

HILD 30: The History of Public Health

Fall 2014
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Course description

Public health concerns and campaigns have always been bound up with the globalizing activities of trade, exploration, capital accumulation, war, colonization and industrialization. In the wake of these disruptive forces, public health crusades have done their work. Their success has been phenomenal. By extending life, they have changed its meaning.

Beginning with an overview of increasing global longevity in the last two centuries, this class will examine a series of episodes in the global history of public health, from the medieval plague to the new millennial diseases of affluence. Using the Gapminder website, we will examine and analyze global demographic statistics to think through what strategies extend human life, and why. By analyzing the political, cultural and economic dimensions of these strategies, we will use the lessons of history to pose urgent questions about how public health policies and initiatives work or fail to work across the globe. Proceeding chronologically, each week will focus on a different aspect of public health intervention, examining debates such as the politics of sanitation campaigns, the legacies of colonialism, the definition of progress, the rights and wrongs of 'soft' power, and the challenge of the population explosion.

Requirements

The class will meet MWF. Attendance is mandatory. There is no textbook for the class, and all readings will be available electronically on TED. Students must complete the assigned readings according to the schedule below, and must come to Friday's class each week prepared to participate in discussion of that week's readings. There will be two take-home examinations, consisting of short essay answers to set questions. The first, for 40%, will be due on the Friday of fifth week, the second, for 60%, due on the Friday of tenth week.

Schedule of readings and topics

FIRST WEEK: When and why did the gap begin to open?

James C. Riley, *Rising Life Expectancy: a Global History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-57

SECOND WEEK: The origins of public health and epidemiology

James C. Riley, *Rising Life Expectancy: a Global History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 58-121

THIRD WEEK: Hygienic modernity and colonial medicine

Patricia Lorcin (1999) 'Imperialism, Colonial Identity and Race in Algeria 1830-1870: the role of the French Medical Corps' *Isis* 90:4, 653-679

Lenore Manderson (1999) 'Colonialism and the Politics of Prevention' *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 89, issue 1, pp. 102-107

Alexandra Minna Stern, 2006, 'Yellow Fever Crusade: US Colonialism, Tropical Medicine and the International Politics of Mosquito Control, 1900-1920', in Alison Bashford, ed. *Medicine at the Border*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 41-59

FOURTH WEEK: Universalism and world health

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Theodore Brown, et al., 2006, 'The World Health Organization and the transition from 'International' to 'Global' Health' in Alison Bashford, ed. *Medicine at the Border*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 76-94

FIFTH WEEK: Decolonization

Frantz Fanon (1965) 'Medicine and Colonialism' in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakan Chevalier, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, pp. 121-147

SIXTH WEEK: Barefoot Doctors to Alma Ata

The Declaration of Alma Ata

SEVENTH WEEK: Neoliberal public health

Marcos Cueto (2004) 'The Origins of Primary Health Care and Selective Primary Health Care' *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 94, # 11, pp. 1864-1874

Gavino Maciocco and Angelo Stefanini (2007) 'From Alma-Ata to the Global Fund: the history of international health policy' *Rev. Bras. Saúde Matern. Infant., Recife*, 7 (4): 479-486

EIGHTH WEEK: Colonial legacies?

Ronald Bayer (1998) 'The debate over maternal-fetal HIV transmission prevention trials in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean: racist exploitation or exploitation of racism?' *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 88, #4, 567-570

Olga Shevchenko and Renée Fox (2008) "'Nationals" and "expatriates": Challenges of fulfilling "sans frontières" ("without borders") ideals in international humanitarian action' *Health and Human Rights*, Vol. 10 #1

NINTH WEEK: Contemporary Issues in Global Health

Michael Watts (2008) 'Imperial Oil: the Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency' *Economies of Violence Working Papers*, #17

A. S. Jegede (2007) 'What Led to the Nigerian Boycott of the Polio Vaccination Campaign?' *PLoS Med* 4(3): e73. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0040073

Jon Boone (2014) 'Pakistan's polio-busters try to contain disease despite terrorist opposition' *The Guardian*, Thursday 3 July 2014

TENTH WEEK: Diseases of Affluence and the Politics of Pleasure

Kelly Brownell and Kenneth Warner (2009) "The Perils of Ignoring History: Big Tobacco Played Dirty and Millions Died. How Similar is Big Food?" *Millbank Quarterly*, Vol. 87, #1, 259-294