Semester | Fall 2017
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Class code | UGPH-GU 10-003
Instructor Details | Dr Usman A. Khan
Office Hours Thursday am by arrangement

Class Details
Health and Society in a Global Context

Prerequisites
None

Class 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.

Lectures, Discussion, Presentations, Field Visits, Group Work

Desired Outcomes
- Introduce the field of public health and its various dimensions
- Introduce students to a population perspective on health and disease
- Define and describe the social determinants of health and explain how they differ from other (biological) determinants of health.
- Encourage debates on individual versus societal rights related to the promotion of health and prevention of disease.
- Deepen students’ understandings of the complex factors that shape health issues, and the response of government, institutions, and policies to those issues

Assessment Components

1. Class attendance & participation (10%)

2. In-Class Exercises (20%) – Two group exercises as set out in the relevant sections of the course guidance. Each group of four to five students will be required to present to the class for three to five minutes (no PowerPoint presentations are required).
3. Case study – Debate/Presentation (30%) – Groups will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of no more than twelve slides on the topic of obesity. Presentation will last between 8-15 minutes and will require equal contributions from all team members. They will also be required to answer questions from students and faculty for a maximum of five minutes.

4. Seen Exam Final (40%) – student will be given a choice of two questions to take home in preparation for a 90 minute exam.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Course Expectations**

You are actively and regularly engaged in insightful discussion and critique of course readings and topics, often and elegantly making connections across readings and between weekly lecture topics. Your arguments are clearly organised and original, and sometimes draw on experience from outside the classroom, including personal experience and other coursework, particularly from your field of study. You take a leadership role in in-class exercises and debates. You make clear, thoughtful class presentations, working effectively and problem solving as part of a team. You write a clear, insightful project report, drawing connections between materials throughout the course, to make your arguments. You have a readable, grammatically correct writing style. You adhere to assignment guidelines, staying to task, answering all questions cohesively and completely, and keeping to the designated time limitations.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A (90-100%)**: Your course assignments and course participation include all of the above qualities, including some of them to a superior degree.

**Grade B (80-89%)**: Your course assignments and course participation include all of the above qualities, but to a more modest standard.

**Grade C (70%-79%)**: Your course assignments and course participation include some of the above qualities, but to a modest degree; however, you may fall short of achieving some of these standards.

**Grade D (65-69%)**: Your course assignments and course participation do not consistently demonstrate the above qualities, however, you have worked to demonstrate some notable interest, effort and understanding of the course material.

**Grade F (below 65)**: You have failed to fulfill any of the above qualities in your course assignments and participation. Plagiarism or failure to submit or complete any required course component will result in failure of the class.

**Required Text(s)**

ISBN-10: 1284089231

**Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)**


A website with frequent updates of topical material for this course is the Lancet global health site
http://www.thelancet.com/global-health


This WHO book is available as a free download: Ingrid Wolfe and Martin McKee (editors) European Child Health Services and Systems. 2013


This report from the London Health Commission in 2014 contains useful comparative data:


Two International reports of the Institute of Health Equity may be of interest for specialist study:

Addressing Social, Economic and Environmental Determinants of Health and the Health Divide in the Context of Sustainable Human Development


The Social Determinants of Mental Health 2014

http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/social-determinants-of-mental-health

PDF files of selected journal articles will also be available to download on the Class site.

Internet Research Guidelines

Please use discernment when it comes to using the Internet to conduct research for course assignments. Use reputable peer-reviewed sources whenever possible (not Wikipedia!) to make scholarly or scientific claims, but you may find that news media websites and blogs are nonetheless helpful sources of information about newsworthy (and debate-worthy) topics. Please just back up this media information with scholarly work you find in journals and other academic sources. Please use APA Citation Style in all your written work e.g. with a list of references in alphabetical order at the end of your project report.

Additional Required Equipment

None

Session 1

Course Introduction

Overview
The first week will be taken up with a course overview and an outline of assessment points, communication issues and the opportunity for students to introduce themselves.

After the break we start the course with an introductory group session that will start developing our understanding of what public health is.

Reading

For the first two lectures you will be focusing on the first third of the Mary-Jane Schneider textbook. Don’t be too put off as each chapter is no more than ten to fifteen pages in length, very clearly written and with good introduction and summary sections. For Week One you will be required to read the following five chapters:

- CH 1: Public Health: Science, Politics, and Prevention
- CH 2: Why is Public Health Controversial?
- CH 4: The Basic Science of Public Health
- CH 5: Principles and Methods
- CH 6: Problems and Limits

The American Public Health Association gives these topics and issues as priorities for the USA:

Topics & Issues

- Health Reform
- Environmental Public Health
- Ebola
- Global Health
- Healthiest Nation in One Generation
- Healthy Communities
- School-Based Health Care
- Transportation Issues
- Gun Violence Prevention

Session 2

Public Health & Epidemiology in Context

Overview

This introductory lecture on public health and epidemiology. Following a broadly similar path to that set out in the first chapters of the course text you will be introduced to key terms and will be given a summary overview of the history of public health, current challenges and the role played by public health professionals.

Reading

See Session One

Session 3

Museum Visit

Overview

The focus for this first field trip will be to take in two of the world’s best-known health related museums. The Wellcome Collection explores the connections between medicine, life and art in the past, present and future. The Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons contains 400 years of medical history with one of the oldest anatomical collections in the world alongside the latest advances in minimal access surgery.
Session 4

Statistics, Data and the Biomedical Basis of Public Health (In Class Exercise One)

Overview

This second introductory session will focus on two interrelated themes. The first of these is to understand the role and value of data in public health, examining public health data sets such as the census and discussing the limitations to their use. In the second section of the session we focus on infectious diseases and the role played by public health in identifying and helping to eradicate diseases ranging from smallpox to AIDS. Following the lecture students will work in small groups on an interactive project that will help develop their understanding of the gains that have been made in public health over the last century.

Reading

The required reading continues to focus on Introduction to Public Health, but includes an article from the New England Journal of Medicine as well as a 2001 piece from the New Yorker magazine.

- CH 7: Statistics: Making Sense of Uncertainty
- CH 8: The Role of Data in Public Health
- CH 9: The Conquest of Infectious Diseases
- CH 10: The Resurgence of Infectious Disease
- CH 11: The Biomedical Basis of Chronic Diseases


Assessed in Class Group Work (See section on Assessment for further details)

Session 5

Public Health in the United States and the United Kingdom

Overview

Moving into the third session of the course students will be introduced to the means by which public health services are delivered. Within a framework of comparative analysis students will be given an overview of how public health services operate in the United States and the United Kingdom, facilitating a discussion of the underlying drivers as well as highlighting the central similarities and differences between the two systems.

For the seminar session students will watch two videos that highlight the fundamental differences between each of the two health systems and will discuss how they feel this impacts on their respective abilities to deliver effective health care and public health services.

Reading
 Session 6

Second Field Visit – Public Health Walking Tour of the River Thames

This specially organised tour will be led by Sue Weir, a highly experienced health tour guide. Sue will take students on a walk along the historic River Thames talking to them about all aspects of water - from disease - ships and cargos - healing waters - water for pleasure and how we use water today. The visit will finish in the Old Operating Theatre at London Bridge where Students will be given a guided tour.

Session 7

Social Inequality and the Social Construction of Illness and Medicalization

Overview

Having first examined the biomedical basis of health and illness in the Session One, we now move onto consider how aspects of health and illness can be viewed to be social constructions rather than objective realities. In addition to understanding the dynamics of this process and the role of medical professions students will be given a number of case study examples, which they will be able to discuss and debate.

Reading

There are such a large number of texts on this subject that developing a reading list for a single lecture is always going to be problematic. It is suggested that you start with the Conrad article, which will give you a broad overview of the principles of constructivist thinking and then dip into the other reading to build out from this. Reading the early sections of Ivan Illich’s seminal work Medical Nemesis is also highly recommended.

- Hawkes, N. (2012) “Poor health does not preclude a happy life, though it does increase the odds against it”. BMJ online doi: 10.1136/bmj.e5073

**Session 8**

**Race, Gender and Social Inequality in Health**

**Overview**

This second lecture within the broader theme of the social construction of illness focuses on the particular issues of race, gender and social inequality. Drawing heavily on material from the United States, but including material from the UK and more internationally the session will help students to understand more fully the nature and impact of health inequalities and the role played by public health.

**Reading**

- Navarro, V (2009) What We Mean by Social Determinants of Health *Int J Health Serv* July 2009 vol. 39 no. 3 423-441

**Session 9**

**Health Lifestyle and Social Relationships (In Class Exercise Two)**

**Overview**

This lecture session will focus on the rapidly evolving understanding of how social relationships and lifestyle can have a major impact on an individual’s health status and well being. The session will cover theoretical approaches to structural disadvantage as well as looking as particular case study examples from the United States and the United Kingdom. The seminar session will go on to facilitate a discussion on how public health professionals can best respond to the debate.

**Reading**

The readings for this week’s session are quite closely focused and students will benefit from undertaking their own parallel research.


Session 10

Obesity Case Study

Overview

Obesity is the chosen subject for the case study element of the course. The introductory lecture will help students to understand the nature of the issue including being given an overview of key trends that will take a comparative focus of the United States and the United Kingdom as well as exploring how the debate on obesity has evolved including consideration of issues relating to determinism. During the second half of the class students will work in small groups to start the development of the presentations that they will be giving in Week Twelve.

Reading

Students will be expected to undertake their own research on this topic and as such only an indicative reading list is provided.


Session 11

Third Field Visit (Guest Lecture) –Obesity

Overview

Having been taken through the theory associated with the study of obesity you will now be given the opportunity to hear how a UK based charity is working to inform the policy debate and to support individuals and families dealing with issues associated with childhood obesity. Students will be expected to be prepared with questions that will help them to develop and refine material that will be used for their group presentations and the class debate that will be held the following week.
Session 12  Obesity Group Presentation and Debate

Overview

In this third session of the obesity case study students will be required to make a ten to fifteen minute group presentation to the class on a particular aspect of obesity. There will then be the opportunity for questions and answers to be followed by a group discussion. Further detail regarding this assignment will be given at the start of the case study sessions.

Session 13  Smoking and Tobacco

Overview

This final substantive element of the course will focus on helping students to develop an understanding of how healthcare and public health have addressed the risk presented by tobacco. The lecture will look at how regulatory and legal instruments have been used alongside more traditional public health prevention and treatment programs to reduce and eradicate the impact of an industry that has been a major cause of ill health and death over the last century. The seminar discussion will consider how authorities should be responding to the recent advent of e-cigarettes and vaping.

Reading

These first two texts will be supplemented with additional material that will be made available via the course web page.


Session 14  Challenges for Public Health in the 21st Century

Overview

In this final lecture students will be given an overview of the major opportunities and challenges facing public health in the United States and the United Kingdom in this century. An overview of the political, economic and legal framework for public health will be set out.

Reading

Further reading for this final lecture will be provided in NYU Classes page for this course.

Details

This final element of the assessment for this module will require students to answer a single seen essay question in an exam setting. The question is designed to enable students to engage in a broader assessment of public health, its benefits and the political and operational opportunities and challenges it is facing over the next decades and beyond.

Classroom Etiquette

Please arrive to class on time and ready to engage in a discussion of the class readings and topics. Active participation, including in group discussions and presentations, is a significant portion of your grade and just makes the class more enjoyable for everyone. Please be respectful of others’ perspectives and opinions, while also engaging in lively debate. Please turn off all mobile phones and limit laptop use to classroom activities (please try not to check Facebook).

Required Co-Curricular Activities

None

Estimated Travel Costs

Visits are all likely to within Zone One and Zone Two of the London Underground Network.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities

Details of Field Visits are set out within the Course Details

Your Instructor

Usman Khan is a public policy consultant, academic and organisational leader who over the last two decades has worked in the public, private and not for profit sectors in Europe and the United States.

In 1990 Usman completed his PhD in Public Policy in the United Kingdom at Sheffield University and subsequently spent over a decade working in academia and academic consultancy. Usman took up the first of four non-executive roles in 2001. At Camden and Islington NHS Trust he moved from being a non-executive Director to being the country’s youngest non-executive chair. He continued his non-executive career becoming first a non-executive and then Chair of Turning Point, one of the United Kingdom’s largest not for profit providers of alcohol and substance misuse care and prevention services.

Usman set up Modus Europe in 2012 as a Health Services Consultancy and maintains strong links with academia holding adjunct professorial positions at George Washington University and New York University. Usman is also External Advisor on the National Institute for Health Research CLAHRC programme and is a fellow of the European Health Management Association. Usman’s research interests are in health system sustainability and post graduate teaching in health.