Course Outline: CHL.5118H Fall 2012

International Health, Human Rights and Peacebuilding

Instructors:

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Time and Location of Course:

Wednesday, 9 - noon, Room 614, Health Sciences Building, 155 College Street

Rationale for Course:

Many factors that influence health are not addressed in traditional medical and/or public health curricula. Many health professionals do not have backgrounds in those areas that directly impact population health (e.g., human rights, economics, land, food security). This course will introduce students to different ways of understanding population health.

While it is traditionally held that population health is influenced by economics, peace and security, education and other factors (for example, see The Ottawa Charter - www.who.dk/policy/ottawa.htm), recent literature suggests that the relationship between health, economics, peace, security, education and other determinants of health is equally powerful in both directions (i.e., there is no prosperity in an unhealthy nation; there is no wealth, no health, where human rights are abused). This course will help students understand the complexity of that relationship in the global context.

Description of Course:

This course will examine the relationship between the global burden of disease and the social, cultural, economic and political context of international health, human rights and peacebuilding. Structural forces (such as international financing and trade flows) which influence global power relationships will be examined, especially those forces and relationships that impact on gender and health. As poverty is the leading cause worldwide of disease, disability and death, it will be the prominent underlying theme. Canada’s role and contribution to global health, human rights and peacebuilding will be highlighted. Emphasis will be given on how the above factors influence the everyday lives of the majority of people in the world. Particular attention will be paid to the interactive nature and impact of global health circumstances.

The course will look at specific global issues and examples of interventions and the role of governments and NGOs (non-government organizations) in responding to global health, human rights and peace opportunities. It will develop links between theory and practice, using case histories and examples of non-government (NGO) and government-initiated interventions for public health, human rights and peacebuilding.
Objectives:

Learning objectives of this course are for students to:

1. broaden their understanding of social structures which impact on the health of the majority of people in the world;
2. become familiar with key policy documents on international health, human rights, peace building and development;
3. examine in detail specific issues related to health, human rights and peace building;
4. explore the human capacity for resistance to oppression and human rights abuses, especially through examples of community-based and grassroots organizations.

Course Length: Half Course (Fall term)

Course Format:

The course will include some and/or all of the following: lectures, guest speakers, audiovisual presentations, case studies and seminar discussions. Students will take leadership roles in identifying issues of relevance to their particular areas of interest and by presenting these issues to the class.

Evaluation:

There will be four forms of evaluation: a short reflective paper (15%); a longer paper (50%) preferably based on the reflective paper (but could be on another topic); group presentation (30%) and class participation (5%). Individual grades will be assigned for the first two assignments; a group grade will be assigned for the presentations. Five percent of the final grade will added to the total at the end of the course for class participation.

Students are expected to attend and participate in class discussions. If absence is unavoidable, it is courteous to colleagues and professors that written notice is given.

Assignment One: Reflective Paper (15%)

Students will write a short paper on a topic of interest in an area of international health, human rights and/or peacebuilding which they want to investigate further. The paper should:

- clearly identify why the topic was chosen;
- provide some background to the topic, either from personal experience, reading the literature or other sources (e.g., media);
- indicate why the area is considered important to the course;
- propose areas for further investigation.
This paper is **NOT** a literature review. It should contain the students’ own personal reflections on why they consider the issue chosen to be important for global health. It can provide the base for the next assignment which will include a literature review. **Length:** 4 pages (double spaced). **Due:** October 10, 2012.

**Assignment Two: Major Paper (50%)**

The major paper can develop the ideas outlined in the first assignment or it can discuss an entirely different area. It should examine critically the issue of public health and its relationship to human rights and/or peacebuilding in a global context, based on critical appraisal of literature, theoretical constructs and/or analysis of options. The major paper should include most or all of the following:

- an overview of the topic and its relationship to global health;
- a theoretical framework against which the topic/issue can be understood;
- relevant literature and/or sources of further information;
- Canada’s role/contribution to the topic/issue chosen (if relevant);
- strategies for addressing the issue;
- suggestions for possible intervention and/or research.

**Length:** 10 pages (double spaced). **Due:** November 7, 2012.

**Assignment Three: Presentations (30%)**

Students will form study groups (3 – 5 members), based on areas of mutual interest in global public health, human rights and peacebuilding. Each group will meet outside of class time to prepare an oral in-class presentation for their colleagues on an issue related to the course. Marks will be based on content of presentation, analysis of the issue and facilitation of class discussion. Students are encouraged to form their study groups with individuals from programmes other than the ones they are in.

**Presentations will take place on November 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2012.**

Students are urged to select their topics and claim presentation time early.

**Length of Presentation** will depend on number of groups that need to be assigned time. Presentations are usually 40 minutes long, with approximately 20 minutes for discussion.
Session 1: Course Introduction and Overview of Issues

Outline of Session

1. Introduction of Participants
2. Address List
3. Overview of Course:
   A. Objectives:
      - integrate concepts from different disciplines;
      - develop critical appraisal skills;
      - develop ability to understand issues from different perspectives.
   B. Key Concepts:
      - Health (microbes sans frontiers);
      - Human rights (poems, stories);
      - Peace building (as opposed to peace keeping).
   C. Theoretical Perspectives:
      - Determinants of Health: first and second generation;
      - Globalization versus Parochialism;
      - Urbanization versus Agrarian (pastoralists, nomadic);
      - Fundamentalism versus Existential nihilism.
   D. Key Documents:
      - UN Declaration on Human Rights;
      - Alma Ata (WHO);
      - Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.

Following principles of adult education, students will be expected to find their own readings related to their particular areas of interest.

While there are no formal assigned readings because of the nature of the course, the following suggested readings are excellent background resources which provide insight into the history of the field:


NOTES:
Session 2: Geo-Political Aspects of Human Rights: Ideals and Reality

1. Announcements
2. Health and human rights norms and standards
3. The Right to Health
5. Discussion

Suggested Readings and Additional Resources:


NOTES:
October 3, 2012
Session 3: Concept Wars and Health

Outline of Session

1. Announcements
2. The history of wars against concepts
3. Implications of concept wars for human rights and public health
4. Documentary: The War on Drugs
5. Debate: Can the war on drugs be won? Should it be fought?

Suggested Readings and Additional Resources:

http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/charity-news/child-soldiers.htm

NOTES:
Session 4: Health as a Vehicle for Peacebuilding

Outline of Session

1. Announcements
2. Health for Peace: Case Studies
3. One Doctor’s story
4. Discussion

Objectives of Session:

Through examples of cooperative projects from various regions:

- to demonstrate the added value of using existing skills and experience on the ground as ways to bring communities and people together around common issues and as ways of working together to solve common public health problems;
- to show why health is a good platform for encouraging cooperation;
- to appreciate the value of identifying common ground as a base and starting point for building cooperation networks;
- to learn the value of building partnerships with academic institutions, governments, civil service, community agencies and clients and their families in order to build mutually beneficial knowledge and service networks;
- to show how the public health sector can provide a neutral platform for promoting cooperative activities;
- to recognize the importance of equality in the intellectual partnership, if not in the material resources and relative positions of power.

Suggested Readings and Additional Resources:


NOTES:
October 17, 2012

Session 5: The Global Burden of Disease and Globalization

Outline of Session

1. Announcements.
2. The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) and the populations that are the focus of international attention.
4. The links between globalization and respect for human rights.
5. Debate: Are we experiencing a common, connected global burden of disease, and global health crisis, or several geographically distinct, discrete, regional or national crises and varied burdens?

Suggested Readings and Additional Resources:


Session 6 & 7: Health, Human Rights and War

Outline of Session

1. Announcements
2. An overview of health and human rights conditions in sub-Saharan Africa
3. The reality of human rights in the field (Guest presenters on Bosnia, Congo & Sudan).
4. Discussion

Suggested Readings and Additional Resources:


Web sites:


www.hrw.org (Human Rights Watch)
www.icrc.org/eng/health-relief (International Committee of the Red Cross)
www.imc-la.org (International Medical Corps)
www.who.int/hpr (World Health Organization)
www.theirc.org (International Rescue Committee)
November 7, 14, 21, 28, 2012 – Group Presentations

Additional Suggested Readings: