

Health and Human Rights in Kenya IPBH-3000 (3 credits)

Kenya: Global Health and Human Rights

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

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, the course specifically addresses 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 in Kisumu County. Students analyze specific case studies that illuminate the problems, prospects, and potential methods of promoting health for marginalized groups in Kisumu County. 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 Kisumu County.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Explain the ways in which Government of Kenya Health Policy, as practiced through Kisumu County Government, impacts health access and outcomes for the different communities in Kisumu.
- Describe the process and factors that prohibit achieving universal health care for the different social groups in Kisumu County.
- Suggest some of the ways through which Universal Health Care might be enhanced or achieved in Kisumu County.

Language of Instruction

The course is taught in English. Lectures with key personalities in public health and human rights are complemented by case studies, excursions and field visits to a rural village just

outside of Kisumu, case studies of Kisumu City Department of Public Health, and Gender Violence Recovery Centre.

Instructional Methods

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.

Required Texts

See course schedule for a full listing. 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 aspects encountered on the course. Readings listed in the syllabus may vary on a case-by-case basis.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Health and Human Rights Paper (30%)

What does “health as a human right” mean? What are the different perspectives on “health as a human right”. In what ways is this context dependent? What is the human rights framework to health? Students write a 1,500-word essay answering these questions, citing at least three online sources and two journal articles.

2) HHR Infographics Assignment (30%)

For this assignment students could do one of the following:

- Prepare a presentation that assesses the extent to which Kenya is achieving the key ideal and principles of health as a human right. Where are the gaps in health care delivery? Which social groups benefit and which ones don't benefit from health care? Why?
- Prepare a photo essay or an art project that depicts the health care delivery across gender, space (rural vs urban), and the age (youth, elderly), supported by a 500-word narrative.

3) Policy Brief with Presentation (30%)

As part of the RME course students complete a community action research project. From the data, each student selects a key health issue and prepares a policy brief (15%) and PowerPoint (15%) presentation to be presented to the rest of the group. Additional guidelines for this assignment will be provided prior to the community project.

4) Participation (10%)

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during field excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during field excursions and classes; not keeping others waiting.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment

Health and Human Rights Paper - 30%

HRR Creative Assignment - 30%

Policy Brief and Presentation - 30%

Participation - 10%

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.

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.

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 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 explores the concept of health as a human right and 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.

Bryant J. H. (2009). Kenya's cash transfer program: protecting the health and human rights of orphans and vulnerable children. *Health and human rights*, 11(2), 65–76.

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*. Pp. 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*. [THE MENTAL HEALTH REPORT.pdf](#)

Yamin, Alicia Ely. 2003. "Not Just a Tragedy: Access to Medications as a Right Under International Law." *Boston University International Law Journal* 21(2):325-371.

Module 3: Determinants of Access to Health and Care: Gender, Sexual Identity, Social Class and Place of Residence.

This module centers gender, sexual identity and socioeconomic class in examining the barriers and facilitators of access to health and health outcomes in Kisumu County. The module draws on visits to hospitals, the community project and lectures from experts in NGOs and from the Kisumu County Department of Health.

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*. Pp. 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 4: Comparative Study of Tanzania's Healthcare Systems

Kenya embraced a liberal economic model from independence while Tanzania embraced more socialist, state-controlled socio-economic models. Through various field visits, and lectures, students begin this module by exploring Tanzania's recent history and then conduct case studies of Tanzania's health care systems and key case studies in the management of malaria, maternal and child health, and noncommunicable diseases.

Assigned Reading:

Epping-Jordan, J. E. (2004). Improving the quality of health care for chronic conditions. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*, 13(4), 299–305. <https://doi.org/10.1136/qshc.2004.010744>