore one of the readings, talk about recent developments in this area, or express a viewpoint. Once the blog post is posted, make sure you tweet it (using #HPAM1831). Your grade will depend on how useful the posting was and either how informative or how well articulated the posting. A one page overview of how to post will also be circulated at the beginning of class and will be available on blackboard. 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 sessions you signed up for in advance.

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, your demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject matter, discussions outside of the classroom (e.g. office hours) and attendance. I realize that you are all busy adults and sometimes things prevent you from attending class, but I hope you can try to minimize such events, and generally appreciate an explanation for your absence.

Group project. During the second week of class, you will be assigned to an important health issue group. During the course of the semester, your group will be required to prepare a 20-page (approximately) report on “How to Address this Important Issue”. More details regarding the expectations for the group project will be circulated at the start of the second week. You will be expected to work with your group outside of regular class hours (although if there is enough demand, we can find some time during the semester to meet as well). During the last two classes, students will be required to make a short 20 minute presentation (including Q&A) to the class, although not every student needs to present (although all group members must be present). A small component of your grade will be assessed by your peers based on your contribution to the group. More details regarding the content and expectations of this project will be distributed shortly.
TEXTBOOKS

The textbook for this course is called the “Textbook of International Health: Global Health in a Dynamic World, 3rd Edition” by Anne-Emanuelle Birn, Yogan Pillay, and Timothy H. Holtz. It is available for purchase at the NYU bookstore and through online retailers. There are also copies available at Bobst on reserve.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Wagner School values both open inquiry and academic integrity and students are asked to sign a pledge of academic integrity at the start of the program. Students are expected to follow standards of excellence set forth by New York University. Such standards include respect, honesty and responsibility. The program does not tolerate violations to academic integrity including:

- Plagiarism
- Cheating on an exam
- Submitting your own work toward requirements in more than one course without prior approval from the instructor
- Collaborating with other students for work expected to be completed individually
- Giving your work to another student to submit as his/her own
- Purchasing or using papers or work online or from a commercial firm and presenting it as your own work

Students are expected to familiarize themselves University’s policy on academic integrity as they will be expected to adhere to such policies at all times as a student and an alumni of New York University.
### Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12-Sep</td>
<td>An Introduction to Global Health Policy and Course Specifics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19-Sep</td>
<td>Why are some populations so much healthier than others? How do we know some people are healthier than others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26-Sep</td>
<td>Priority and agenda setting: how should we allocate limited resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3-Oct</td>
<td>Group project planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>10-Oct</td>
<td>Columbus Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>17-Oct</td>
<td>Global health governance and the political economy of development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>24-Oct</td>
<td>Guest Lecture: Sandeep Kishore, Advocacy and the NCDs Health systems, health system performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>31-Oct</td>
<td>Paying for the sick: health financing around the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7-Nov</td>
<td>Pharmaceuticals and access to new technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>14-Nov</td>
<td>Health service delivery - demand side issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>21-Nov</td>
<td>Health service delivery - supply side issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28-Nov</td>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5-Dec</td>
<td>Malaria and the neglected tropical diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>12-Dec</td>
<td>Reproductive health/Case Discussion 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>14-Dec</td>
<td>Corruption and Health/Case discussion 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assignment Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Memo 1</td>
<td>9/29/11</td>
<td>Due by 5 p.m. on blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Memo 2</td>
<td>10/24/11</td>
<td>Due before class on blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Memo 3</td>
<td>11/21/11</td>
<td>Due before class on blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group project outline</td>
<td>10/31/11</td>
<td>Ungraded, one member to discuss with me in office hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group project</td>
<td>12/12/11</td>
<td>Due before class on blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Posting 1</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Tweet 24 hours before class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog Posting 1</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Tweet 24 hours before class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LECTURE GUIDE

(1) An Introduction to Global Health Policy and Course Specifics

Topics covered:

· What are the key themes in this course?
· Why should the world care about improving global health?
· Course expectations, grading, outline of lecture

Readings:


(2) Why are some populations so much healthier than others? How do we know some people are healthier than others?

Topics covered:

· How is it that people in some countries live twice as long as in others?
· What are the determinants of population health?
· Where does global health population data come from? How are estimates generated?
· What are the implications for policy and management on relying on such imperfect data?

Readings:


· Grepin, KA. (2010) "Are my made up numbers better than your made up numbers?" (blog post) Available online at: http://karengrepin.com/2010/04/are-my-made-up-numbers-better-than-your.html.

(3) Priority and agenda setting: how should we allocate limited resources?

Topics covered:

· How are global health priorities set?
· What is cost-effectiveness and how can it be used to define priorities?
· What other frameworks have influenced global health priorities?

Readings:


· Daniels, N. Just Health Care, Chapter 1.


(4) Group project work session

(5) Global health governance and the political economy of development

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:


(6) Health systems, health system performance health reform, and politics of health reform Topics covered:
· What is a health system?
· How do we measure health system performance? What are limits of this approach?
· Why do some health systems perform so much better than others?
· What does it mean to strengthen a health system?

Readings:

(7) Paying for the sick: health financing around the world
Topics covered:
· What are the main modes of financing health services in developing countries?
· What are the main kinds of health financing systems?
· What incentives are created from the various health system financing options?

Readings:
(8) Pharmaceuticals and access to new technologies

Topics covered:

- The concept of access: Frost and Reich Framework
- Overview of the role of pharmaceuticals in health systems
- Intellectual property law

Readings:

- Reich, MR “The Global Drug Gap.”

(9) 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 heath insurance in developing countries?

Readings:


(10) 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.


· One more reading TBA

(11) HIV/AIDS

Topics covered:
· What explains the patterns of prevalence of HIV around the world?
· How successful has the response to the HIV epidemic been?
· What are some of the main challenges for the HIV response going forward?

Readings:

(12) Malaria and the neglected tropical diseases

Topics covered:
· What have we learned from five decades of trying to eliminate malaria?
· How should malaria be address globally?
· How have the neglected tropical diseases become less neglected

Readings:
· Roll Back Malaria Report, 2011.

(13) Reproductive health/Case Discussion 1

Topics covered:
· What are some of the main challenges in addressing maternal health issues?
· What programs have been successful and why?
· Why is there not more advocacy for maternal health issues?

Readings:


(14) Corruption and health/Case discussion 2

Topics covered:

· What is corruption and how does it manifest itself in health systems?

· What are some of the effects of corruption on health service delivery?

· What if anything can be done to address corruption in health systems?

Readings:

