Social Determinants of Health in South Africa

IPBH-3005 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
South Africa: Community Health and Social Policy

Please Note: This syllabus represents a typical 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
This course examines the social determinants affecting the burden of disease in South Africa. The course explores the pervasive effects of a history of racialized under-development and exploitation, and moves on to analyse the systems and policies that have been applied to redress inequities and improve health outcomes. The course is taught through facilitated engagements with local communities, schools, clinics and non-government organisations, and through lectures by local experts on health, education, gender and law.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course students will be expected to:

- Explain how social and political processes shape health outcomes especially for lower-income rural and peri-urban communities;
- Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the necessity for differentiated community-based and nation-wide intervention strategies; and
- Recognize the complexities involved in the implementation of a multi-sectoral approach to facilitate the progressive improvement of health outcomes that are substantively linked to social determinants.

Language of Instruction
This course is taught in English but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content through in-South Africa expert lectures and field visits to a wide range of venues and regional locales.
Course Schedule

*Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers’ availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.

Module 1 – The Pervasive Effects of Colonialism and Apartheid

Sessions

The History of South Africa
Excursion to Freedom Park, Tshwane
The State of the Nation
Critical Race Praxis in Public Health
Those In between: “Coloured and Indian”
Excursion and Homestay in Wentworth
Issues affecting the Wentworth Community
Social Issues affecting Health in Wentworth
Excursion and Homestay in Nzinga Village
Thirty Day Homestay in Cato Manor Township
Excursion to the Cato Manor Museum

Required reading


Recommended reading:

Module 2 – Rights-based Approaches to Addressing Social Determinants of Health

International Conferences Addressing the Social Determinants of Health and PHC
The South African Constitution
Excursion to Constitution Hill
Video: Taking HAART
Social Activism for Health
Excursion: Toxic Tour of South City Basin
The Gender Commission: The intersection of Health and Gender

Required reading:

Module 3 – Multi-sectoral Approaches to addressing Social Determinants of Health

Education and the Life Orientation Curriculum
Excursion to Special Needs Schools
Disability in South Africa
The National Health Insurance Plan
Social Welfare
Sanitation
Social Conditions affecting the spread of Tuberculosis
Concluding Session: The balance between preventative and curative interventions

Required reading

3
Readings
Students are responsible for all the readings, and should be prepared to bring them to bear on discussions in class. The readings will place the classes and excursions in their contexts, enabling students to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen knowledge of particular aspects discussed in class. Supplementary reading materials, not mentioned on the list, will sometimes be assigned and made available.

PLEASE NOTE: COURSE CONTENTS, LECTURERS AND READINGS MAY BE MODIFIED AS NEEDED. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OF CLASS TOPICS OR LECTURERS BE NECESSARY, STUDENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Assignments
Timely completion of all seminar assignments is expected. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments and papers must be turned in on the due date, by 4 pm.

1. Pre-assigned Reading Essay on Health and Human Rights 10%
   In a short essay of 500 to 750 words, outline the major points contained in Paul Farmer’s article on Rethinking Health and Human Rights. (Download from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10511828) Use formal academic writing conventions and include a bibliography.

2. Quiz on Essential Understandings from SA History 10%

3. Living Conditions in Nzinga Village Related to Social Determinants of Tuberculosis 30%
   During your stay in Nzinga Village, take careful note of social conditions that may be rendering members of the community more vulnerable to contracting tuberculosis. Describe the social conditions in thick detail and note where families are already taking steps to improve their health outcomes. Use formal academic writing conventions and include a bibliography. (500 to 750 words)

4. A Multidimensional Approach to Addressing the Social Determinants of Health in SA 50%
   In an essay of 1500 to 2000 words, analyse how a specific disease that you choose might be tackled using a multi-dimensional approach. Conclude your essay by speaking to the essential balance between treating those already ill and preventing others from becoming infected, providing reasoned arguments to justify where the emphases should lie. Use formal academic writing conventions and include a bibliography.

Grading Scale:
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

Expectations and Policies

- **Show up prepared.** Be on time. Have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- **Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done according to the specified requirements.** This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- **Ask questions in class, Engage the lecturer.** These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- **Comply with academic integrity policies** (no plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical).
- **Respect differences of opinion** (those of classmates, lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits, etc.). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

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.

**Disability Services:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 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.