



## Social and Political Dimensions of Health

IPBH-3000 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:

Madagascar: Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Systems

**PLEASE NOTE:** This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

### Course Description

Western medicine and practices have brought with them new forms of treatment but have simultaneously had seriously detrimental impacts on traditional healers and traditional medicine, diminishing their influences, and disrupting the natural balance and coherence of mind, body, and soul. The Social and Political Dimensions of Health Seminar introduces students to the cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts of health care in Madagascar, allowing them to understand Malagasy cultural assumptions and practices as they relate to health care. The course also explores the role of post-colonial and contemporary Malagasy politics as applied to health care policy and delivery. Class and field based lectures, excursions and site visits and activities are interwoven and complement each other and allow students to explore and understand how historical circumstances, geography, and demographics shape and inform the provision and delivery of traditional and allopathic healthcare systems in Madagascar. Various health care professionals trace the social and political dimensions of healthcare from precolonial through colonial and postcolonial periods.

Students explore nuances of health care and traditional medicine through in-country expert lectures held at the Laboratoire de Pharmacologie Générale, de Pharmacocinétique et de Cosmétologie (LPGPC) lecture halls at the 'Coline,' University of Antananarivo campus at Ambohitsaina, Ankatso and conduct field visits to historical sites and a variety of traditional medicine practice venues as they engage with traditional medicine practitioners. They visit localities where traditional medicine remedies (medicinal plants) grow and venues where the remedies are sold. Similarly students simultaneously learn Malagasy as they engage community members in this language (to the best of their abilities) when the opportunity arises.

Students conduct carefully designed data collecting exercises as they take lectures and conduct site visits. This data collecting aspect enables students to write a final paper and make a presentation on a

topic of their choice pertinent to the program theme at the end of the term (see Evaluation section for details on assignments).

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the theoretical framework and world view on the global challenges and opportunities in traditional and allopathic health care;
- Explain the impact of colonization on traditional healers and traditional medicine practice in Madagascar;
- Collect primary health data from health care professionals as well as lay people through interviews;
- Research a topic in traditional medicine, write up and submit a report;
- Demonstrate knowledge of an issue relating to traditional medicine in a presentation.

### **Language and method of Instruction**

This course is taught in English and French (the academic director serves as a translator when the course is taught in French) with students being exposed to vocabulary related to course content.

### **Required readings**

Solofo Randrianja & Stephen Ellis. 2009. Madagascar A Short History. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. ISBN – 10: 0-226-70420-3.

World Health Organization, 2013. Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014 – 2023

[http://www.who.int/medicines/publications/traditional/trm\\_strategy14\\_23/en/](http://www.who.int/medicines/publications/traditional/trm_strategy14_23/en/)

These readings trace two millennia of human activity in Madagascar by elucidating the three main phases of Madagascar's history: the earliest settlements, the age of kingdoms, and the island's entry into intercontinental systems of commerce and exchange, including over sixty years under French rule. It looks at the chain of historical experiences of Madagascar to understand the present as well as an overview of the strategy of the World Health Organization for Traditional Medicine globally.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Module I: People and biodiversity – the health resources-conservation relationship**

This module explores Madagascar's biodiversity and its relationship to traditional health care. The module examines the use of various fauna and flora by indigenous people to meet their health care needs and the relationship of this to sustainable biodiversity conservation and management. The module is complemented by visits to Petite Vitesse, a local traditional medicine remedies market in Antananarivo; "Parc Botanique et Zoologique" de Tsimbazaza (PBZT), as well as the biodiversity conservation sites of Andasibe National Park, Tsingy de Bemaraha, Bekopaka World Heritage site and the Allée du Baobab at Morondava. Students get to understand how this resource-use-biodiversity-conservation conflict is being addressed through site visits and discussions with various stakeholders.

#### *Assigned readings*

Balick, Michael, J. & Cox, Paul, A. (1996). Plants, People, and Culture: The Science of Ethnobotany. Scientific American Library, New York, USA.

Quansah, Nat., (2001). Pharmacies for life. *Our Planet*. Vol.12 (2):27-28  
([www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/122/quansah.html](http://www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/122/quansah.html)) .

Quansah, Nat. (2004). The Neglected Key to Successful Biodiversity Conservation and Appropriate Development: Local Traditional Knowledge. *Ethnobotany Research & Applications* 2:89-91  
[www.ethnobotanyjournal.org/vol2/i1547-3465-02-089.pdf](http://www.ethnobotanyjournal.org/vol2/i1547-3465-02-089.pdf)

## **Module 2: The historical evolution of traditional medicine among the Merina ethnic**

This module examines Malagasy cultural and traditional health care philosophy, underpinnings, and practices, with an emphasis on the Merina ethnic group. The structure of the ancient Malagasy society in general and the Merina in particular is examined. The history of the Merina ethnic group is explored and discussed as well as the role and value of traditional medicine and its professionals (traditional healers) in ancient and present day Merina society. The module is complemented by visits to Rova Ambohimanga and Rova Ilafy (palaces of ancient kings and queens of the Merina kingdom), Doany Kingory (a Sacred Traditional Medicine Practice Spiritual Healing Center) at Ambatomihiravavy, abodes and practicing venues of Reninjazas (traditional birth attendants) and other traditional healers in Antananarivo.

### *Assigned readings*

Rabarijaona, Bernadin. 2015. Traditional medicine with regards to Madagascar's history. Lecture Notes, SIT, Antananarivo

Raharinjanahary, Jean Marius Solo, 2014. Traditional medicine of the Merina ethnic group. Lecture Notes. SIT. Antananarivo, Madagascar.

[PDF][Overview on Medicinal Plants and Traditional Medicine in Africa](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&ved=0CGQQFjAH&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.monkeyland.co.za%2Findex.php%3Fcomp%3Ddownload%26op%3Ddownload%26file%3Dtrees%2Fmedicinal_plants.pdf&ei=FCvHVMSWAoL6Ut7rgcgE&usg=AFQjCNF-IlzOqmPc2lSGB-UJaAJ2-BzhRA&bvm=bv.84349003,d.d24&cad=rja)  
[http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&ved=0CGQQFjAH&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.monkeyland.co.za%2Findex.php%3Fcomp%3Ddownload%26op%3Ddownload%26file%3Dtrees%2Fmedicinal\\_plants.pdf&ei=FCvHVMSWAoL6Ut7rgcgE&usg=AFQjCNF-IlzOqmPc2lSGB-UJaAJ2-BzhRA&bvm=bv.84349003,d.d24&cad=rja](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=8&ved=0CGQQFjAH&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.monkeyland.co.za%2Findex.php%3Fcomp%3Ddownload%26op%3Ddownload%26file%3Dtrees%2Fmedicinal_plants.pdf&ei=FCvHVMSWAoL6Ut7rgcgE&usg=AFQjCNF-IlzOqmPc2lSGB-UJaAJ2-BzhRA&bvm=bv.84349003,d.d24&cad=rja)

## **Module 3: Political history of Madagascar**

This module introduces students to the cultural and political contexts of health care in Madagascar as the different professionals discuss aspects of the social and political dimensions of healthcare from precolonial through colonial and postcolonial eras with them. Students are exposed to how contemporary Malagasy politics are applied to healthcare policy and delivery in the country. Power relations in the Malagasy society through the historical times to the present and the position of traditional healers in the society are explored and discussed. Visits to Rova Ambohimanga and Rova Ilafy (palaces of ancient kings and queens and seats of government of the Merina kingdom), Doany Kingory (a Sacred Traditional Medicine Practice Spiritual Healing Center) at Ambatomihiravavy and Betafo Hot Springs Healing Center enable students to trace and understand the historical context health in Madagascar

### *Assigned readings*

Andriamparany, Tolotra A. 2015. The organization of Traditional Medicine in Madagascar. Lecture notes. SIT, Antananarivo, Madagascar.

Rasamindrakotroka, Andry. 2016. The political history of Madagascar and its implication on development of health care of the country. Lecture Notes. SIT, Antananarivo, Madagascar

World Health Organization. 2001. Legal Status of Traditional Medicine and Complementary/Alternative Medicine: a Worldwide Review. WHO, Geneva. Available at: [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO\\_EDM\\_TRM\\_2001.2.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2001/WHO_EDM_TRM_2001.2.pdf)

## **Evaluation and Grading Criteria**

### **Assignments**

#### **Arrival Quiz**

Students read the article by Quansah, N., 2001. Pharmacies for life. *Our Planet*. Vol.12 (2):27-28 at [www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/122/quansah.html](http://www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/122/quansah.html) and reflect on the challenges of healthcare delivery, especially, in developing countries vis-a-vis accessibility, affordability, and availability of the services to the citizens of these countries. Could the reliance on traditional medicine's use of local biodiversity – 'in countries rich in biodiversity but economically poor' - complemented by the use of the allopathic systems—provide affordable and effective health care? The arrival quiz is a one-hour-long quiz that students will take on arrival in country during the orientation period of the program based on the above article. The exam requires students to provide true-false responses to given statements as well as respond to short answer questions taken from the article.

#### **Seminar Paper** (see program calendar for due date)

The seminar paper offers students time and space to explore the literature on a topic of their choice relevant to issues of Social and Political Dimensions of Health in Madagascar. The seminar paper will provide the conceptual basis for the Traditional Medicine Research Paper. Students are encouraged to discuss the topic of the seminar paper with the AD from the start of the program.

#### **Traditional Medicine Research Paper** (see program calendar for due date)

Students will use their seminar paper as a platform to launch a research process on a topic related specifically to Traditional Medicine, and its role in Madagascar. Students will work with the AD to design and conduct research relevant to their topics.

#### **Presentation** (see program calendar for due date)

Students will prepare a PowerPoint presentation to share the findings of their Traditional Medicine research papers with peers and invited guests.

### **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 and respectful behavior.

Assessment of a student's participation in the program happens throughout the semester and is based on the following criteria:

- **Attendance:** promptness to all activities, and positive presence in all program environments
- **Involvement in class:** paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, sharing knowledge and information.
- **Respect:** polite and respectful behavior towards SIT program partners, host institutions, SIT staff, homestay communities, and fellow students.

## Grades

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Arrival Quiz                        | 20% |
| Seminar Paper                       | 20% |
| Traditional Medicine Research Paper | 40% |
| Presentation                        | 10% |
| Participation                       | 10% |

**Grading Scale** - 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  |

\*All written assignments should be typed unless permission is given otherwise. Make sure you have a flash drive, laptop or computer available and keep back-up files so nothing gets accidentally lost or erased.

## Grading Criteria

All grades assigned will take into account the students' special circumstances and challenges they face as foreign students. An "A" grade for an assignment entails superior (not just "very good") performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of Class Participation, an "A" grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in all practicum experiences, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of the students' participation will be monitored and taken into account.

## Disability

## Services

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sit.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sit.edu) for information and support in facilitating an accessible educational experience. Additional information regarding SIT Disability Services, including a link to the online request form, can be found on the Disability Services website at <http://studyabroad.sit.edu/disabilityservices>.

**Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook** for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.