

Social Determinants of Health in South Africa

IPBH-3005 (3 credits)

South Africa: Community Health and Social Policy

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.

Course Description

Social Policy should create health justice, which can best be achieved by addressing the Social Determinants of Health. The course explores the pervasive effects of a history of racialized under-development and exploitation, then moves on to analyze the systems and policies that have been applied to redress inequities and improve health outcomes. The course will focus on how Social Injustices continue to affect Health outcomes in current epidemics of HIV and Coronavirus and is taught through facilitated engagements with local communities, schools, clinics and non-government organizations, and lectures by local experts on health, education, gender, and law.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain how social and political processes shape the 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;
- Recognize and articulate the link between Social Justice and improved health outcomes, and;
- Reveal a personalized, thoughtful, and coherent grasp of how specific diseases are linked to the social conditions in which people must live.

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.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Course Schedule

Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lectures' 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

The mindset of coloniality, global monetary systems and the power of whiteness continue to hinder progress towards the creation of a just society in South Africa. Hear how the South African State is constructed and engage with museums that display conditions using multimedia exhibits.

Sessions include:

- The History of South Africa (2 hours)
- The State of the Nation (2 hours)
- The Social Determinants of Health(2 hours)
- How Racism affects Health (2 hours)
- Homestay in Nzinga village – Rural Conditions (3 days)
- Homestay in Cato Manor township – Peri-urban Conditions (28 days)

Excursions:

- Kwa Muhle Museum on Migrant Labor (2 hours)
- Freedom Park (2 hours)
- Old Fort Jail Museum (2 hours)

Readings:

A History of South Africa. (2017). Retrieved from Government of South Africa:
<http://www.gov.za/about-sa/history>

- Coovadia, H., Jewkes, R., Barron, P., Sanders, D., & McIntyre, D. (2009). The health and health system of South Africa: historical roots of current public health challenges. *The Lancet*, Published online August 25, 22009, 1-18.
- Ethekwini Municipality Local Museums.(n.d.) Kwa Muhle Museum. Downloaded from <https://durbanhistorymuseums.org.za/kwamuhle-museum/> A history of South Africa (2017.) Retrieved from Government of South Africa <http://www.gov.za/aboutsa/history>
- Scott, V., Schaay, N., Schneider, H., & Sanders, D. (2017). Addressing social determinants of health in South Africa: the journey continues. In A. Padarath, & P. Barron (Eds.), *South African Health Review 2017* (pp. 77-88). Durban: Health Systems Trust.
- Williams, D.R. (2016) How racism makes us sick. Ted Talk https://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_williams_how_racism_makes_us_sick?language=en
- Mayosi, B. M., Lawn, J. E., van Niekerk, A., Bradshaw, D., Abdool Karim, S. S., & Coovadia, H. M. (2012). Health in South Africa: changes and challenges since 2009. *The Lancet* (Online November 30, 2012), 5-19.

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

Having a right is nothing unless one has the ability to use it. South Africa has produced laws and policies that are among the most progressive in the world, but implementation is often lacking. Explore how the Treatment Action Campaign succeeded where other interventions have mixed success in producing significant outcomes.

Sessions include:

- The South African Constitution (2 hours)
- Documentary: “Taking HAART” (2 hours)
- Policies and Social Activism for Health (2 hours)
- Gender, Health and Policy (2 hours)
- The National Health Insurance Plan (2 hours)
- Social and Legal Perspectives on Lockdown and Prohibition. (2 hours)

Excursions:

- The Constitutional Court (1 hour)
- Toxic Tour of the South Durban Basin (4 hours)
- Special Needs Schools in Durban (2 hours)

Readings:

- Knight, L., Ranganathan, M., Abramsky, T. *et al.* Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE): Women’s Engagement with the Scaled-up IMAGE Programme and Experience of Intimate Partner Violence in Rural South Africa. *Prev Sci* 21, 268–281 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-019-01070-w>
- Lewis, J. (Director). (2011, July). TAC - Taking HAART [Video file]. Retrieved July 1, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGwvv0z7--Y>
- Parry, C. D. H., Simmonds, J. E., & Freeman, M. (2020). Failing to respond to health promotion imperatives could scupper or hamper National Health Insurance efforts. *SAMJ: South African Medical Journal*, 110(3), 170-171.

Prüss-Ustün, A., Wolf, J., Corvalán, C., & Neira, M. (2016). Preventing disease through healthy environments. A global assessment of the burden of disease from environmental risks. Geneva: World Health Organization.

The South African Bill of Rights (2017) Accessed from Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa. <http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za>

WHO. (2011). Rio political declaration on social determinants of health. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Module 3: Diseases Affected by the Social Determinants of Health

Health outcomes correlate with social and environmental conditions. Learn about South Africa's world-class health surveillance systems that enable connections to be measured and hear from local experts how selected diseases are addressed.

Sessions include:

- Health Indicators (2 hours)
- The Cascade of Treatment Approach to HIV (2 hours)
- Diarrhoea, Latrines, and Rotovirus Immunisation (2 hours)
- Tuberculosis; The Trace and Treat Imperative. (2 hours)
- Non-Communicable Diseases and access to Chronic Medications During Lockdown. (2 hours)
- The Coronavirus Pandemic. (2 hours)
- Concluding Session: The Balance between Preventative and Curative Interventions (2 hours)

Excursions:

- King Dinizulu Hospital and the Inanda Community Health Center

Readings:

Day, C., Gray, A. & Ndlovu, N. Cois, A. (2019). Health and related indicators. In Rispel, L. & Padarath, A. (Eds.), *South African Health Review 2019* (pp. 139-250). Durban: Health Systems Trust.

https://www.hst.org.za/publications/South%20African%20Health%20Reviews/20%20SAHR_2019_Health%20and%20related%20indicators%202019%20interrogating%20the%20UHC%20service%20coverage%20index.pdf

Hemson, D. (2016). Water, sanitation and health: South Africa's remaining and existing issues. In A. Padarath, J. King, E.-L. Mackie, & J. Casciola (Eds.), *South African Health Review 2016* (pp. 25-34). Durban: Health Systems Trust.

Statistics South Africa. (2016). *South Africa Demographic and Health Survey 2016: Key Indicator Report*, Statistics South Africa. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Human Sciences Research Council. (2018). The fifth South African national HIV prevalence, incidence, behaviour and communication survey, 2017: HIV impact assessment summary report.

WHO. (2019) Global Tuberculosis Report – Executive Summary. Download from https://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/tb19_Exec_Sum_12Nov2019.pdf?ua=1
McIntyre, D. (2010). National health insurance: providing a vocabulary for public

engagement. In S. Fonn, & A. Padarath (Eds.), *South African Health Review 2010* (pp. 145-156). Durban: Health Systems Trust.

Assignments and Evaluation

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.

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Relevant History and Social Context Quiz (10%)

Quiz on relevant moments in history that affect current social conditions and customs. Students are not required to memorize dates but are expected to use a given time-lined list of events to explain social conditions in South Africa. (30 minutes) The quiz is based on lectures and excursions in module 1. Students who have difficulty with performing in quizzes will be given the option of a two-page essay.

2) Data on Social Determinants of Health (10%)

This short assignment will allow students to demonstrate their ability to access useful demographic data on the Social Determinants of Health. Students will be given a particular disease and will use websites previously given to them to provide statistics that describe and quantify conditions that influence Health outcomes. (30 minutes is allocated but students needing more time will be given it)

3) Reflective Paper on a Reading (15%)

Students write a 750 to 1000-word critical paper on an assigned SDH reading, including at least three direct quotes relating to key points. They find, include, and cite one other source that adds perspective to a point raised, then submit three questions arising out of the topic, the reading, and their understandings of the social context in South Africa.

4) Critical Reflection on a Lecture (15%)

Students write a 750 to 1000-word critical reflection paper of a lecture assigned, including three direct quotes relating to key points. If the lecture cites another study, students source and cite the original, and include one other source (not mentioned in the lecture) that adds perspective to a point raised. Students then write an e-mail to the lecturer, thanking them for their presentation and describing what new insights were gained from the lecture.

5) Social Determinants Synthesis Paper (50%)

Write a 8-page academic paper in which you discuss the extent to which social conditions affect/affected the management of the HIV Pandemic.

Assessment

History and Context Quiz – 10%

Data on Social Determinants of Health – 10%

Reflective Paper on Readings – 15%

Critical Reflection on Lecture – 15%
Social Determinants Synthesis Paper – 50%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance, may impact grades, and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with field-based experiences, site visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Example: Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

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

Program Expectations

- 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 accordingly 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 (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Storing Your Work: Keep several copies of your work as back up and keep one copy accessible to you through an online forum, such as an attachment in your email, the course learning management system, or cloud-based storage. This way your work will always be available to despite technical issues. Lost files, deleted drives, or computer crashes are not excuses for late, missing work.
- Personal Technology Use: Cell phones and other personal electronics can be used for taking notes and other class activities. Off-task usage is not acceptable. You may be marked as absent for habitually using them for something other than classroom activities.
- Course Communication: Course documents and assignments will be posted on the learning management system, Canvas. Although the course calendar provides a broad overview and the general sequence of work and assignments for the course, what we accomplish in class will vary, and revisions to the calendar will be posted at the course site. You will need to check the course site regularly. You are responsible for letting me know about any network-related problems that prevent you from accessing or submitting assignments.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. As possible, I will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with me and/or seek help from counseling services.
- Classroom recording policy: To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field

study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.