

Health and Human Rights in Kenya

IPBH-3000 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Kenya: Global Health and Human Rights

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

How do social class, place of residence and gender affect access, and utilization of health care and health outcomes in tropical locations? To delve into this question, lecturers and excursions will specifically address healthcare issues experienced by women and youth, in addition to other groups made vulnerable through their social or geographic positions, including those with chronic/stigmatized health conditions and/or in rural communities. Secondly, the course focuses on the theoretical foundations underlying the assessment of human rights as they relate to public health. The course explores the overarching economic and political policies of Kenya and how they impact access to healthcare and related public health outcomes. Students analyze specific case studies that illuminate the problems, prospects, and potential methods of promoting health within the specific socio-cultural environment of Kenya. Finally, the course explores models and strategies for management of tropical diseases and their human rights dimensions. Course content is provided via lectures, discussions, readings, presentations, and educational excursions. The course draws on site visits to a variety of social spaces in Kenya, from KEMRI/CDC health surveillance sites, to rural villages, factory settings and international organizations in Nairobi.

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of Health and Human Rights in Kenya, students will be expected to:

- Describe the strategies for human rights advocacy within Kenya's public health program planning;

- Explain the alternative healthcare systems in Kenya delivered in a variety of different sociocultural contexts;
- Define the role of various state and private actors and institutions in healthcare policy in Kenya; and
- Distinguish between modern public health agenda and notions of human rights as they intersect with processes of social, economic and political change.

Methods of Instruction:

The course is taught in English. Lectures with key personalities in public health and human rights are complemented by case studies at Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and Centers for Disease Control in Kisumu, excursions and field visits to a rural village just outside of Kisumu, case studies of Kisumu City Department of Public Health, WOFAK (Women Fighting AIDS in Kenya), Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Kibera School for Girls/Shining Hope, and Gender Violence Recovery Centre.

Readings

Students are expected to complete all assigned reading by the scheduled readings discussions sessions, and they should be prepared to bring them to bear at scheduled reading discussions sessions. Readings help students place the classes in their context, to challenge and engage lecturers, to generate questions for class discussions and to deepen your knowledge of particular aspects encountered on the course.

Course Schedule

Module 1: The Historical and Cultural Context of Western Kenya

This module introduces students to the histories and cultures of western Kenya, and to the political history of Kenya more broadly. Students will begin to trace the links between social structure, health and human rights, through the lens of Luo cultural practices. After an introductory lecture, students visit the Kisumu Museum, which provides students visual and textual data with which students begin to gain insights into these issues.

Assigned Reading:

Hornsby, C. (2012). *Kenya: a history since independence*. London: I. B. Tauris, Chapters 1, 13 & 14.

Module 2: Introduction to Public Health and Human Rights

This module provides students with an overview of the healthcare systems in present-day Kenya. Students examine the philosophy and practice of public health in tropical settings in both rural and urban contexts. Students will study several issues impacting healthcare such as population dynamics, public health education, HIV/AIDS, orphaned and vulnerable children, women's healthcare needs, differential access to healthcare, and issues regarding mental healthcare in various cultural contexts.

- Bryan, John (2009) Kenya's Cash Transfer Program: Protecting the Health and Human Rights of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Health and Human Rights 11(2): 65-76. <http://www.hhrjournal.org/index.php/hhr/article/viewFile/174/272>. Last accessed online 3 December 2012.

- Coburn, David (2010) “Inequality and Health” in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (eds.) *Morbid Symptoms: Health under Capitalism*. Left World Books/Merlin Press: London. 39-58.
- Green, Judith (2010) “Working for Equity Whilst Improving Urban Public Health: Some Challenges” in Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Sharon Messenger, Caroline Overy (eds.) *Social Determinants of Health: Assessing, Theory, Policy and Practice*. Orient Black Swan: New Delhi. 294-306.
- Hunt, Paul and Rajat Khosla (2008) “The Human Right to Medicines” in *Sur* 5(8):99-115.
- Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (2011) *Silenced Minds: The Systematic Neglect of the Mental Health System in Kenya*.
http://www.knchr.org/Portals/0/Reports/THE_%20MENTAL_HEALTH_REPORT.pdf. Last accessed 3 December 2012.
- Yamin, Alicia Ely. 2003. “Not Just a Tragedy: Access to Medications as a Right Under International Law” in *Boston University International Law Journal* 21(2):325-371.

Module 3: Public Health and Disease Surveillance

This module draws on current ongoing work at Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) collaboration, through which students explore the incidence, distribution and possible control of the major tropical and nontraditional tropical diseases. HIV/AIDs, malaria, and Tuberculosis are employed as the major cases studies.

Assigned Reading:

- Nwaka, Solomon (2005) “Drug Discovery and Beyond: The Role of Public-Private Partnerships in Improving Access to New Malaria Medicines” in *Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 99:S20-S29.
- Petchesky, Rosalind Pollack (2003) *Global Prescriptions: Gendering Health and Human Rights*. London: Zed Books.
- Shretta, R; Walt, G; Brugha, R and RW Snow (2001) “A Political Analysis of Corporate Drug Donations: The Example of Malarone in Kenya” in *Health Policy and Planning* 16(2):161-170

Module 4: Public Health and Human Rights in a Rural Tropical Setting

This module draws upon the rural homestay in western Kenya. Student will conduct a profile of rural public health infrastructure, and explore health care financing, the structure of rural health care systems, and how national health care policy translates into health services for rural people. Students will complete an assignment on these issues, following which the academic director facilitates a discussion to draw out insights and lessons learnt.

Assigned Reading:

- Lee, Kelley (2010) “How Do We Move Forward on the Social Determinants of Health: The Global Governance Challenges” in Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Sharon Messenger, Caroline Overy (eds.) *Social Determinants of Health: Assessing, Theory, Policy and Practice*, Orient Black Swan: New Delhi. 11-23.
- Seuba, Xavier (2006) “A Human Rights Approach to the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines” in *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 84(5):405-407.
- Jenkins, R., Baingana, F., Ahmad, R., McDaid, D., & Atun, R. (2011). Social, economic, human rights and political challenges to global mental health. *Mental Health in Family Medicine*, 8(2), 87–96.

Module 5: Nairobi: National and International Level Approaches to Public Health Promotion

This module oriented towards case studies of international NGOs and local grass roots based organizations) and Q & A sessions with program expert partners in NBO. Students do a comparative assessment of the work of local grassroots/community based organizations and large international and national level organizations. This module draws on a case study of the United Nations office in Nairobi.

Module 6: Comparative Study of Rwanda's Healthcare Systems

Rwanda stands out in the East African region for its exceptional gains in rolling back malaria and in implementing a universal health insurance system. And, Rwanda is also pursuing urbanization processes in ways that are quite opposed to what is being implemented in Kenya. How has Rwanda made such progress in health promotion, and what lessons do we draw for implementing successful public health programs in tropical settings? Through various field visits, and lectures, students begin this module by exploring Rwanda's recent history, and then conduct case studies of Rwanda's Universal health insurance scheme, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Assigned Reading:

- Twahirwa, Aimable. "Sharing the burden of sickness: mutual health insurance in Rwanda." Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Nov. 2008, p. 823
- J E Epping-Jordan, S D Pruitt, R Bengoa, E H Wagner (2004) Improving the quality of health care for chronic conditions. Qual Saf Health Care 2004;13:299–305. doi: 10.1136/qshc.2004.010744.

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. The final grade for the Health and Human Rights seminar will comprise three assignments:

- I. Health and Human Rights Paper 70%
- II. Discussion Leadership and Participation 20%
- III. Rural Profile 10% *

Health and Human Rights Paper

For this assignment, students expand on a chosen topic addressed in lectures and readings. To gain in-depth knowledge of current scholarship in this area, students are expected to undertake at least two site visits to organizations (institutions, hospital, etc.) or NGOs associated with their topic. They should conduct a minimum of two interviews on site with a list of questions prepared in advance and based on issues raised in the course readings and lectures. The resulting theoretical and fieldwork research should be compiled into an 8-page paper. The goal of the paper is to demonstrate the students' understanding and synthesis of the subjects addressed in the corresponding lectures, readings, site visits and discussions, and analyze this knowledge within the specific context of Kenya. Successful completion of the paper requires a thorough discussion of the topic of choice, including the socio-economic circumstances in which the topic is embedded. Students are required to use a minimum of four secondary sources to evidence their arguments. It is expected that the Health and Human Rights paper will be rigorously edited. Thus, it should be free of grammatical errors and typos. It should also follow standard citation formats for both

primary and secondary sources. Most importantly, the paper should persuasively argue points in a concise and logical manner.

The paper may explore a topic such as the following:

- Public health systems in Kenya
- Right to health and healthcare
- Social determinants of health
- Gendered dynamics of health and human rights
- Malnourishment
- Health equity and human rights
- Mental health issues in Kenya
- Reproductive health
- HIV/AIDS in Kenya and access to ARVs
- Health financing
- Impacts of globalization on public health in Kenya
- Pharmaceutical industry and drug pricing

Discussion-leadership and Participation

This assignment combines classroom-based lectures, readings, and active participation in educational excursions with student and faculty-led discussions. Each student is required to lead at least one synthesizing discussion session during the course. Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the material in order to facilitate group analysis of key themes and ideas related to health and human rights in Kenya and to draw on lectures, readings, and site visits. In addition to the discussion leadership, this grade will also reflect the active engagement and participation in the discussions led by your colleagues in the program. Thus, you are each expected to contribute to the discussion sessions led by your classmates as an active listener and engaged participant.

Rural profile

During the rural homestay students will produce a rural profile detailing issues pertaining to health and human rights in the village host community. In particular, students are encouraged to view the village in tandem with – rather than isolated from - nearby urban areas and to provide an overview, informed by their experiences during the homestay and conversations with members of the community, to elucidate the specific health issues unique to the area.

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

Grading Criteria

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation, 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 seminar lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of student participation will be monitored and taken into account. All written assignments should be typed and double-spaced. Always remember to keep back up files or email files to yourself so that nothing gets accidentally lost or erased.

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>.