SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS
May 2012
Discipline: Medical Anthropology/ Sociology
ANTH 4590: The Social Roots of Health and Disease
Upper Division
Faculty Name: Joan E. Paluzzi, Ph.D.
Pre-requisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The problems directly or indirectly correlated with poverty encompass every aspect of daily experience for the billions of people struggling to provide not only basic necessities but the tangible and intangible assets that define a good life for themselves, their families, and their communities. The presence or absence of good health becomes a crucial factor in their ability to achieve that better life. In areas with high burdens of infectious disease, the tragedy of a disease like HIV/AIDS moves beyond individuals and families to ultimately slow or reverse sustainable and equitable economic growth for communities, countries, and entire regions. The scale of the current global epidemics of infectious diseases often leaves otherwise compassionate and engaged individuals asking, “But what can I possibly do?” This course provides an opportunity for students to move beyond the generalizations (both social and epidemiological) that characterize public perceptions and international development discourse to identify the ways in which these generalizing statistics are actually experienced at the community and family levels. We will examine the specific economic, political, cultural, and historical pressures that have shaped the current international health environment with particular attention to the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria in developing nations. Each student will serve on a task force and assume the role of a “consultant” to a specific low-income country’s Ministry of Health. Working with their task force colleagues, they will develop a series of recommendations to be implemented at both the national and community levels to address a specific health issue. The course will draw on the work of critical medical anthropologists, sociologists, and the work of the Task Forces within the United Nations Millennium Project.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:
1. Clearly defined the scope and broad epidemiological patterns of the three major global infectious disease epidemics (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria).
2. Identified some of the economic, social, cultural, and historical forces that have contributed to widespread vulnerability to these and other illnesses and the manner in which these forces continue to serve as obstacles to their prevention, treatment, and elimination.
3. Contextualized current international health policy within a continuum of the historical trajectory of development policy
4. Refined their academic/professional writing skills through the synthesis of readings, discussions, and current scholarship to formulate a country case study.
5. Advanced their oral communication skills through class discussions, collaboration with peers, and the development of a conference-style professional presentation.
REQUIRED TEXTBOOK
AUTHOR: Farmer, Paul
TITLE: Partner to the Poor: A Paul Farmer Reader.
PUBLISHER: Berkeley: University of California Press.

On-line reference materials:
Final Reports of the Task Force on HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB, and Access to Essential Medicines (available online)
Combating AIDS in the Developing World: http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_hivaids.htm
Coming to grips with malaria in the new millennium
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_malaria.htm
Investing in strategies to reverse the incidence of TB in the developing world
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_tb.htm
Prescription for healthy development: increasing access to essential medicines
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_essentialmedecines.htm
The Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria: Country profiles and grant proposals
http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/reports/tf_essentialmedecines.htm
The World Bank On-line Development Indicators

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS
1. Field Lab: Visit an outpatient treatment center run by Socios en Salud in Lima Peru, meet with community health workers who assure consistent treatment for residents of low-income comunas in Lima.
2. Optional Field Experience: Visit with staff of WIN Belize (Women’s Information Network)

STUDENT ASSESSMENT OF FIELD EXPERIENCE: The final page of the student’s report will: 1. Briefly describe their field experience; 2. detail the manner in which this experience reinforced or contradicted the information they have learned in the course; 3. specify how this field experience was integrated into the formulation of their recommendations.

METHODS OF EVALUATION/DEADLINES
The grade will be based on the following achieved course requirements (these requirements and the report will be discussed in detail during first class period) Deadlines to complete assignments included in class syllabus:
1. First two components of report: 10 (5 each)
2. Completion of course readings evidenced by participation in each class discussion in a way that reflects your grasp of the assigned readings for that day: 2 points for each class (total of 20 points)
3. Final Report (7-10 pages): 35 points
4. Panel presentation of Task Force: 15 points
5. Assessment of field experience, specifically relating it to the themes, discussions, and readings throughout the course: 20 points

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS
Paluzzi, J. E. 2004. A social disease/a social response: Lessons in tuberculosis from 1930s Chile. Social Science and Medicine, 59(4):763-773
ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS (cont’d)


NOTE: Electronic research data base with references for reports also available on the intranet.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

May 22. Course overview, introductions, goals and expectations. Formation of three task forces.

Class Themes:
a. The global demographics of health and disease. Is geography destiny?
b. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria; three diseases, hundreds of epidemics
c. The value of multiple lenses in any critical evaluation: gender, class, age, ethnicity and geography.

30 minute meeting of Task Forces

May 23. Critical Intersections: Poverty and health

Class themes:
a. Logistical and systemic barriers to the maintenance and promotion of good health
b. The vicious cycle of profound poverty and compromised health.
c. Global trends of the twentieth century trends (eg urbanization, immigration, neoliberal reforms) and their impact on health in vulnerable populations.

Required readings to prepare for this discussion:


Report Stage 1 Due in Class: Name of country and health issue

May 24. Tuberculosis


Class themes:
a. A brief history of the “White Plague” (aka “The Captain of All Death”)
b. The social reasons that TB gained renewed momentum (and took a very lethal turn) in the late 20th century
c. The contradictions of modernity: why is a curable disease still killing two million people a year?

Required readings to prepare for this discussion:


May 28. Gender and health
Gendered vulnerability: biology or culture?

**Class Themes**
- a. The role of biological sex, socially constructed gender models and access to education in addressing health issues.
- b. Gender-based barriers to health care.
- c. The power of empowered women

**Film: A Walk to Beautiful (PBS/Nova)**

**Required readings to prepare for this discussion:**

**30 minute meeting of Task Forces**

**Report Stage 2 due in class: Full outline of report with 5-8 reference sources**

May 29: HIV/AIDS


**Class Themes:**
- a. The changing demographics of HIV/AIDS; the global picture
- b. What’s poverty got to do with it?
- c. The synergy between HIV and TB
- d. HIV in Belize: the complex social drivers of an epidemic

**Required readings to prepare for this class:**

June 3. The mobile global community

**Class themes:**
- a. National and Transnational migration of populations;
- b. Implications for Public Health
- c. The “Brain Drain” of health workers from developing to developed countries

**Required readings to prepare for this class:**

**30 minute Task Force meeting**

**MOVIE AND PIZZA NIGHT:** (Time and location to be announced.) Viewing and discussion of *The Constant Gardener* in the evening.
June 4: Conflict and displacement
Class Themes
a. The special vulnerability of refugee and displaced populations.
b. The cycle of conflict, poverty and negative health outcomes
c. Rape as a weapon of war in the age of AIDS

Required readings to prepare for this class:

June 7: Diseases transmitted by mosquitos: Malaria, Yellow Fever, and Dengue
Resource starting point for malaria: Roll Back Malaria: http://www.rbm.who.int/
Class themes:
 a. Man vs. Mosquito and the building of the Panama Canal.
b. The special vulnerability of infants and children.
c. Climate change and human ecological intrusions as risk factors
d. The simplicity of prevention: for want of a bed net

Required readings to prepare for this class:

June 10: Moving forward effectively (and with hope): Back to the Future?
Class themes:
 a. Community mobilization
b. The untapped potential of community workers
c. The big picture: becoming effective advocates at the national and international levels.
d. Primary Health Care: The Social Medicine Model

Required readings to prepare for this class:

Report Stage 3 (Final stage) PRINTED (HARD) COPY of Final Report Due Remember to include integration of observations and insights gained during your Peru field experience.

June 11: Current international economic policy and its intersections with international health policy
Class themes:
 a. WHO, IADB, PAHO, WB, IMF, WTO, GFAATM: Digesting the alphabet soup of international health and finance.
b. What do we mean by vertical, disease-specific interventions and why are they popular with multilateral and bilateral donors?
c. Primary Health Care: what it can and cannot do and why it may be the answer we are looking for.

Required readings to prepare for this discussion:
The Declaration of Alma Ata

**FINAL 30 minute meeting of Task Forces**

**June 12:** Field experience: WIN Belize (Woman’s Information Network) Review class notes and readings from May 28th.

**June 14:** Three Task Force panel presentations (45-60 minutes/panel) (12 minutes per student)