Course Description

Why are some people in some countries so much healthier than others? This course will explore the social and institutional factors that help to 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, health systems, political analysis, global health governance, and health financing. It will then analyze the rationale for and modes of intervention to improve global health by exploring a number of current global health policy issues and the process of reforming health policies. 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.
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;
7. Describe the health reform process and develop an understanding of why some health reforms are more successful than others.

Office Hours

My office is located on the third floor of the Puck Building (295 Lafayette Street, Room 3077). 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 simply to get to know one another better. My regular office hours are Monday afternoons 3:30-4:30 p.m and Thursday afternoons 5:15-6:15 p.m. Regular office hour discussions are 15 minutes in length. Please be on time: if there is someone waiting for the next slot we will have to end at the scheduled time. In addition, I am also willing to meet with students immediately before class in the hallway outside of our classroom. I use an online booking system to book both types of appointments (http://bit.ly/oFG602). Although I will most likely be in my office during my regular office hour times, sometimes important engagements come up and I can’t always be in my office and I may cancel my office hours if no one has scheduled an appointment. For this reason, I would encourage you to make an appointment at least a day in advance and email me directly if you want to make a same day appointment. Under normal circumstances, please don’t email to see if I am free, simply use the following link to schedule appointments (http://bit.ly/oFG602). 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 due to class or work conflicts, 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 and does well 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 half ways 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.

GRADING

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

- 2 policy memos (15% each for a total of 30% of final grade)
- 2 blog posting (5% each for a total of 10% of final grade)
- Term paper (5% for outline, 40% for written assignment and 5% for in class presentation for a total of 50% of final grade)
- Class participation (10% of final grade)

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due online before the start of class (4:55 p.m.). Late assignments will be penalized 10 percentage points 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

Your résumé or CV. Your first assignment, which is ungraded, is to upload a copy of your most recent résumé or CV. The purpose of this exercise is for you to learn about how to use the classroom website and it will also allow me to learn more about who you are and
your interests. In addition, it is always a good idea to have a recent copy of your résumé or CV on hand, just in case that perfect job opportunity presents itself.

**Memos.** An important skill for anyone interested in working in global health policy is the ability to summarize complex issues and to articulate concise arguments. During the semester you will be asked to write two - 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 online, including some example memos. Please use these memos as a guide in terms of length and content. Memos should be uploaded online before class on the day that they are due.

**Blog postings.** All of the students in this class will participate with a group classroom blog. 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 300-500 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 #globalhealth). Your grade will depend on how useful, informative, or 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 course website. Students must each post at least twice for full grades but there is no maximum number of postings. However, I will only grade the posts that 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, case discussions, your participation 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. I expect everyone to speak up at least once during each case discussion. I will cold call on those who have not yet spoken.

**Term paper project.** During the second week of class, I will distribute more information on the class term paper. During the course of the semester, you will be required to prepare a 10-page (approximately) report on “What health issue should be included in the post-2015 MDG agenda”. The paper itself is worth 40% of your final grade. About a month before the term paper is due, you will be asked to submit a short 1-page outline of your term paper in order for me to give you feedback on your progress. This outline is worth 5% of your final grade. Finally, on the last day of class, you will be asked to give a short 3-minute pitch to the class about why your issue should make the cut.
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. You can also rent a copy of the book through Amazon.

READINGS

For every class, I have assigned a set of readings that I expect you will have read before coming to class. These readings take time, so please allocate sufficient time before the start of class to read these materials. If you do not get a chance to read the whole article, at least skim the material to get a sense of what is in those readings. I have selected these readings in order to give you more background and more context to frame classroom discussions. I believe that they are all important readings. If you do not manage to cover them before class, I think you should go back and read them at some point this semester. I will also post on the class website a document to help guide your readings. We will discuss many of these readings in class each week so please come prepared to be called on to comment on the reading. You have paid a lot of money to take this course, and I see these readings as an important component of what you will get out of this class, so make sure you get your moneys worth!

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>9-Sep</td>
<td>An Introduction to global health policy and course specifics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16-Sep</td>
<td>Measuring the health of the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23-Sep</td>
<td>Why are some people so much healthier than others?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>30-Sep</td>
<td>Priority and agenda setting: how should we allocate limited resources?</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7-Oct</td>
<td>Case discussion 1: Tobacco Control in South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>14-Oct</td>
<td>Fall break - no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21-Oct</td>
<td>Global health governance and the political economy of development</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>28-Oct</td>
<td>Health systems, health system performance</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4-Nov</td>
<td>Paying for the sick: health financing around the world</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11-Nov</td>
<td>John Gershman: Health and foreign policy</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>18-Nov</td>
<td>Pharmaceuticals and access to new technologies</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>25-Nov</td>
<td>Case discussion 2: The Measles Initiative</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>2-Dec</td>
<td>Health reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9-Dec</td>
<td>The future of global health policy: UHC, the post-MDGs, the NCDs</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>11-Dec</td>
<td>Class presentations</td>
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## Assignment Deadlines

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upload your CV</td>
<td>9/16/13</td>
<td>Due by 5 p.m. on class website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Memo 1</td>
<td>9/30/13</td>
<td>Due by 5 p.m. on class website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Memo 2</td>
<td>11/4/13</td>
<td>Due before class on class website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper outline</td>
<td>11/11/13</td>
<td>Due before class on class website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>12/11/13</td>
<td>Due before class on class website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blog Posting 1</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Tweet 24 hours before class</td>
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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
- History of international health system

Readings:

(2) Measuring the health of the world

Topics covered:
- How do we measure population health at the global level?
- 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) Why are some populations so much healthier than others?

Topics covered:

· How is it that people in some countries live twice as long as in others?

· What are the social determinants of population health?

· What is the relationship between income and health?

· Why is health different?

Readings:


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

Topics covered:

· How are global health policy agendas set?

· What is cost-effectiveness and how can it be used to define priorities?

· What other frameworks have influenced global health priorities?

Readings:


(5) Case Discussion 1: South Africa Tobacco Control Guiding questions (think about these when you are reading the case, come prepared to discuss in class):

· Why did Zuma and the ANC focus on tobacco control? Was this a good choice?

· What political, social, and economic factors impacted tobacco control in South Africa?

· Are the tobacco control strategies used and the lessons learned in South Africa transferable to other developing countries? Why or why not?

Readings:

· HBS Case GHD-012: Tobacco Control in South Africa. Click here to download [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/20535401].

(6) 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:


· Grepin KA. (2012) “HIV Donor Funding Has Both Boosted And Curbed The Delivery Of Different Non-HIV Health Services In Sub-Saharan Africa.” Health Affairs. 31(7):1406-14.


(7) 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?

· Human resources for health

Readings:


(8) 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?
· Corruption and health

Readings:

(9) 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.”
(10) Case Discussion 2: The Measles Initiative

Guiding questions (think about these when you are reading the case):

- What are the most important aspects of the biology and epidemiology of measles to consider in designing a strategy to reduce its incidence? Why?
- What roles do the organizations participating in the Measles Initiative play?
- Is it feasible to try to eradicate measles worldwide? What steps should the MI take to ensure it achieves its goal of a 90% reduction in measles deaths?

Readings:

- HBS Case GHD-015: The Measles Initiative. Click here to download [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/20535401].

(11) Health Reform

Topics covered:

- Under what circumstances do policy makers and health system planners initiate reform?
- What levers do governments have under their influence to improve the performance of health systems?
- What factors make some reform efforts more likely to succeed than others?
- What lessons can we learn from the experiences in the Mexico, Ghana, and China? What lessons are generalizable to other countries?

Readings:

(12) The future challenges in global health policy: UHC, post-MDGs, and the NCDs

Topics covered:

· What is Universal Health Coverage? Is it worth pushing as an agenda?
· Should the Non-Communicable Diseases receive more attention in global health policy?
· How successful have the MDGs been? What goals should be included in the post-MDG agenda to improve health?

Readings: