

Assessing the Epidemiologic Impact of Human Rights Violations **340.639.01, 2Credits, 4th Term, 2006**

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Course Description

Since human rights violations and failed public policies can affect the health of populations and the efficacy of public health efforts, students utilize a case studies approach drawn from recent epidemics of infectious diseases to investigate the interactions of epidemics, public health, and human rights. In the context of the case studies, students examine epidemiologic methods to investigate and understand these interactions, including qualitative assessments and interview approaches, population level measures, indirect measures for use in conflict areas, and new tools of molecular epidemiology. Case studies include the stalled response to SARS in China; HIV/AIDS in Burma under military rule; HIV, STIs, and violence in relation to human trafficking and sex work; limitations on effective HIV prevention for drug users in Russia, the CIS and China; and the policies of limiting condom availability for prisoners in the US, Russia, and Thailand. Students gain an appreciation for the mechanisms through which policies and rights abrogations can worsen epidemics, of the benefits of using a rights-based approach to public health problems, and of current epidemiologic tools to study these complex interactions.

Course Learning Objectives

Students will gain an appreciation for the mechanisms through which policies and rights abrogations can worsen epidemics, of the potential benefits of using a rights-based approach to public health problems, and of current epidemiologic tools to study these complex interactions.

COURSE DATES	PRESENTERS	Title of Presentation
28/3/06	Chris Beyrer	Introduction to the Course: Overview of Core Concepts
30/3/06	Chris Beyrer	Case Study #1: Responses to SARS and HIV/AIDS in China: Why freedom of information is essential to public health
4/4/06	Luke Mullany	Case Study #2: Public Health and Human Rights among Internally Displaced Persons in Eastern Burma
6/4/06	Luke Mullany	Case Study #2 (continued): Rape as a tool of ethnic terror, a gender-based rights violation, and a threat to health
11/4/06	Vivian Go	Human Rights Investigations: Qualitative Methods
13/4/06	Vivian Go	Human Rights Investigations: Qualitative Methods
15/4/06	Chris Beyrer	Using Molecular Epidemiology as a tool for human rights and policy. Overland heroin trafficking and spread of HIV in South & Southeast Asia and Central Asia
20/4/06	Jon Cohen	The impact of censoring HIV/AIDS information on public health: the case of abstinence-only programs"
25/4/06	David Celentano	Case Study #3: Drug Use, HIV, and Human Rights in Thailand
27/4/06	Susan Sherman	Case Study #4: Drug users experiences of a crackdown: qualitative methods to assess impacts
2/5/06	Michele Bohana	Institute for Asian Democracy: Using public health data for human rights advocacy, A view from inside the beltway
4/5/06	Lynn Lawry	"Methods for Evaluating Human Rights Violations on Women's Health"
9/5/06	Julie Mair	Case Study #5: US Prisons: Limits on the right to health
11/5/06	Chris Beyrer	Trafficking of persons
16/5/06	Chris Beyrer	Advocacy
18/5/06	Student Presentations	

Course Assignment
Due Date: May 16th, 2005, 5:00 PM

Human Rights realities and public health threats interact in complex ways in “real world” situations. One of the primary goals of this course has been to explore some of the interactions through presentations, class discussions, and Q & A sessions. Examples of these interactions include are the ways in which limitations on the right to information exacerbated China’s SARS outbreak, or the policy limits on condom access for prisoners in many states which facilitate HIV spread. To conclude the course and to evaluate participant understanding, we are asking participants to explore one such public health and human rights situation. This can be an evaluation of a policy and its health impacts, a description of an interaction in a specific context (HIV spread in the war in DR Congo, land mine injuries in Afghanistan), or an essay of your own design.

Format:

This should be a short written essay, no more than 1,200 words (about 2-3 pages at 1 1/5 spacing) and should be your own original work. This is not a research essay, but rather an opportunity for you to think through an issue, and to discuss in your own words the interplay of public health and human rights. There is only one requirement in addition to brevity and originality: please be sure to discuss a possible remedy to the health threat you are discussing. Describing the problem is crucial—but suggesting solutions and advocacy for those solutions is critical too.

Topics:

We strongly suggest that you speak to the instructors Dr. Beyrer, and Stefan by April, 20th, about possible topics. This is to insure the topic is feasible in the very short time we all have together.

Submission:

Please email your paper to sbaral@jhsph.edu