Refugees Health and Humanitarian Action
MDES 3500 (3 credits)

Jordan: Refugees, Health, and Humanitarian Action

This syllabus is representative of 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.

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 Nations’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
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:

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:
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:

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:

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:

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:
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:
affected by conflict: future trends and changing frameworks. The Lancet, 375(9711),
341-345.
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:

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:
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:

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:

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:
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:

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:

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:

Session 3: 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:
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:

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:

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.