

International Honors Program (IHP)

IHP Health and Community:
Globalization, Culture, and Care

Public Health: From Biology to Policy

(IPBH3505 / 4 credits / 60 class hours)

2026

Faculty:

Course Introduction: USA:	John McGladdery
Country Module, India:	Shaweta Anand PhD Vayda
Country Module, South Africa:	Megannon PhD
Country Module, Argentina:	Pablo Rall, MD

Course Description

In this course, students will learn about public health across several countries with an emphasis on exploring determinants of health including social, cultural, political, and economic factors. This course will actively examine how public health practitioners work to identify and respond to public health challenges, building on local community strengths, while carrying out the three core functions of public health: assessment, program/policy development, and evaluation. To understand the applied nature of the discipline, students will examine resources, barriers and facilitators to public health, identifying measurable outcomes that contribute to the efficacy of public health interventions. Moreover, students will come to understand the relationship between biology and policy, which involves the process of moving from data to actionable interventions on smaller and larger scales that account for differences in local contexts.

By learning with local public health experts in each country, the class will explore various questions threaded throughout the semester, including:

- What are the major determinants of health in each local context?
- How are interventions designed and implemented in those contexts?
- What are the critical disease concerns in each context and how does the prevalence of disease vary in different segments of society?
- Where are there health disparities?

- How can we explain why some members of society are healthy and others less so?

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- What are some effective interventions, programs, or policies that have improved health outcomes in these contexts?
- What can be done to reduce health status inequities among communities and nations?

Learning Outcomes

The *Public Health* course comprises 40 class hours of instruction and field experience, and 80 hours of reading, self-study and reflection (4 credits).

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

- Characterize the core and crosscutting functions of public health in promoting individual and population health.
- Articulate the major components of healthcare systems in program countries.
- Identify social, environmental, and other major determinants of health.
- Explain the relationship between biological sciences and the development, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs and policy.
- Recognize the role of public health interventions in improving health outcomes, and barriers and complications to implementation.
- Appraise the roles that global, governmental, professional, and non-profit organizations play in the assessment, development, and evaluation of public health policies, programs, and interventions.
- Assess how stakeholders in health provision help and/or hinder progress towards health equity.
- Communicate an assessment of a proposed intervention, within context, using an assets-based approach that avoids the impression of saviorism.

Materials

All course readings will be available electronically. Students are responsible for accessing all required materials

Format

This course is organized into an introduction and four modules: three country modules within an overarching comparative framework. In each module you will have assignments given and graded by the faculty overseeing that segment of the PH class.

This course is organized into four country-based modules, within an overarching comparative framework. In each module you will have assignments given and graded by the faculty overseeing that segment of the PH class. Journaling and comparative synthesis oral presentations will occur across all four countries.

Course Schedule

This course comprises one introduction class and three subsequent country cycles. See the program calendar distributed at the start of each country program for corresponding dates of class sessions.

NB: The instructors retain the right to change the syllabus as needed. Given the flexible field program, changes may occur that are beyond our control.

Whenever there are two either/or readings, homestay pairs should do different readings and discuss them. When there are 3 or more the lecturer will suggest how to split them among the class.

USA

Lectures and Readings

Session	Preparation
PHI Introduction to Public Health	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>CDC Public Health Indicators: Washington DC. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/dc/DCI.htm</p> <p>IHP Handbook: Washington DC Handbook.</p> <p>Discussion: How is the American Public Health System working?</p>

Guest Lecture: Dean Brian Floyd: “Social Determinants of Health in DC”

India

Lectures and Readings

Session	Preparation
PH 2	<p><u>Required</u></p>

<p>The Indian Public Health System</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p>Canna Ghia & Gautam Rambhad (2023) Implementation of equity and access in Indian healthcare: current scenario and way forward, <i>Journal of Market Access & Health Policy</i>, 11:1, 2194507, DOI: 10.1080/20016689.2023.2194507 https://doi.org/10.1080/20016689.2023.2194507</p>
<p>PH 3</p> <p>Aging and Community Networks of Care</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Readings</p> <p>1. Vaishnav LM, Joshi SH, Joshi AU, Mehendale AM (2022). The National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly: A Review of its Achievements and Challenges in India. <i>Annals of Geriatric Medicine and Research</i>. 26(3). https://doi.org/10.4235/agmr.22.0062</p> <p>Or</p> <p>2. Public Health Care Utilization by Elderly in India: An Analysis of Major Determinants from LASI Data (2023). Analytical Paper Series # 7. UNFPA. https://india.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/analytical_paper_7_-_determinants_of_public_health_care_utilization_by_elderly_in_india_-_final.pdf</p> <p><u>Suggested Podcast</u></p> <p>Invisibilia. The Problem with the Solution. (Electronic Document).</p> <p>Discussion: How is ageing more than a biological process?</p>
<p>PH 4</p> <p>Perinatal and Reproductive Health</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Kothavale, A., Meher, T. Level of completion along continuum of care for maternal, newborn and child health services and factors associated with it among women in India: a population-based cross-sectional study. <i>BMC Pregnancy Childbirth</i> 21, 731 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-04198-2</p> <p><u>Suggested</u></p> <p>1. Shah, Arpita and Karne, Dr. Manisha (2024). Maternal and Reproductive Health in India: Challenges and the Road ahead. Munich Personal RePEc Archive. https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/121539/1/MPPRA_paper_121539.pdf</p> <p>Discussion: Why do many women not receive all recommended care before, during, and after childbirth?</p>

South Africa

Lectures and Readings

Session	Preparation
<p>PH 5</p> <p>South Africa's Health System: from a perinatal perspective</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Schneider, H., Mianda, S., Odendaal, W., & Chetty, T. (2023). Managing local health system interdependencies: referral and outreach systems for maternal and newborn health in three South African districts. <i>Systems</i>, 11(9), 462.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u></p> <p>National Department of Health. (2020). <i>Referral policy for South African health services and referral implementation guidelines</i>. Knowledge Hub.</p>
<p>PH 6</p> <p>Aging and Community Networks of Care in South Africa</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Moore, Elena, and Gabrielle Kelly. "Struggles over elder care in South Africa." <i>Development Southern Africa</i> 41.6 (2024): 1062-1077.</p> <p><u>Suggested:</u></p> <p>Button, K., Moore, E., and Seekings, J. (2018) 'South Africa's Hybrid Care Regime: The changing and contested roles of individuals, families and the state after apartheid', <i>Current Sociology</i>, 66(4): 602–616.</p>
<p>PH 7</p> <p>Discussion: Public Perceptions of Public Health in South Africa</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Whyte, E. B., & Olivier, J. (2023). A socio-political history of South Africa's National Health Insurance. <i>International Journal for Equity in Health</i>, 22(1), 247,17-21.</p> <p>Prepare to bring narratives from your notebooks to share.</p>

Argentina

Lectures and Readings

Session	Preparation
<p>PH 8</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p>

<p>Argentina's Health System</p>	<p>Novick, G. E. (2017). Health care organization and delivery in Argentina: a case of fragmentation, inefficiency and inequality. <i>Global Policy</i>, 8, 93-96.</p> <p><u>Suggested</u></p> <p>Heredia, N., Laurell, A. C., Feo, O., Noronha, J., González-Guzmán, R., & Torres-Tovar, M. (2015). The right to health: what model for Latin America? <i>The Lancet</i>, 385(9975), e34-e37.</p> <p>Palacios, A., Espinola, N., & Rojas-Roque, C. (2020). Need and inequality in the use of health care services in a fragmented and decentralized health system: evidence for Argentina. <i>International journal for equity in health</i>, 19(1), 67.</p>
<p>PH 9</p> <p>Argentina's Health Profile</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Prado, C., López, M. V., Cavallo, A., García Díaz, M., Ortiz, F., Serna, J. M., Caruso, D., & Irazola, V. (2025). The challenge of healthy aging: Gaps between the needs of older adults and implemented policies in Argentina. <i>Revista española de geriatría y gerontología</i>, 60(2), 101583.</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Bridging the Gap in Healthcare Access in Argentina: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjhl447sUqc</p> <p>Tuberculosis: the "disease of poverty" on the rise in Argentina (clip with subtitles available on Canvas, not available online)</p> <p>Chagas: A silent killer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_P0-JMjcNMI</p>
<p>PH 10</p> <p>Argentina's Health Workforce</p>	<p><u>Required</u></p> <p>Argentina Doctors, Health Workers Raise Alarm Over Crumbling Public Health Sector: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lwn6Vbgr0Ik</p> <p>Argentina: Great Medical Education System and Turbulent Political Instability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=34aCHXlho2Y</p> <p>Argentina: Inside the therapy capital of the world: https://www.aljazeera.com/video/mindset/2024/1/11/argentina-inside-the-therapy-capital-of-the-world</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Pereyra F., & Micha A. (2016). The configuration of nursing labor conditions in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area: An analysis at the intersection of the gender order and the organization of the health system. <i>Salud Colect</i>, 12(2), 221-238. (Compulsory Reading for Maternal Health Group)</p>

	Elizalde, I., Lunab, M. G., & Rostkier, S. (2024). Promotoras de salud: aportes en la atención primaria de la salud en el Barrio 31. Debate Público. Reflexión de Trabajo Social, 14(28), 139-146
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Public Health Course Readings

As a general rule, readings and other preparations for class consist of no-cost open-source or library accessible documents available online. Students must download these readings on their own. The readings will provide an overview of fundamental Public Health concepts and inform material introduced by local faculty in each country. Optional Readings pertaining to Comparative Synthesis Projects should be read and referred to (where relevant) in presentations.

Evaluation

Assignment		Points
4 Countries	Note-taking (5 points per country)	20
1 Country Assigned	Significant Issue Analysis Paper (PH)	40
3 Country Group Average (individualized)	Comparative Synthesis Presentations (PH)	40
Total		100

Assignments

Notebook Assignment

Students are required to keep a notebook in which they capture significant details that arise in educational visits. (Students are also encouraged, not required, to also take note of significant conversations or observations that you encounter outside of the program) In every site it is expected that students will consider issues from Global (G&H) National (PH) and Community (HCC) perspectives.

The Notebooks will not be read from cover-to-cover but will be handed to the Program Director in DC, Cape Town (including India Notebook) and Buenos Aires.

A rubric and example will be provided in Orientation.

Significant Issue Analysis Papers (SIAP) - 40 Points

Students are allocated one country in which to write a significant issue analysis paper from a Globalization perspective .

In an essay of 1200 words, select a significant real-world situation encountered, that relates to Public Health. Describe the encounter and use readings, lectures and initiative to analyze it. Segment the essay into sections on: Description of the real world encounter (that raised the issue); Significance of the Encounter (related to Public Health); Analysis of the Significant Issue in context.

Students have the option to state that they did not use AI at all, or use AI and provide a statement in which they detail the extent to which it was used. (An example will be given) Note: Essays utilizing AI are expected to access and engage with more data and expert opinions than essays that are based on traditional research and analysis.

Alternative Knowledge Production Option

Students having skill in alternative knowledge production (Creative Writing, Poetry, Art, Dance, Photography, Video ...) may engage with Local Faculty to produce knowledge that essentially achieves the same as the essay option above. This engagement will need to commence within 10 days of arrival in a country to allow sufficient time to set expectations. In the same way as an academic essay will use analysis to have academic impact with academic readers, alternative pieces must have impact on a specified audience. As an excellent academic piece could contribute to changes in Health practice, an alternative knowledge piece will need to do likewise, perhaps through motivating activism that may lead to improved health outcomes for humanity or a specified vulnerable group. Conversations with Local Faculty will need to start early, and a rubric will need to be agreed on. Provision of materials or access to Apps will be at the student's own cost. The final product will need to be copied into electronic format for record purposes and SIT does not accept responsibility for safekeeping. We are excited to receive alternative knowledge production but warn that an IHP experience is intense and this option requires more time than an essay would.

(An example of a SIAP, and a rubric will be given to students.)

Core Learning Outcomes

This assessment aligns primarily with the following outcomes:

1. **Critical Thinking**
2. **Global Systems and Structures**
3. **Experiential Learning**
4. **Intercultural Effectiveness**
5. **Ethical and Social Responsibility**
6. **Academic Communication**

Comparative Synthesis Project

40 points (team points averaged over 3 countries and individualized)

During the final days in each country, each Comparative Synthesis Project (CSP) team will present its findings of the month's work, and fellow students and faculty will have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments regarding observations and findings. A different student must present a different section in each country, and 1 student will provide the Introduction and Conclusion. All students in the team should contribute to all sections, but only 1 student must present a course section. The course grade in each country will be given to all members of the team, but the final composite grade will be decreased or increased by up to 5% on an individual basis in cases where one student consistently exceeds expectations in all presentations and/or 1 student in the team consistently fails to meet expectations.

The CSPs evaluate the content of the learning, not the public speaking skill. Students will be expected to **speak without resort to notes**, using their own words to explain what they have seen and found. The Powerpoint/Slide presentation will be handed in by 4PM the day before the first group presents and a grade will be allocated to it.

Note

Presentations should be professional in tone, like a conference paper presentation. They should be divided into sections, with a different person handling each section applicable to a course. Structure for the **India** and **South Africa** CSP presentations are as follows:

1. *Introduction*: State the topic and indicate the structure of the presentation (1 min, 1 point)
2. *Global influences* on [Topic] (8 mins, 6 on country, 2 comparative, 10 points)
3. *How health system/s engage* [Topic] (8 mins, 6 on country, 2 comparative, 10 points)
4. *How communities/cultures engage* [Topic] (8 mins, 6 on country, 2 comparative, 10 points)
5. *Conclusion* Present the most important findings (2min, 2 point,)

Note: The 40 point Grade is as much a reflection of the team's performance in working together as it is a reflection of the presenter's final effort. Prospective Public Health Practitioners must learn to work as a team.

In **Argentina** students present the Final Synthesis and explain the Methods used to obtain the knowledge gained.

General Presentation Requirements

The group has substantial creative freedom to craft the presentation to best fit the project, as long as the presentation addresses the following:

- *Introduction* that explains the evaluation of the research question and introduces the title and team.
- Global (G&H), National (PH) Community Level (HCC) aspects are covered in equal detail including:
- The presentation includes *findings* and *discussion of evidence* (reference to human lived experience is an essential requirement – the presentation must be driven by experience then backed up by analysis of context with reference to expert opinions, not vice versa).
- The *contextual elements* which allow the audience to understand the significance of the local findings and conclusions drawn on comparatives.
- *The Methodologies* used (Argentina presentation ONLY) also referring to real situations in which ethical issues were negotiated .
- *Conclusion* that highlights the most critical learning.

The Powerpoint/Slides

- The student who presents is responsible for constructing the slides for their section and for submitting the section to the relevant local faculty/visiting faculty.
- Tables and graphs should be visible from a reasonable distance and pertinent sections highlighted.
- All sources must be referenced ON THE SLIDE not in notes that will not be visible when converted to PDF
- Images are encouraged but every one must be appropriate to a professional presentation
- References to readings are required in a bibliography.

The Presentation

- Students must reflect continuously on the ethical implications of their presentations. Only the last presentation contains a Methods and Ethics section, but students should demonstrate awareness of ethics in every situation.
- The presentation as a whole must cohere. Students will need to find consensus on what the most critical issues are, and present them from global, national and community/cultural perspectives.
- The presentations should be visual and innovative presentation techniques are welcome, but time must not be spent on audience participation exercises and entertainment should not come to the detriment of the content.
- Comparative Synthesis Project presentations must demonstrate cultural humility and respect for the point of view and dignity of informants, research participants, and other teachers, whether formal or informal.
- Students may not read off notes, either handwritten or electronic. The goal of the presentation is to share the knowledge gained and explain its significance, and not to read a speech. The slides must be all students need to prompt their explanations.

Country-specific requirements

India □

India is the first country where students will have collected information on a topic outside of the United States. Students will start to use a comparative frame to create testable generalizations and to understand better the weight of the particular contexts. At the end of the country program each group will present a synthesis of what was learned in India, with comparisons made to the US.

25 minutes (+8 min Q&A)

South Africa

Towards the end of the South Africa program, each group will present on the main findings thus far. The structure follows the same as above, with the exception that the comparative element will cover the US, India, and South Africa.

25 minutes (+8 min Q&A)

Argentina

In this final group presentation, students will share findings and analysis with fellow students, faculty, and other members of the learning community.

The presentation should include your main insight and research results in Argentina, as you have done before. In this final presentation, more emphasis is placed on comparatives from across the entire semester as a cumulative whole. This presentation should demonstrate a learning path and highlight similarities, variations, or oppositions in certain notions/issues/practices/problems and solutions between countries. It is essential to demonstrate how the overall learning informs understanding of relevant comparable issues in the United States and the world.

1. *Introduction*: State the topic and indicate the structure of the presentation (1 min, 1 point)
2. *Methods and Ethics* (7 mins points allocated to RME Course Grade)
3. *Global influences* on [Topic] (10 mins 6 on country, 6 comparative = 10 points)
4. *How health system/s engage* [Topic] (10 mins 6 on country, 6 comparative = 10 points)
5. *How communities/cultures engage* [Topic] (10 mins 6 on country, 6 comparative = 10 points)
6. *Conclusion* Present the most important findings (2 min, 2 point)

Note: In all presentations have a fellow students provide time warnings. Overtime will be penalized. A student who exceeds the time-limit by over a minute for the course section will be penalized individually.

40 minutes (+8 min Q&A)

Grading Scale

Grading Scale					
94-100%	A	Excellent	74-76%	C	Average
90-93%	A-		70-73%	C-	
87-89%	B+		67-69%	D+	
84-86%	B	Above Average	64-66%	D	Below Average
80-83%	B-		below 64	F	Fail
77-79%	C+				
Note: Where decimal points are used in grading, below 0.5 will be rounded down, and 0.5 and above will be rounded up. For example, 93.4 will be an A-, while 93.5 will be an A.					

Submitting Assignments

- Except for hardcopy assignments, all work for this course will be handed in electronically via Canvas. Assignment grades and feedback will also be distributed through Canvas. Assignments are due on the day/time indicated by your professor.
- Students may never use email to submit assignments, .
- PLEASE UPLOAD ALL ASSIGNMENTS AS A MICROSOFT WORD FILE to allow for in-document comments.

- All assignments are to be double spaced with one-inch margins in 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font (these are most legible for reading).
- The American Psychological Association (APA) referencing and citation style is preferred. When using APA format, follow the author-date method of in-text citation. Whatever citation method you use must be consistent and indicate the author's last name and the year of publication for the source in the text or footnote, for example, (Colby-Bottel, 2022, p. 14). If you are referring to an idea from a work but not directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article or other work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication and not the page number in your in-text reference. All sources that are cited in the text must appear fully in the reference list at the end of the paper.
- For hard copy assignments, you may be asked to submit the original. **KEEP A DIGITAL COPY OF ALL WORK YOU TURN IN ON YOUR COMPUTER**, so as to avoid unexpected disaster and significant inconvenience for all parties involved; this may mean photographing / scanning any hard copy assignments (and keeping a copy in .jpg or .pdf).

Expectations and Policies

Participation

IHP is an experiential learning program. You have to show up to have the experience. As such, participation is a minimum expectation not to be rewarded with class credit. Students are expected to attend all classes, guest lectures, and field activities unless they have a medical excuse that has been communicated and approved by IHP staff or faculty. Missing one class means a small makeup assignment (as determined by the faculty); missing two classes means a sizable makeup assignment; missing three classes means a grade reduction of 2% of the total course grade. Keep in mind that IHP has academic requirements to attend class meetings and field activities. Failure to attend classes or field activities means that a student may not be eligible for credit from their universities, or could result in program dismissal.

Late Work

Exact deadlines for assignments will be confirmed in class. All work for this class must be submitted by the end of the 3rd week of each country program to allow time for the local faculty to grade the assignment and return it before students leave the country, unless otherwise noted. Any grade disputes must be settled *before* the program leaves the country, no exceptions. Work is to be submitted via Canvas on the day on which it is due. Late work will only be accepted with the consent of the instructor *prior* to the deadline and will result in a lowering of the grade one full step (for example, from a B to a B-) per day, as per SIT's policy. Due to the nature of the Country Module structure, late work will be difficult to manage—so work hard to be on time.

Technology in the Classroom

Electronic devices are critical tools for learning and communication, but our IHP courses prioritize engaged conversations unhindered by personal electronic devices. Students are expected to keep cell phones, laptop computers, and other devices out of sight, sound, and mind during class sessions - except where otherwise indicated and under extenuating circumstances that have been discussed in advance with the faculty member. As is always the case, students with accommodations through SIT are welcome to use technology as is appropriate.

Class Preparation

This program is built upon the strong belief that your experiences result in deep insights and powerful learning. Course assignments are created to facilitate learning opportunities and experiences. Dialogue in class about these insights and participation in these activities is critical. For this reason, your participation is very important. As a learning community, each one of us will influence the learning environment. Please take responsibility for your role in this environment and come to class prepared and ready to engage with others in a positive and thought-provoking manner.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is the failure to maintain academic integrity. It includes, but is not limited to: obtaining or giving unauthorized aid on an examination; having unauthorized prior knowledge of the content of an examination; doing work for another student; having work done by another person for the student; and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty can result in severe academic penalty, including failure of the course and/or dismissal from the institution/program.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's ideas or product as one's own. Examples of plagiarism are: copying verbatim and without attribution all or parts of another's written work; using phrases, charts, figures, illustrations, computer programs, websites without citing the source; paraphrasing ideas, conclusions or research without citing the source; using all or part of a literary plot, poem, film, musical score, computer program, websites or other artistic product without attributing the work to its creator.

Students can avoid unintentional plagiarism by carefully following accepted scholarly practices. Notes taken for papers and research projects should accurately record sources of material cited, quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, and research or critical papers should acknowledge these sources in footnotes or by use of footnotes.

Violations of SIT Study Abroad academic integrity policy are handled as violations of the student code of conduct and will result in disciplinary action. Please discuss this with your traveling faculty if you have questions.

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.