PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

DWA 249/UEP 249  Spring 2018

Tuesdays 7:15-10:10pm

Prof. Courtney Powers, powersc@oxy.edu

OFFICE HOURS:

5:00-7:00pm Tuesday and/or the weekend (to be announced in class).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores core concepts in public health, the development of human rights' concepts and how these two fields have increasingly intersected in global and local public health work. Specifically, we will review public health analysis to human rights problems and vice versa, examining how a rights-based approach to health can inform more critical and more productive approaches to issues such as gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health concerns. Finally, this course examines how public health issues have generated dramatically different responses across and within regions, countries and communities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the health and human rights framework and use it to analyze major public health problems;
- Identify human rights concepts related to health in international and national human rights documents and apply them to public health concerns and vulnerable populations; and
- List and explain major international human rights conventions and institutions and how they can be used to promote both health and social justice.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Students can earn up to 450 points in this class. Final grades are based on the percentage of points earned.

Student performance will be evaluated based on four components:

1) Attendance and Active Participation in Class: 50 Points

Class attendance is mandatory and I evaluate student participation in class activities and discussions.
Students must read the materials assigned for each class prior to class.

2) Critical Reading Response Essay: 100 Points

Each week I will assign two or three students to submit a 3-4 page Response Essay that critically engages the next week’s reading. Students must submit a hard copy to me at the beginning of the assigned class. The response assignment will be guided by a topic question or prompt provided in class. Each essay should include at least two questions for group discussion. Each student will prepare one Response Essay during the semester.

3) Current Event Essay: 100 Points

Each week I will assign two or three students to submit a 3-4 page Current Event essay evaluating a current event news article. The essay should briefly summarize the article, detailing how it relates to themes covered in class, and provide an opinion on the issue at hand. A hard copy is due at the beginning of the assigned class. Please staple a hard copy of the news article to the essay. Each student will prepare one Current Event Essay during the semester.

4) Group Paper Project: 200 Points

In teams of 3-4 you will choose a problem that can be analyzed through a health and human rights lens. The issue can be something you noticed on campus, in your community, city, or anywhere on the globe. As a team, you will work together to produce a paper that identifies how rights related to health in international and national human rights documents can be applied to the issue in a way that would promote both public health and social justice.

- Paper proposal and literature review (25 Points) - Hard copy due at the beginning of class on February 20th.
- Project Presentation (50 Points) – Each team member must present on April 24th and/or May 1st.
- Final paper (150 Points)- Hard copy due at the beginning of class, May 1st. The paper must be 15-20 pages and each team member must indicate which section(s) they had primary responsibility for drafting.

** All writing assignments must be typed, double spaced and completed in 12 inch font with no more than 1 inch margins. Late papers are not accepted. All papers must be submitted in class. Submission via email is not permissible. **
READINGS

The course textbook is Health and Human Rights in a Changing World (2013) by Michael Grodin, Daniel Tarantola, George Annas and Sofia Gruskin (hereinafter "Textbook"). Some class sessions will be supplemented by additional readings which are accessible on the world wide web or the course Moodle page, as indicated on the syllabus.

POLICY ON LATE WORK AND ABSENCES

Assignments must be turned in on time. If a student anticipates that s/he will not be able to attend a class or make a deadline, s/he is expected to speak to the instructor as soon as possible.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS

Please let me know immediately if you have a disability or any special needs that may affect your ability to complete the course successfully, so that we may discuss possible accommodations. These conversations will remain strictly confidential. For students who have special learning or related needs, please contact the Dean of Students Office in Coons 111 to complete the documentation necessary to make appropriate accommodations. Students with documented disabilities who are registered with Disability Services are required to present their accommodation letter to the instructor at the beginning of each semester or as soon as possible thereafter. Any student who experiences significant physical or mental conditions or impairments may contact Disability Services at (323) 259-2969 to learn about available services and support. More information is available at http://www.oxy.edu/disability- services.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, violates the college’s academic conduct policies. It also short changes student learning and intellectual growth. Cheating is taking credit for work by dishonest means or helping fellow students to receive credit through dishonest means (e.g., by copying from another student’s exam or assignment). Plagiarism occurs when the ideas or direct quotes of another individual or organization are incorporated into one’s work without recognizing the original source with a citation or other disclosure. This includes re-writing or re-formatting material in your own style without acknowledging the original source of your ideas or data. Any ideas or information that is not common knowledge must be acknowledged in a reference. Unacceptable academic conduct is subject to disciplinary action by college authorities. For Occidental College’s academic ethics policies, see http://www.oxy.edu/student-handbook/academic-ethics.
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<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Week 2 Jan. 30</td>
<td>Health and Human Rights: The Theoretical Framework</td>
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<td>Rights-Based Approach and Social Determinants of Health</td>
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<td>Epidemics, Communicable Diseases and Human Rights: Responses to HIV/AIDS</td>
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<td>Week 7 Mar. 6</td>
<td>Reproductive (continued)</td>
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<td>Week 8 March 13</td>
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<td>Gender-based Violence as a Human Rights and Health Issue</td>
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<td>Sexuality, Gender Identity, Health and Human Rights</td>
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<td>Right to Clean Water &amp; Sanitation</td>
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<td>Week 14 Apr. 24</td>
<td>Medical-Legal Partnerships/Project Presentations</td>
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January 23rd: Introductions to the Course

REQUIRED READING

- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):


International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx


January 30th: Introduction to Health and Human Rights: The Theoretical Framework

REQUIRED READING

• Textbook, Introduction, pp. 1-8; Ch. 1: Health and Human Rights, pp. 16-27.

Drawing on insights from the HIV/AIDS epidemic, this foundational chapter outlines the conceptual work from which the field of health and human rights emerged.

• Textbook, Ch. 2: History, Principles and Practice of Health and Human Rights, pp. 32-42.

Emphasizing the role that health professionals can play in reducing and preventing human rights violations, this chapter also suggests that health-related policies and practices can promote rights.

• Textbook, Ch. 3: Human Rights Approaches to Public Health Policy, pp. 43-58.


February 6th: Rights-based Approach and Social Determinants of Health

REQUIRED READING

• Textbook, Ch. 4: Health Systems and the Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health, pp. 62-76.

• Textbook, Ch. 8: Health and Human Rights: Overview pp. 121-133.

Tracing the evolution of linking health and human rights with particular attention to underserved and
marginalized populations, this article discusses programmatic application of a rights-based approach to health.


- Textbook, Ch. 40: Bias, Discrimination and Obesity, pp. 581-606.

The authors use what has become a major focus of public health action, the obesity epidemic, to illustrate the recurring and multifaceted face of stigmatization and discrimination.

- Sen & Ostlin, Gender inequity in health: why it exists and how can we change it, Global Public Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice, pp. 1-12 (April, 17, 2008) (posted on Moodle)

February 13th and 20th: Epidemics, Communicable Diseases and Human Rights: Responses to HIV/AIDS

REQUIRED READING

Read for February 13th:

- Textbook, Ch. 9: Is Access to Essential Medicines as Part of the Fulfillment of the Right to Health Enforceable Through the Courts? pp. 139-150

This article sets forth the results of a systematic review of court cases in low and middle income countries in which individuals used the courts to claim access to essential medicines arguably guaranteed them by the right to health.


Read for February 20th:


February 27th and March 6th: Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights

REQUIRED READING

Read for February 27th:


This article explores the difference between not denying access and providing access to reproductive health, and why provision of services is more important than access.

- Textbook, Ch. 26: Use of Human Rights to Meet the Unmet Need for Family Planning, pp. 410-422.

Concentrating on family planning and contraception, the authors suggest how human rights can be used to overcome barriers to access.


Using maternal deaths to highlight system failures, the author suggests rights-based approaches to improve the health and human rights of women.

Read for March 6th:

- Textbook, Point of View: Enhancing the Role of Men for Gender Equality and Reproductive Rights, pp. 431-433


Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm (read Articles 1-16)

March 13th: No Class (Spring Break)

March 18th: Gender-based Violence as a Human Rights and Health Issue

REQUIRED READING

- Textbook, Ch. 23: Gender, Health and Human Rights, pp. 341-351.

A classic article that proposes a framework for consideration of gender, health and human rights.

- Textbook, Ch. 29: Protection of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: Addressing Violence Against Women, pp. 441-448

The authors address the widespread impacts of violence against women on their health and well-being, including their sexual and reproductive rights.


Using the example of sexual violence against women, the authors provide a compelling example of the value of collecting empirical data to inform policy and to support redress for human rights violation.


March 27th: Sexuality, Gender Identity, Health and Human Rights

REQUIRED READING


April 3rd: Right to Clean Water & Sanitation

REQUIRED READING

- Right to Water. Read the UN web page on “water” at http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/human_right_to_water.shtml (stop at “To know more”)
- Sanitation. Read UN website on “sanitation” at http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/sanitation.shtml (stop at “To know more”)
April 10th: Torture and National Security through a Health and Human Rights Lens

REQUIRED READING


This article provides an introduction to the history and epidemiology of torture as a major and enduring public health problem.


This article argues that solitary confinement that inflicts mental harm is not ethically defensible for health care professionals and is a human rights violation that health care associations should work to end.

- Textbook, Point of View: Dual Loyalty in Clinical and Public Health Settings—the Imperative to Uphold Human Rights, pp. 322- 23.


The author examines the roles of physicians in prisons with special attention on how the state uses physicians not only to provide healthcare to prisoners, but also to further the national security and research interests of the state.

April 17th: Natural Disasters, Wars and Displaced & Refugee Communities – Health & Human Rights Implications

REQUIRED READING:


The authors suggest that physicians have a duty as key actors to do what they can to protect civilians and provide humanitarian relief in times of war.


The author argues that the worst effects of climate change are likely to be felt most by those groups whose rights and health are already precarious.
April 24th: Utilization of Medical-Legal Partnerships to Address Public Health Concerns

NO REQUIRED READING

May 1st: Student Project Presentations