FALL 2003 SYLLABUS

Social Medicine 700
The Social Roots of Health and Disease

Tuesdays 1:00-3:00 pm (MEC 227) &
One evening dinner gathering, Tuesday December 2nd, 6-8 pm (location, TBA)

This course is intended for students interested in working with underserved populations in the United States and internationally. By closely examining pressing problems in global health, the course helps prepare students to become leaders in international health, and guides them in their efforts to improve the health conditions of those overburdened by poverty, marginalization and social injustice. By the end of the course, students will have gained an understanding of how social forces become embodied as pathologies and how specific political, economic and historic processes influence the distribution of disease among different populations.

The classes will be case-based and will focus on a set of medical problems of relevance to people living at the margins of society. Students will analyze the cases in terms of central ethical and socioeconomic considerations related to current world events and particular aspects of globalization. They will also examine the constraints and opportunities afforded key players in global health—local populations, national governments, and multilateral health agencies—in their efforts to remedy health inequalities and improve overall health. The course will cover old scourges as well as new and re-emerging infectious diseases, including diseases associated with economic vulnerability, food insecurity, lack of access to potable water, detrimental environmental policies, social injustices, violence, and social unrest. Students will be given ample opportunity to work individually and in teams to develop interventions and solutions to the problems addressed in class.

The course is taught by a team of physicians and medical anthropologists engaged in the practice of social medicine in Latin America, Africa, Russia, and the United States.

Course Faculty:

Paul Farmer, MD, Ph.D. (Course director)           paulhaiti@aol.com
Arachu Castro, Ph.D., MPH (Course co-director)     arachu_castro@hms.harvard.edu
Joyce Millen, Ph.D., MPH  (Course instructor)      jmillen@pih.org
Heidi Behforouz, MD    (Course instructor)         hbehforouz@partners.org

Teaching Assistants:

Sylvia Aparicio          sylvia_aparicio@student.hms.harvard.edu
Kanu Okike               kanu_okike@student.hms.harvard.edu

Required readings (Books available at HMS COOP)

- Course Package available at Partners In Health in Department of Social Medicine (641 Huntington Avenue, 1st floor)

Course requirements:

1. Reading of course materials
2. Attendance and participation in discussions
3. Team presentations
4. Final paper (ten to fifteen pages, doubled spaced)
SCHEDULE AND READINGS

September 9

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDICINE
Dr. Arachu Castro

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
Dr. Joyce Millen

Background readings:

September 16

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE: THE CASE OF HAITI
Dr. Paul Farmer

Problems and controversies: history, poverty, inequality, foreign aid, and human rights

Readings:

September 23

INTERVENTIONS AND SOLUTIONS
DISCUSSION AND FILM SCREENING: “SAVING LIVES IN RURAL HAITI”
Dr. Arachu Castro

Readings:
September 30

FALLING THROUGH SERVICE GAPS: HEALTH AND DISEASE AMONG THE U.S. URBAN POOR
Dr. Heidi Behforouz

Problems and controversies: institutional racism and sexism, international migration, socioeconomic status, minority health, drug use and HIV/AIDS, agency versus structure

Readings:

October 7

INTERVENTIONS AND SOLUTIONS: DOT-HAART IN ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
Dr. Heidi Behforouz and Dr. Paul Farmer

Readings:

October 14

PROFITS OVER PEOPLE? CORPORATIONS, TRADE, GLOBALIZATION AND HEALTH
Dr. Joyce Millen

Problems and controversies: labor practices, environmental impact, trade related issues, advertising and promotion

Readings:
October 21

**LIQUID ASSETS, BLUE GOLD: DISEASE AND THE INEQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WATER**
Dr. Joyce Millen and Sylvia Aparicio

**Problems and challenges:** environmental justice, water access, and the commodification and privatization of water, water-borne ailments

**Readings:**

October 28

**POLITICS, JUSTICE AND TUBERCULOSIS AMONG THE INCARCERATED**
Dr. Paul Farmer

**Problems and controversies:** political ideology, socioeconomic change, prison health, human rights, justice and the provision of social services

**Readings:**

November 4

**TREAT THEIR INFECTIONS AND SEND THEM HOME TO DIE OF STARVATION? NOT.**
**MIDTERM REVIEW AND EVALUATION**
Dr. Joyce Millen with Dr. Mukachilma Chikuba

**Problems and challenges:** malnutrition and world hunger, structural adjustment policies, trade and agriculture, genetically modified organisms, food aid and food security

**Readings:**
November 11

Holiday – No Class

November 18

FROM DEATH SENTENCE TO GLOBAL HOPE: THE SOCIAL ROOTS OF MDR-TB
Dr. Paul Farmer

Problems and controversies: inflexible global health policy, health reform, healthcare privatization, cost-effectiveness in health, professional chutzpah

Readings:

November 25

STIGMA AND SOCIAL BARRIERS TO COMPREHENSIVE HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND CARE
Dr. Arachu Castro

Problems and controversies: distal versus proximal barriers, public health failures

Readings:

December 2

THE MANY FACES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL UNREST
Dr. Paul Farmer

Problems and controversies: domestic violence, rape, ethnic and national violence, social unrest, genocide

Readings:
- Kroll, J. “Posttraumatic Symptoms and the Complexity of Responses to Trauma. JAMA, 2003; 290; 667-670.
December 9

INTERVENTIONS AND SOLUTIONS TO VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL UNREST
Dr. Joyce Millen

Readings:

December 16

HEALTH AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE: COURSE SUMMARY
Dr. Arachu Castro

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND GLOBAL HEALTH ADVOCACY
Dr. Joyce Millen

Readings:

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Additional Readings

In addition to readings assigned for the course, the following books will be useful to students interested in pursuing careers in international health: