Health has become an issue of great personal and political significance, bound up as it is with the development of the welfare state and popular perceptions of well-being. This seminar examines health-related dilemmas faced by nations in the second half of the twentieth into the twenty-first century: how they become defined as a threat to the public's health, and how political economy, social structure, and cultural myths about health and illness affect policy responses in different countries.

Nations also operate within a broader global political economy and a network of international organizations including WHO, WTO, the UN, and the World Bank. Developments at an international level shape the strategies individual nations can and do consider. We consider the role of wealthier donor nations, particularly the United States, in a global era. What are the possible connections between global actors and local governance systems? How does NGO involvement help or hinder solutions to health problems? How do states and regions mobilize to meet perceived threats to their citizens’ health as they debate the appropriate limits to government intervention and the demands of an international “health regime”?

One of the foci of the seminar this fall will be on how nations and regions are coping with health threats that cross borders. What measures have been taken to meet emergent threats to the public health posed, or perceived to be posed, by both ‘products’ and ‘peoples’. Among the latter are ‘serious imported
diseases” (such as SARS); HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, avian and “swine” flu and Ebola and zika. Many of these diseases are perceived to be carried by “outsiders”, thus the seminar is also an investigation of strategies of action towards migrants (including travelers, immigrants, refugees and displaced persons) when disease enters the picture. Case studies of diseases carried by products may include blood products (which can carry Hepatitis C), and beef products, which can transmit vCJD (the human form of BSE/“mad cow disease”).

We will also explore how public policy-making occurs in the context of health risks when scientific knowledge is salient to policy decisions. What dilemmas do policy-makers face when they must cope with issues that pose significant risks to the safety of the population in contexts where there are significant costs to addressing such risks and uncertainty surrounding them? How is scientific evidence interpreted and used in political decision-making?

Throughout the seminar we will analyze various theoretical explanations for how and why countries choose divergent strategies to cope with the same substantive health problems. The ultimate object is to explore the character of those explanations and their hidden dimensions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation:
To ensure continuity, attendance at all seminar sessions is required of seminar participants. Please keep conversations, texting and exits from the seminar room for the break. Material should be read before each class session because the instructor will lead a discussion rather than lecture. Class participation is an essential component of the course. Therefore, your attendance, preparation, and engagement are essential components. Your participation is worth 20% of your course grade. You will be evaluated on your attendance, the quality of your preparation and involvement in discussion, and your posts and discussion questions. I hope to see evidence of intellectual curiosity, hard work, the ability to critique ideas thoughtfully and to re-assess your own assumptions and arguments.

Reaction papers:
Each student will select an article related to the topic or time period of a week’s readings and write a short analysis to be submitted to me as an email attachment no later than 5pm on Monday, or the day before we meet. Your paper should include a brief summary of the arguments and evidence used and a critical evaluation, explaining how it relates to/throws light on the cases/other readings for that week. At a suitable moment in the class, you will be called on to give a short presentation that summarizes the content of your paper. This presentation is informal, though it should explain your ideas with some degree of thoroughness. I expect students not writing reaction papers to listen carefully and to respond with thoughtful and challenging questions or reactions of their own so we can delve further into the ideas raised in the papers. The reaction paper is worth 15% of your course grade. You may choose to write your paper on the readings for any of the weeks 8-13 and will select “your” week during the seminar session on October 8 (see below for choices).

Weekly posts and discussion questions:
In weeks when you are not writing a reaction paper, you are expected to post a commentary on the readings – guidelines provided each week. You may also be asked to post a discussion question – keep an eye on the weekly instructions under Discussions on Canvas. The goal of this assignment is to encourage you to think critically about course material. Commentary/questions on the readings should be posted each week on the relevant Canvas Discussion by 5pm of the day before the seminar (usually a Monday).
Because we meet only once a week, a participant's absence will affect the group, his/her contribution to the seminar and understanding of the material. If you must miss a session (supported by a dean’s or doctor’s note), you will be required to complete a short paper on the missed week's readings (after consultation with the instructor). More than one absence will affect your final grade.

All seminar participants will be asked to complete a short assignment at the end of the first 5 weeks of the seminar which is designed to help you absorb the theoretical perspectives we have discussed to that point by applying them to a case study. This assignment should be submitted via “Turn it in” technology.

**Research paper:** The major requirement for the seminar will be to complete a paper that analyzes the approaches of one nation to a health problem. You may if you wish team up with another seminar participant to write a comparative paper together analyzing how two nations have dealt with a health problem. A series of paper proposals which develop your topic, including a literature review, will be submitted at regular intervals. Presentation of your ideas and arguments will take place at the last class session on December 3. The final paper, of at least 20 pages, is due on **Thursday, December 12, no later than noon**, and should be submitted via “Turn it in” technology.

Contribution of these assignments to your final grade are as follows:

- Participation: 20%
- Reaction paper: 15%
- First assignment: 25%
- Final paper (including proposals): 40%

**Grading scale:**

- 97 - 100 = A+
- 93 – 96 = A
- 90 – 92 = A-
- 87 – 89 = B+
- 83 – 86 = B
- 80 – 82 = B-
- 77 – 79 = C+
- 73 – 76 = C
- 70 – 72 = C-
- 66 - 69 = D+
- 60 - 65 = D
- F = <60

**Accessibility**

If you need accommodation as a result of a documented disability, you should register with the Disability Services Office. You can find out how to do so here: [http://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibility-services](http://students.tufts.edu/student-accessibility-services). And even if you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services are available to all students.

**Academic integrity:** Please familiarize yourself with Tufts’ Academic Integrity Handbook

Academic dishonesty can take many forms and I don’t propose to list all the things you should not do – the handbook is clear about definitions of plagiarism, copying exams etc.

**Use of technology**

- Please do not come to class and try to skim through readings on an electronic device – print out your notes or bring a handwritten version.
- All phones, ipods, kindles, laptops etc. should be turned off during class; emailing, texting or recording is not permitted.
- **But, for discussion:** Laptops may be used for seminar-related purposes such as taking notes, but only when necessary as they can be distracting to both fellow students and the instructor.
It is hoped that, among the learning objectives set by the Sociology department and the Community Health Program, this seminar should have encouraged participants by the end of the semester to:

➢ examine social structures analytically and critically;
➢ develop a comparative perspective on cultures, social structures, institutions, and practices;
➢ read and understand original research published by sociologists;
➢ engage in a major piece of writing that reviews published sociological research, develops a sustained argument, and uses theory and research to support the argument
➢ understand how multiple disciplines bring unique perspectives to cross-cutting questions of health and societies.
➢ evaluate complex arguments related to the formation of public policy

**Deadlines**

- Brief statement of research paper topic due: Friday, 20 September, 5pm via Canvas
- First assignment due no later than Friday, October 5 at 5pm, via Turnitin technology
- Second statement of research paper topic due: Tuesday, 15 October, by 4:30pm via Canvas
- Third research paper proposal with literature review due: Friday 8 November, by 5pm via Canvas
- Presentation of the ideas and arguments in your paper will take place at the last class session on December 3 (NOTE: class time will probably be extended to 7:30pm)
- The final paper, of at least 20 pages, is due on Thursday, December 12, no later than midnight, and should be submitted via “Turn it in” technology.

**NEW: Sociology department attendance and late policies**

**Attendance**

- **Major Illness or Emergencies:** Exceptions may be granted for major illnesses, family emergencies, or jury duty. Serious illnesses must have documentation from health services or your doctor, and all other serious emergencies must first be reported to and documented by your advising dean.
- **Minor Illness or Standard Outside Obligations:** Exceptions for assignments will generally not be granted for minor illnesses or standard outside obligations, including travel, work, performances, job interviews, games, and so forth. If you have a question about whether your circumstance qualifies, please ask at least two weeks in advance. Extenuating circumstances are more likely to be considered with advance notice rather than at the last minute.
- **Any Ongoing Issues:** If you have ongoing issues (i.e., chronic or mental or physical health conditions), please speak either to the Student Accessibility Services office or to your advising dean and I will be happy to work with them to put a plan in place.

**Late Policy**

- All written assignments should be submitted by the due date and time. Late assignments will be docked one third of a letter grade.
SEMINAR OUTLINE AND READING LIST

Readings will be available on-line on Canvas. The instructor may make changes to the syllabus in response to participants’ interests and feedback, my sense of how things are going, or world events. Any changes will be discussed in class and announced via email, so please check your inbox for this class even if you live the rest of your life on your smartphone. The current syllabus version number is on the front page.

Week 1 (September 3): Introduction and the Comparative Method

Week 2 (September 10): Why states (and health professionals) do what they do: Interests and Rational Decision-Making in Democracies

Rational Actors?

Clips from The Fog of War, film by Errol Morris on Robert McNamara


Week 3 (September 17): Theories of Policy Construction continued: The Significance of Culture

Lynn Payer, Medicine and Culture (New York: Penguin, 1988): chapters 1, 2 and part of 3


Brief statement of research paper topic due: Friday, 20 September, 5pm via Canvas

Week 4 (September 24): Theories of Policy Construction continued: The Significance of Institutions


A critique of cultural explanations and the argument for institutional factors

Week 5 (October 1): What’s the Problem?

Culture, institutions and politics – how do they shape the stories we accept and the policies that follow?

5


A Case of East meets West

First assignment due no later than Friday, October 5 at 5pm, via Turnitin

Week 6 (October 8): Elaborating your paper topic, locating sources

Discussion of your paper topics in the context of the article:


And an explanation: Are Countries Prisoners of their Pasts? Peter Baldwin, Disease and Democracy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005): chapter 10

Week 7 (October 15): A Tufts MONDAY, NO CLASS

Second statement of research paper topic due: Tuesday, 15 October, by 4:30pm via Canvas

Week 8 (October 22): The Global Context of International Health Policies

Reaction paper:


Week 9 (October 29): Science and Tradition: Cancer in Different Contexts

Reaction paper:

2 films. Please watch at least one BEFORE the seminar
The Cancer Detectives of Lin Xian (on oesophageal cancer in China, 1981): link on trunk

Well-Being (on cervical cancer in Britain): on reserve, Tisch library


Week 10 (November 5): AIDS in a Global Era

AIDS and black politics in the US


International strategies
Ann Swidler, talk: “Who’s Afraid of Circumcision?” (video): on international resistance to circumcision as a preventive strategy against AIDS in Africa

AIDS in Uganda


An Indian intervention

Third research paper proposal with literature review due: Friday 8 November, by 5pm via Trunk
Week 11 (November 12): The migrant crisis: disease and public health

Reaction paper:

**Background**
Sandro Galea, Europe’s migrant crisis: what the EU is forgetting, Fortune.com (September 15, 2015)


**Cases**


Week 12 (November 19): The Return of Infectious Disease: Implications for Global Governance

Reaction paper:

**SARS**

**Avian Flu**


**Swine Flu**

Alessio Cornia, Marina Ghersetti, Paolo Mancini & Tomas Odén, “The Partisans, the Technocrats and the Watchdogs”, *Journalism Studies*, 17:8 (2016) 1030-1050

**Cholera in Haiti**
Armin Rosen, “How the U.N. Caused Haiti’s Cholera Crisis – and Won't Be Held Responsible”, The Atlantic (February 26, 2013) and 3 other articles
**Week 13 (November 26): The latest challenges to international health policy: Ebola and zika**

*Reaction paper:*

**Ebola**


**Zika**

Siddhartha Mukherjee, “The Chase: Can the zika virus be stopped?”, *The New Yorker* (22 August 2016)

Ed Yong, “The Tiny Trump Budget Cut That Could Blind America to the Next Zika”, *The Atlantic* (March 18, 2017)

“The discarded cases: health policies” in *Zika in Brazil: women and children at the center of the epidemic* (Anis – Institute of Bioethics, Brasilia, Brazil, 2017)


**Week 14 (December 3): Conclusion - Paper Draft Presentations**

**NOTE:** CLASS PERIOD WILL BE EXTENDED TO 7:30pm on December 3

The final paper, of at least 20 pages, is due on Thursday, December 12, no later than midnight, and should be submitted via “Turn it in” technology.