**Health Systems, Policies, and Programs**

IPBH-3005 (3 credit/ 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Argentina: Public Health in Urban Environments

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**Course Description**
The Health Systems, Policies, and Programs seminar introduces students to the social organization of health care in Argentina. The course examines the development of the health care system as part of the social, political, and economic fabric of Argentine society. Students study the societal responses that have occurred throughout Argentina's history to improve health and well-being. Using a comparative approach, the organization of the system is studied based on the way needs are addressed while the health system profile is presented and discussed at varying geographical levels, including the national, provincial and local, and its administrative sectors – private, public, and social security.

The interdisciplinary view of the Argentine health care system that is presented allows students to understand how health needs are met in large urban areas. From a population perspective issues such as quality, cost, and access are considered. Organizational structure and the relationship between different health system components are taken into account when addressing how different stakeholders contribute to defining the public health agenda.

**Course Objectives**
The Health Systems, Policies, and Programs course has an interdisciplinary, critical, and practical focus. Its main objectives are:

- To introduce students to the development and history of the Argentine health care system
- To give students the opportunity to understand the Argentine health care system from population, social, economic, and human rights perspectives
- To challenge students to connect Argentina’s epidemiological profile and the health needs of the population with the national health system's policies and programs in different contexts

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• To expose students to health care and social institutions and stakeholders involved in health issues, policies, and programs in different geographical settings
• To illustrate to students the main challenges of health care and protection systems in the context of big cities

Expected Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students should have attained the following skills and knowledge to be able to:
• Identify the key features of the historical development of public health in the context of the Argentine development process.
• Define the basic concepts related to health systems and public health policies in a comparative framework.
• Discuss the challenges involved in fostering a healthy society in urban areas.
• Critically analyze the responses of the Argentine health system and public policies to address the health population’s needs and to cope with the different risks affecting quality of life in urban environments.
• Analyze the political process in defining the public health agenda and the roles played by different stakeholders.

Program Calendar
The Health Systems, Policies, and Programs course is divided into five thematic modules:

Module I  Argentina’s health system in a historical perspective and its present organization and functioning.

Analysis of the historical processes and main concepts to understand contemporary Argentina. Different stages of the health system development are analyzed in the context of historical and socio-economic processes: the consolidation of the State; immigration and urban transformations; industrialization and expansion of public health services; increasing importance of the private health sector. The health system’s organization and functioning: main institutions and networks. Implementation of national policies and programs at provincial and local levels are discussed. The module is organized through lectures, debates with specialists, and visits in the field.

Module II  Public Policies and Health: The Challenge of Equity

Health as a public good, the role of the state and public policies in the search of health and wellbeing. How public policies influence population access to health goods and social services. The debate on health and equity: alternative policies to reduce inequality. The module is organized through lectures, reading workshops, and debates with stakeholders.

Module III  Health Policies and Programs

General orientations of health policies focusing on developments in the last decade. Policies and programs at provincial and local levels: visits to Mendoza and Tucumán Provinces and to Ciudad de Buenos Aires and Florencio Varela municipalities. The role
of civil society in population health conditions and wellbeing through the implementation of community projects. Visits include presentations, discussion groups, and reflections.

Module IV  The Organization of Social Services and Healthcare Services

The different complexity levels in health care, organization of “Services Networks.” Primary health care. Articulation between health services and social services. The module is based on visits and debriefings. The visits include health services of different complexity levels, centers that integrate health and social services and NGOs. All visits will be coordinated by professionals at local level.

Module V  Problem Based Learning Experience

Based on a case that poses an academically relevant health issue, students will work in small groups guided by specialized tutors. Through brainstorming, debate, and information analysis, students will analyze the problem and possible explanation for its occurrence. Additionally, they will identify and suggest issues to be further discussed to deepen the comprehension of the problem. This module is developed in 5 days of work at the end of regular classes and other program activities, just before the beginning of the Independent Study Project assignment.

Educational Excursions may include:

- City of Buenos Aires: CeSAC 41 La Boca (primary health care level)
- Florencio Varela: Hospital del Cruce (third health care level)
- Florencio Varela: Hospital Mi Pueblo (second health care level)
- Florencio Varela: La Esmeralda Center (primary health care level)
- Mendoza: Centro de Integración Comunitaria de Maipú (Center that integrates health and social services) Centro de Atención Primaria La Consulta (primary health care level).
- Tucumán: Maternidad de las Mercedes (third health care level) and Policlínica Villalonga.
- La Plata: Global Age-Friendly Cities Project
- NGOs working in the city of Buenos Aires, Florencio Varela, La Plata, Mendoza, and Tucumán

Student Expectations

Class Participation

Participation in class refers to attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all lectures, discussions, field trips, and other activities. It also means polite, respectful, and appropriate behavior.

Course Requirements

Readings

Students are responsible for all the required readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will aid students in placing classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions, and to deepen their knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class.

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Required Readings

- Excursions Handbooks (Florencio Varela, Mendoza and Tucumán)

Student Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assignments
Timely completion of all assignments is expected. Late hand-ins will be penalized. All assignments are evaluated according to organization, analytical quality, depth of understanding, argumentation, and presentation of evidence.

- Pre-Departure Assignment: Question 1 10%
- Group Discussion Papers on Excursion Topics 30%
- Mid-Term 20%
- Case Resolution 30%
- Participation 10%

- **Pre-departure Assignment** Based on recommended bibliography, students will be required to complete a 2-page essay answering a question related to the Argentina’s health system’s historical background.
- **Group Discussion Papers on Excursion Topics** Students will meet with an assigned group to critically discuss issues concerning Argentina’s health system, policies, and programs raised in lectures, excursions, and debriefings.

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• **Mid-Term** Students will be required to reflect on certain aspects of the trajectory of the Argentina’s health system and current policies.

• **Case Resolution** Based on group analysis of the selected case, students will provide a written (ppt) and oral presentation to the class and professors. Students will also prepare an individual work summarizing their work in the group, reflecting on his/her understanding of the Argentine health system, policies, and programs. Both items (group and individual presentations and individual work) will be considered in the final exam grading of the student.

**Grading Scales and Criteria**
Grades are earned both fairly and rigorously and in accordance with the system below. They will reflect a combination of absolute quality of performance, progress made, the ability to take into account and assimilate the academic director’s and the professors’ instruction in assessing the work done. An “A” letter grade reflects exceptional work, perfect combination of academic competences, and personal research and analysis. It shows great ability to integrate field-based investigation and personal reflection into a structured and well argued paper. A “B” letter grade reflects serious and methodical work as well as a substantial effort at analyzing and understanding the issues. A “C” letter grade shows the work meets the requirements but needs more in-depth reflection and personal involvement. A “D” letter grade is insufficient and clearly reflects lack of work or serious deficiencies.

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100% A  
90-93% A-  
87-89% B+  
84-86% B  
80-83% B-  
77-79% C+  
74-76% C  
70-73% C-  
67-69% D+  
64-66% D  
below 64 F

Please see the SIT Study Abroad student handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, academic warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment, and the academic appeals process.

Please Note: Course contents, lecturers, and readings may be modified as needed. Should any change of class topics or lecturers may be necessary, student will be promptly notified.

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