

Refugee Health and Humanitarian Action

MDES-3500 (3 credits / 45 class hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Jordan: Refugees, Health, and Humanitarian Action

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is representative of a typical term. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from term to term.

Description

This seminar is focused on the study of refugee health care and humanitarian aid in Jordan. Over decades, Jordan has become home to millions of refugees and displaced populations from Palestine and more recently from Iraq and Syria. The seminar provides first-hand exposure to the humanitarian response of various UN agencies in Jordan, most notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nation's International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), during the emergency, post-emergency, and resettlement phases, in collaboration with the host government. The seminar also addresses the common principles, rights, and duties governing humanitarian action as set out in the humanitarian charter, as well as the priority humanitarian interventions and minimum standards across the various sectors of humanitarian work, with special emphasis on the health sector. The health status, risk factors, and health services (both physical and mental) available to refugees will be addressed during the emergency and post-emergency phases with special emphasis on vulnerable groups including women and children. The relationship between the social and economic "daily stressors" and war-related traumas on the mental health of refugees will be examined in detail. Due consideration will also be given to the impact of consecutive refugee crises on the health system and the determinants of health for Jordan's population. The seminar uses an experiential learning model that integrates theory and field-based learning during visits to healthcare facilities providing health services in refugee camps and in host communities, UN agencies, international relief organizations, the Ministry of Health, and local NGOs.

Learning Outcomes

The Refugee Health and Humanitarian Action course comprises 45 class hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the common principles, rights, and duties governing humanitarian action as set out in the humanitarian charter;
- Demonstrate knowledge of refugee humanitarian response in Jordan and the coordination between host government, UN, and humanitarian agencies;
- Show understanding of the risk factors to the physical, mental, and social health of refugees in camps and host communities;

- Demonstrate understanding of the objectives, priorities, processes, and minimum standards in humanitarian health response during the emergency and post-emergency phases of refugee crises;
- Produce a critical paper that appraises refugee health and humanitarian action in Jordan.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English. Students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of health, environmental issues, and community change and development through in-country expert lectures and field visits in 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: Humanitarian Response to Refugee and Displaced Populations

This module addresses the common principles, rights, and duties governing humanitarian action as set out in the humanitarian charter. The module examines the major sectors of humanitarian response and looks into the processes, standards, and players in each sector.

Session 1: Introduction to Refugee Humanitarian Action

This session provides a general introduction to the common principles, rights, and duties governing humanitarian action as set out in the humanitarian charter and the core standards in humanitarian response. The session also addresses the definition, guidelines, and laws related to refugee status, treatment, and protection and the legal obligation of states.

Required Reading:

Humanitarian Ethics in Disaster and War. IFRC, 2003. Retrieved from:
<http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2003/chapter1.asp>

Session 2: Minimum Standards of Humanitarian Response

This session introduces the top priorities of intervention in a refugee relief program grouped under four major technical sectors: water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion; food security, nutrition, and food aid; shelter, settlement, and non-food items; and health services. The session also addresses the core “process and people” standards of humanitarian aid that cuts across all major sectors of humanitarian aid such as participation, initial assessment, response, targeting, monitoring and evaluation, aid worker competencies and responsibilities, supervision, management, and support of personnel.

Required Readings:

UNHCR. (2014). Regional Public Health and Nutrition Strategy for Syrian Refugees. Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Retrieved from:
<http://www.bing.com/search?q=UNHCR's+Regional+Public+Health+Strategy.&src=IE-SearchBox&FORM=IENTTR&conversationid=>

Session 3: Humanitarian Response in the Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Sector

This session focuses on the particular challenges of providing water to refugees in Jordan: one of the most water poor countries in the world.

Required Readings:

REACH (2014). Al Za'atari camp households possessing a source of wastewater. UNICEF.
UNHCR. (2008). Guidance for UNHCR field operations on water and sanitation services.
Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/49d080df2.html>

Session 4: Humanitarian Response in the Food Security, Nutrition, and Food Aid Sector

This session introduces the minimum standards in food aid, nutrition, and food security according to the principles embodied in the Humanitarian Charter. The session also examines food aid intervention and refugee food security and nutrition status in Jordan.

Required Reading:

Prudhon, C. (2002). *Assessment and treatment of malnutrition in emergency situations: manual of therapeutic care and planning for a nutritional programme*. Imprimerie Compédit Beaugard.
UNHCR/UNICEF/WFP/WHO. (2002). *Food and Nutrition Needs in Emergencies*. Geneva.
World Health Organization. Dept. of Child, & Adolescent Health. (2000). *Management of the child with a serious infection or severe malnutrition: guidelines for care at the first-referral level in developing countries*. World Health Organization.

Session 5: Humanitarian Response in the Shelter, Settlement, and Non-Food Items Sector

This session combines a lecture and a field visit to the Zaatari refugee camp in the North of Jordan. The session introduces the minimum standards in shelter, settlement, and non-food items according to the principles embodied in the Humanitarian Charter. The field visit enables the students to assess first-hand the living conditions of refugees and the adequacy of shelter and settlement conditions in the largest Syrian refugee camp in Jordan.

Required Reading:

Shelterproject.org. (2004). *Guidelines for the Transitional Settlement of Displaced Populations*. Cambridge.

Module 2: Emergency and Post-Emergency Refugee Health Services

This module addresses the objectives, priorities, processes, and minimum standards in humanitarian health response during the emergency and post-emergency phases of refugee crises. The role of the Jordanian Ministry of Health (MOH) in coordinating humanitarian aid in the health sector will be explored as well as the challenges of providing quality and sustainable health care services to refugees in Jordan.

Session 1: Healthcare in the Emergency Phase

This session is focused on public health interventions and health services available in Syrian refugee settlements in the emergency phase in Jordan and the coordination between the host government and the various humanitarian agencies working in Jordan. The session also discusses the minimum standard required in a humanitarian health response and the systems approach to emergency health response. The session consists of a visit to a Syrian refugee camp to explore the infrastructure of health services.

Required Reading:

Médecins, S. F. (1997). *Refugee health: an approach to emergency situations*. Macmillan Education Ltd: London.

Session 2: Control of Communicable Diseases and Epidemics

This session addresses the major risk factors for communicable diseases and the general measures for communicable disease control during the emergency and post-emergency phases, including the general preventive measures such as immunization, outreach activities for early case finding, active screening, outbreak detection, epidemic control, and contingency plans.

Required Readings:

Spiegel, P. B., Checchi, F., Colombo, S., & Paik, E. (2010). Health-care needs of people affected by conflict: future trends and changing frameworks. *The Lancet*, 375(9711), 341-345.

Murshidi, M. M., Hijjawi, M. Q. B., Jeriesat, S., & Eltom, A. (2013). Syrian refugees and Jordan's health sector. *The Lancet*, 382(9888), 206-207.

Session 3: Health Care for Refugee Children—Field Visit

This session addresses risk factors for developing health problems and common illnesses in children living in refugee camps. The session also discusses the pediatric curative care, immunization, and therapeutic and supplementary feeding programs available for Syrian refugee children in camps and host communities. The session combines a field visit to a health care center for Syrian refugees run by a local NGO in the city of Ramtha, North of Jordan, and a visit to a health center in a Syrian refugee camp.

Required Readings:

UNICEF. (2013). Syrian refugee children in Jordan. *Assessments desk review on the situation*.

UNICEF. (2013). Syria's Children: A lost generation. *Crisis Report, March 2011-2013*.

Session 4: Refugee Women Health Care—Field Visit

This session explores reproductive health care services available for Syrian refugee women in refugee camps and host communities. The prevention and response relating to high birth rate, early pregnancies, gender-based violence, and increased sexual and domestic violence in the refugee community will be discussed. The session integrates a field visit to a health care center for Syrian refugees run by a local NGO in the city of Ramtha, North of Jordan, and a visit to a health center in a Syrian refugee camp.

Required Readings:

UNFPA. (2013). Jordan Scales Up Emergency Support for Syrians. Retrieved from:

http://unfpa-jordan.org/images/stories/PDF File/flyer_english-main0.pdf

UNICEF. (2014). A Study on Early Marriage in Jordan 2014. Retrieved from:

https://www.unicef.at/fileadmin/media/Infos_und_Medien/Aktuelle_Studien_und_Berichte/Early_Marriage_in_Jordan_2014/UNICEFJordan_EarlyMarriageStudy204I.pdf

Module 3: Refugee Burden on Jordan and the Role of UN Agencies in Humanitarian Aid

This module examines the role played by refugee-specialized UN agencies and other international agencies in humanitarian response to refugee crises in Jordan as well as their policies and strategies. The module will focus on the roles played by refugee-specialized agencies including UNHCR and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian

Refugees (UNRWA), the special UN agency created in the aftermath of the Palestinian Nakba, which has been providing services to Palestinian refugees since its inception in 1949.

Session 1: Humanitarian and Health Care in Protracted Refugee Situation: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan

This session takes place at the UNRWA Headquarters in Amman. The session provides an overview of the Palestinian population in Jordan and its distribution in-country in addition to the health services accessible to the Palestinian refugee community. The session will also examine the role of UNRWA in providing social services to Palestinian refugees in Jordan in collaboration with the Government of Jordan GOV.

Required Readings:

Riccardo, F., Khader, A., & Sabatinelli, G. (2011). Low infant mortality among Palestine refugees despite the odds. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 89(4), 304-311.
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2014). Annual Report of the Department of Health 2012: UNRWA Health Department.

Session 2: UNRWA Health Center Field Visit

This session, which consists of a site visit to the UNRWA Health Center, provides students with the opportunity to learn first-hand about health care systems and medical services available to Palestinian refugees. The field visit is followed by a reflection session that provides the students with a forum to debrief and analyze the challenges of delivering health care to refugee populations.

Required Readings:

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. (2014). Annual Report of the Department of Health 2012: UNRWA Health Department.
Seita, A. (2015). Governing the Reform of the United Nations Health Systems for Palestine Refugees: Moving Mountains. In Reich, M. & Takemi, K. (Eds) *Governing Health Systems for Nations and Communities Around the World*. Lampery & Lee. 267-292 ISBN-978-1-942108-00-9

Session 3: UNHCR Syria Regional Response

This session will address the role and response plan of UNHCR for providing humanitarian aid to refugees in Jordan and the region.

Required Readings:

UNHCR. (2014). Syria Regional Response Plan-Turkey. Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/syriarrp6/docs/syria-rrp6-turkey-response-plan.pdf>
UNHCR. (2003). PARTNERSHIP. *An Operations Management Handbook for UNHCR's Partners*.

Session 4: Coordination of Humanitarian Response

This session will look into coordination of humanitarian response between the host government and the various humanitarian agencies working in Jordan. The challenges to providing sustainable humanitarian aid to refugees in the country will be also discussed.

Required Reading:

UNHCR. (2003). PARTNERSHIP, An Operations Management Handbook for UNHCR's Partners.

Module 4: Mental Health and Psychosocial Challenges in Refugee Populations

This module discusses the risk factors and prevalence of mental illness in refugees, including conflict-related traumas and the psychosocial challenges of immigration and assimilation. The module will also discuss mental health screening and treatment in refugee populations.

Session 1: Risk Factors and Prevalence of Mental Illness in Refugees

This session will discuss the risk factors and prevalence of mental illness in refugees including conflict-related traumas and the psychosocial challenges of immigration and assimilation.

Required Readings:

World Health Organization. (2003). Mental health in emergencies: Mental and social aspects of health of populations exposed to extreme stressors.

Betancourt, T. S., & Khan, K. T. (2008). The mental health of children affected by armed conflict: protective processes and pathways to resilience. *International review of psychiatry*, 20(3), 317-328.

Session 2: Refugee Mental Health Care: Screening and Interventions

This session introduces the students to the guidelines for mental health and psychological support in emergency situations. The session will also explore the mental health care services available for refugees living in refugee camps and host communities in Jordan.

Required Reading:

IASC Reference Group for Mental Health and psychological Support in Emergency Settings. (2010). *Mental Health and psychological Support in Humanitarian Emergencies: What Should Humanitarian Health Actors Know?* Geneva.

Session3: Psychosocial Challenges of Immigration and Assimilation

The session combines a lecture and field visit to International Medical Corps (IMC) and Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) centers in the Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees, which aims to provide protection and psychosocial support for Syrian refugee children living in the camp.

Required Readings:

Pickren, W. E. (2014). What is resilience and how does it relate to the refugee experience? Historical and theoretical perspectives. In *Refuge and resilience* (pp. 7-26). Springer Netherlands. ISBN 978-94-007-7922-8

IMC and UNICEF. (2013). Mental Health/Psychosocial and Child Protection Assessment for Syrian Refugee Adolescents in Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan. Retrieved from:

<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IMC%20MHPSS%20and%20CP%20Assessment%20Zaatari%20July%202013%20final%20%281%29.pdf>

Module 5: International Refugee Protection—Geneva Excursion

This module takes place during the excursion to Geneva, Switzerland, and will provide an opportunity to visit UN and other main international agencies and NGOs mandated with refugee protection and relief. Students will learn firsthand about their missions, mandates, roles, and activities. The session will also examine the politics and the challenges facing the said agencies in fulfilling their mandates of refugee protection and assistance.

Session 1: WHO as Health Cluster Lead in Humanitarian Response

This session combines a lecture and a field visit to World Health Organization office in Geneva. The session explores the central role played by WHO as the health cluster lead in leading, coordinating, and supporting the health sector response in emergencies, with the aim of meeting the needs of the vulnerable populations affected by humanitarian emergencies.

Required Reading:

World Health Organization (WHO). (2013). Emergency Response Framework. Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/hac/about/erf_.pdf

Session 2: Coordination of the International Humanitarian Action

This session combines a lecture and a field visit to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Geneva. During the session, the students will learn firsthand about OCHA's mission and role in mobilizing and coordinating effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors to alleviate human suffering in disaster and emergencies. The session will also explore the challenges faced by OCHA and their strategies for overcoming the hurdles encountered.

Required Reading:

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs OCHA. (2015). Global Humanitarian Overview: June 2015 Status Report. Geneva: OCHA. Retrieved from: https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/GHO-status_report-FINAL.pdf

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

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.

Description of Assignments:

Literature Review

Students will be expected to respond to the question relating to social identity of refugees and hand in the assignment during the first week of the semester (first week is orientation).

Critical Analysis

During the semester, students will be required to write one critical analysis of a question based on lectures and readings assigned. The paper should be five pages long.

Synthesis Session

Students will also be required to lead one synthesis session. Leading a synthesis session requires that the student prepare a summary of the assigned lectures and readings, make comments, and prepare questions for class discussion.

Field Visit Report

Following a field site visit assigned by the AD, students will be expected to prepare a three- to four-page analytical paper focusing on observations made during the visit, issues raised by presentations given by health professionals during the visit, and answering the question(s) requested by the AD.

Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance during the thematic seminar is mandatory and your grade will reflect your involvement in class and during other activities and excursions.

Assessment:

Literature Review on Assigned Material	15%
Critical Analysis	30%
Synthesis Session	20%
Field Visit Report	25%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%

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 Reading 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>.