Health and Society in a Global Context

Class Schedule: Wednesdays, 1:45pm – 5pm
Class Location: Instituto de Efectividad Clinica y Sanitaria (IECS)
Semester and Year: Fall 2016

Professor: Fernando Rubinstein MD MPH
Phone: (11) 4777-8767  Office Hours: Tuesday 2PM – 3 PM
Email: frubinstein@iecs.org.ar  Location: IECS Ravignani 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course examines how social, behavioral, historical and political factors influence public health in community, national, and global contexts. We consider how health is influenced by factors such as age, gender, culture, race/ethnicity, social class, and geography. Public health problems and their solutions are analyzed in light of individual risk factors as well as larger structural forces, and we consider the rights of the individual versus the welfare of the public. We examine the ways our understandings of health and well-being shape, and are shaped by, the health care system, our own values, and our assumptions.

Course Objectives:
1. Introduce definitions of disease, illness, and well-being from various perspectives
2. Introduce students to a population perspective on health and disease
3. Define and describe the social determinants of health and explain how they differ from other (biological) determinants of health.
4. Introduce the field of public health and its various dimensions
5. Encourage debates on individual versus societal rights related to the promotion of health and prevention of disease.
6. Deepen students’ understandings of the complex factors that shape health issues, and the response of government, institutions, and policies to those issues

PRE-REQUISITES:
No pre-requisites
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:
The course will consist of lectures and in-class case studies. Concepts will be introduced during lectures. Subsequent case studies will provide the student the opportunity to critically think the concepts and principles discussed in the previous lecture by learning how to define a specific problem, organize known and unknown information, and propose actions.

Case studies will enable the student to actively engage, analyze, and synthesize the material from lectures and apply principles to answering questions related to different health topics.

Both lectures and case studies will be given by either the professor or a guest lecturer. Students are expected to attend all lectures and exercises, irrespective of who is providing instruction. Attendance and participation are a significant part of the final grade.

The purpose of these lectures is to reinforce the interaction between cultural values and social contexts and population and individual health outcomes, provide relevant examples to place the method in context, and introduce a new area of public health research. Additional reading material will be provided as necessary.

Course requirements:
1. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all sessions. If you cannot attend a certain session, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor (with the course assistant cc’d) beforehand, or in the case of an emergency, immediately upon return. All other absences will be considered unexcused and will impact the final grade.

2. Students are expected to come to class on time to prevent disrupting the lecture and classroom activities.

3. Complete all assigned reading assignments prior to class.

4. NYU’s policy on plagiarism and academic integrity, attached at the end of this syllabus, will be strictly adhered to – make sure you read and thoroughly understand this policy.

5. Case Study assignments:
   Case studies will consist of brief group (or pair) presentations of papers addressing some of the topics of the course such as gender, SES, education, race or other social determinants on health outcomes following a question guide discussion on specific topics aimed at reinforcing concepts presented during the previous classes by having students work through questions related to a real-world example.

6. Debates
   Students are expected to actively participate in debates. Controversial topics which allow for different perspectives will be selected and groups will have to prepare the material and argue for and against based on a suggested reading material. By the end of the semester, we will have a similar debate on the US and Argentina health care system, focusing on the coverage of vulnerable populations.
7. **Final short essay assignment**

Students will work individually or in pairs to write up a short position paper addressing a specific topic of their choice (i.e. the relation of education, socioeconomic status, gender, race, access to care, legislation, etc. and some specific health situation or outcome). The aim of this exercise is for students to use the concepts discussed in lectures to address different aspects of the approach to critically evaluate the health outcomes of different social situations defining the population of interest, a data source and instruments to collect data, and presenting and discussing perspectives and expected impact. This assignment is divided into three sections – two of these sections will be due during the semester (see the course outline below for due dates); the final paper will include the revised versions of the first two sections (incorporating feedback from the instructor) and responses to a third section.

The **final version** should include four sections: Introduction and importance of the topic, data source and data collection for the report, summary of results and a brief discussion of the viewpoint of the group.

At least two classes during the semester will provide additional opportunities for teams to meet and discuss the progress of this assignment.

One assignment per team must be printed and turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. **Both students’ names must be on each page of the assignment.** Also, please send a copy by mail to frubinstein@iecs.org.ar

The first two assignments should not exceed 2 pages each; the final essay should not exceed 6 pages.

**Assignment 1:**
- Brief introduction to the selected topic.
- Presentation of the goal of the discussion or controversy.

**Assignment 2:**

Description of methods
- Brief definition of the population of interest
- Data collection: Definition and measurement of the exposure or intervention, definition and measurement of the primary result (health outcome)
- Description of the measures of impact to be reported

**Assignment 3 (final)**

- Revised version of the first two sections (incorporating feedback)
- Expand introduction of the topic and data sources describing the current debate as needed
- Comment on expected consequences and possible limitations.

**NOTE:** All assignments must be typed (1” margins, Arial 11pt font). Student names must be on the top of each page that you hand in.
GRADING RUBRIC:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case study assignments (2 x 10 pts)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress on position paper (2 x 10 pts)</td>
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<td>Debates (2 x 10pts)</td>
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<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Final position paper</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** Work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

100-93  A  76-73  C
92-90  A-  72-70  C-
89-87  B+  69-67  D+
86-83  B   66-60  D
82-80  B-  59-0  F
79-77  C+

READING/VIEWING LIST:

We will primarily rely on the following textbook in this class:

Additional readings for case studies or classes will be distributed.

**Attendance Policy**

- NYU’s Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a strict policy regarding course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted.
- Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 1% from the student’s final course grade.
- Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
- Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs, María Pirovano Peña within one week of your return to class.
- A doctor’s note excusing your absence is mandatory.
- The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam.
- Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said examination via email to the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, Maria Pirovano Peña (mpp6@nyu.edu).
- Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your professors prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please contact the Assistant Director of Academics Affairs, Maria Pirovano Peña mpp6@nyu.edu.)
- If students have more than four unexcused absences, they will fail the course.
- Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.
- Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may
come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their
professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one
week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director for Academics Affairs during
office hours (Mon – Fri, 9.30 am to 5 pm), who will write on the essay or other work the date
and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative
staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academics
Affairs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension
receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed
extension fails and is given a zero.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

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<tr>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>August</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Course Introduction. Methods in Epidemiology and Public Health</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>Statistics and Data. Measures of effect and impact</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>Evaluation of public health interventions. Case study</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>Social Inequalities and Health: Race / SES</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>Students presentations</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>Invited presentation. Social inequalities in mother and child health</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>Tobacco &amp; social determinants</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>MIDTERM EXAM . Social Relationships, Networks and health</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>Neighborhoods and health</td>
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November 9  Health Lifestyle and Behaviors

Argentina Health care system and comparison of Health Care Systems

November 16  Social determinants of Health: The case of Tuberculosis. Case study

November 23  Students Presentation

November 30  Access to health care: Debate

December 7  Us health care reform: Challenges Going Forward: Debate

December 14  Final presentations