

## Politics, Poverty, and Health

Fall 2016

Prof. Mershon

Class meets MW 2-3:15 pm, New Cabell 291

Office hours W 3:30-5:30 pm, Gibson 382

**Course overview.** This course studies politics, poverty, and health in a number of developing countries and what are today developed countries. We study how much and why policy responses to health problems might differ under different socioeconomic and political conditions. We also look at how differences in health outcomes might shape political processes. We consider how policy makers' ideas of appropriate policy interventions to tackle health crises have changed over time, in the face of new medical evidence. We ask how and how much poverty undermines health, and investigate how and how much politicians can design policy so as to alleviate poverty and enhance the health of the people they rule.

**Course goals.** This course pursues chief goals. Naturally enough, several aims regard politics, poverty, and health. This course is designed to help you:

- identify major similarities and differences in how policy is tied to economic inequality and/or health across time and across space (for instance, cities, countries, or groups of countries),
- explain the patterns you observe, and
- articulate why the explanation(s) you find to be persuasive actually hold explanatory power.

The first three goals point to a general one. The course will equip you to:

- hone your critical and analytical skills.

**Class format.** This course operates as a seminar. Thus, each class meeting will combine lecture and ample opportunity for class discussion. In many class meetings, we will have some form of discussion in small groups. The success of all class meetings depends on active engagement of all students enrolled. That statement leads naturally to course requirements.

**Course requirements.** Course grades are based on the following requirements:

- 12.5 percent: first short paper, due 09/22, 11:55 p.m.
- 12.5 percent: second short paper, due 11/14, 11:55 p.m.
- Bonus: whichever of your short papers earns a higher grade will be weighted 14 percent
- 15 percent: overall participation
- 7 percent: small-group projects, including your discussion of others' projects
- 25 percent: in-class mid-term exam, 10/17
- 25 percent: final exam, 12/16, 2-5 p.m.
- Bonus: whichever of your exams earns a higher grade will be weighted 26.5 percent

No single category of work weighs unduly in the course grade. All course work is spaced relatively evenly over the semester. Each requirement deserves fuller attention.

Each of the two *short papers* should directly address one of the questions posed to the class for papers; the choice of question is up to you. Be sure that each element of your paper—each paragraph, each paragraph's theme sentence, and each sentence in the paper—helps you answer the question you have chosen for your focus. Be sure that your paper's introduction states the answer you will develop, and that your conclusion clinches the case for your answer. Each paper should be double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, and have a length of 4 pp.

minimum and 5 pp. maximum (i.e., have a word count of 1,000 to 1,200 words, assuming 12-point Times New Roman and double spacing). The requirements in the previous sentence assure a “level playing field” for all students. Submit the short papers at Collab Assignments.

Your success in this seminar depends on your active *participation* in it. Participation involves not only speaking but also attentively listening to classmates. It is your responsibility as a member of the class to help keep discussion lively, engaged, and focused on the topics at hand. If you believe discussion is lagging or moving off topic, pose a simple question, for instance:

- That’s an important comment. How can we link that to the author’s argument that XXX?
- That’s interesting, and it makes me wonder XXX about our reading YYY for this week.
- Reflecting on the last few points made, I wonder XXX.
- How does this fit in the bigger picture?

These examples by no means exhaust the possibilities, and yet illustrate how you can contribute proactively to thoughtful discussions in class. Moreover, these examples illustrate how you can treat each other respectfully and justly in class. (See the statement on respect and justice below.)

In the *small-group project*, you choose one of six websites as the focus for a class presentation to be developed with the members of your small group. In class on 11/28, small groups convene and discuss preparation for presentations; you are responsible for investigating your site in depth before that class. Our 11/30 class meeting is dedicated to the presentations themselves (~ 5 minutes per presentation), along with discussion of presentations (~5 minutes per presentation) and reflection on all presentations. Be sure that each member of your small group has a role to play in your presentation. Your grades on projects will be based not only on your own project but also on your thoughtful discussion of, and reflection on, others' projects.

The in-class *mid-term exam* on 10/12 will cover material since the start of the semester. Questions will emphasize concepts and explanatory thinking, not memorization. The exam will likely feature some combination of long and short essays. Bring **blue books** with you.

The *final exam* on 12/16, 2-5 p.m, the date and time set by UVa, will *not* be cumulative. That is, the final exam will cover material since the mid-term exam. Questions will emphasize concepts and explanatory thinking, not memorization. The exam will likely feature some combination of long and short essays. Bring **blue books** with you.

***Course rules and policies.*** The following rules and policies are designed to help you benefit as much as possible from taking the class, interacting with fellow students, and interacting with me as the professor. The rules and policies are designed to help you learn.

- Attendance: I will not take official attendance, but if you do not attend class you will not be able to participate in class discussion. For each class you do not attend, your learning and your course grade will suffer.
- Phones: Send your last text before class starts, and then, shortly before 2 pm, silence your cellphones and put them away.
- Laptops: In our first class meeting of the semester, we will discuss several possibilities for policy on use of laptops in our classroom. All students will be individually and collectively responsible for abiding by that policy for the remainder of the semester.

**Statement on equality of respect and equality of justice.** All class members are expected to treat each other at all times with respect, courtesy, tolerance, fairness, and justice. I strive to assure that students in this class are treated with equal respect and equal justice. As part of that effort, I identify my office as a safe haven for anyone who believes she or he is being treated with prejudice or injustice. Moreover, I view it as my essential responsibility to include on this syllabus the Statement on Sexual Violence distributed by the UVa Office of the Dean of Students. You will find that statement, quoted in its entirety, as the Appendix to the syllabus.

**Statement on academic integrity.** I quote extensively from Prof. Bloomfield of the UVa Department of Physics, who offers this eloquent statement as part of his syllabus for Physics 1060, How Things Work (<http://rabi.phys.virginia.edu/1060/2015/ethics.html>).

“In a community dedicated to scholarship and learning, there is no substitute for academic and intellectual integrity. Honesty and forthrightness are essential pillars upon which our enterprise rests and, without them, there can be no trust and little community. All participants in this course are therefore expected to conduct themselves honestly and forthrightly at all times. Truth is the coin of our realm and that truth applies not only to words, facts, and ideas, but also to the authorship of those items. Misrepresentation of authorship is a form of intellectual dishonesty known as plagiarism and intolerable.”

I agree with this statement wholeheartedly and cannot think of a way to improve on it. Moreover, I put in writing the following expectations.

- I hold each student in this class responsible for knowing what actions violate the Honor System at this University.
- I hold each student responsible for abiding by the Honor System.

We all as members of the class have a collective responsibility to uphold academic and intellectual integrity.

**Readings.** The following books are required readings and are (or soon will be) available in the UVa Bookstore.

- Hanlon, Joseph, Armando Barrientos, and David Hulme. 2010. *Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South*. Boulder, CO: Kumarian/Lynne Rienner.
- Johnson, Steven. 2006. *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Other readings are posted at our course website at Resources. If you ever have difficulty locating readings, email me as soon as possible. When a set of articles is assigned, please read assignments in the order listed; I have identified a logical sequence in the week's readings.

## **Class Meeting Topics and Reading Assignments**

08/24 *Introduction*

08/29 *Extending the Introduction: Comparative Policy Responses to Health Crises*

- Gauri, Varun, and Evan S. Lieberman. 2006. "Boundary Institutions and HIV/AIDS Policy in Brazil and South Africa." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 41 (3): 47-73.

[continued next page]

- Gómez, Eduardo J., and Joseph Harris. 2016. "Political Repression, Civil Society and the Politics of Responding to AIDS in the BRICS Nations." *Health Policy and Planning* 31 (1): 56-66.

## Part One: The Historical Experience of Today's Developed Democracies

### 08/31 *Disease and Death in Nineteenth Century Cities, Part I*

- Johnson, *Ghost Map*, Preface, "Monday, August 28: The Night-Soil Men," and first part of "Saturday, September 2: Eyes Sunk, Lips Dark Blue," pp. xv, 1-22, 25-44. Complete the reading assignment, even though **class does not meet on 08/31** and Prof. Mershon is participating in an out-of town professional conference.

### 09/05 *Disease and Death in Nineteenth Century Cities, Part II*

- Johnson, *Ghost Map*, remainder of "Saturday, September 2," and "Sunday, September 3: The Investigator," pp. 45-55, 57-79.

### 09/07 *Smell or Water? Implications for Policy in the Nineteenth Century, Part I*

- Johnson, *Ghost Map*, "Monday, September 4: That Is To Say, Jo Has Not Yet Died," and "Tuesday, September 5: All Smell Is Disease," pp. 81-109, 111-136.

### 09/12 *Smell or Water? Implications for Policy in the Nineteenth Century, Part II*

- Johnson, *Ghost Map*, "Wednesday, September 6: Building the Case," and first part of "Friday, September 8: The Pump Handle," pp. 139-156, 159-172. Portions of this week's lectures draw from: Alsan, Marcella, and Claudia Goldin. *Watersheds in Infant Mortality: The Role of Effective Water and Sewerage Infrastructure, 1880 to 1915*. No. w21263. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2015.

### 09/14 *Policy Lessons from Cholera in the Nineteenth Century? Part I*

- Johnson, *Ghost Map*, remainder of "Friday, September 8," and first part of "Conclusion: The Ghost Map," pp. 172-188, 191-213.
- Sontag, Deborah. 2012. "In Haiti, Global Failures on a Cholera Epidemic." *New York Times* March 31.

### 09/19 *Policy Lessons from Cholera in the Nineteenth Century? Part II*

- Johnson, *Ghost Map*, remainder of "Conclusion," and "Epilogue," pp. 213-228, 231-256.

Questions on Johnson's book, available today in class, will form the basis for five-page papers due 11:55 p.m. 09/22. (Recall from pp. 1-2: double-spaced and 1,000 to 1,200 words in length. Be sure that each element of the paper directly targets the question.) Collective discussion of the questions will take place in class today, whereas work on papers is to proceed individually.

### 09/21 *Pandemic, War, and Beyond: Influenza*

The two readings assigned for 09/21 are short, since you are wrapping up your five-page papers.

- National Institutes of Health. 2007. "Rapid Response Was Crucial to Containing the

1918 Flu Pandemic: Historical Analyses Help Plan for Future Pandemics." April 2, News Release NIH (4 pp.)

- Kamradt-Scott, Adam. 2012. "Changing Perceptions of Pandemic Influenza and Public Health Responses." *American Journal of Public Health* 102 (1): 90-98.

09/22 **Short papers due today, 11:55 p.m. Submit at Collab Assignments.**

## **Part Two: Comparative Analyses of Health and Health Policies**

09/26 *Health Inequalities and Health Policy*

- Lynch, Julia. 2016. "Class, Territory, and Inequality: Explaining Differences in the Framing of Health Inequalities as a Policy Problem in Belgium and France." *French Politics* 14 (1): 55-82.
- Marmot, Michael G. 2016. "Empowering Communities." *American Journal of Public Health* 106 (2): 230-231.

09/28 *Democratization, New Democracies, and Health Policy*

- Grépin, Karen A., and Kim Yi Dionne. 2013. "Democratization and Universal Health Coverage: A Case Comparison of Ghana, Kenya, and Senegal." *Global Health Governance* 6 (2), 1-28.
- Carbone, Giovanni. 2012. "Do New Democracies Deliver Social Welfare? Political Regimes and Health Policy in Ghana and Cameroon." *Democratization* 19 (2): 157-183.

10/03 *No class: Reading day*

10/05 *In-Depth Insight into What Makes Health Programs Work?*

- Tandler, Judith, and Sara Freedheim. 1994. "Trust in a Rent-Seeking World: Health and Government Transformed in Northeast Brazil." *World Development* 22 (12): 1771-1791.

10/05 Special event! Not required but *recommended*. Do your best to attend at least part of it.

- 2016 UVa Center for Global Health Research Symposium, 5:00-7:00 pm, Newcomb Hall Ballroom, <https://globalhealth.virginia.edu/node/1926>. With: Keynote Speaker: Tyler Spencer, UVa Alum, Founder and President, The Grassroot Project, <http://www.grassrootproject.org>

On Wed, 10/05, I will end office hours at 4:45 pm so that I can attend the CGH Research Symposium. Hope to see you there!

10/10 *What Explains Declines in Infant Mortality?*

- McGuire, James W. 2001. "Social Policy and Mortality Decline in East Asia and Latin America." *World Development* 29 (10): 1673-1697.

10/12 *Bringing It Home: Race, Ethnicity, Health, and Politics in the US*

- Keene, Danya E., Julia F. Lynch, and Amy Castro Baker. 2014. "Fragile Health and Fragile Wealth: Mortgage Strain Among African American Homeowners." *Social Science & Medicine* 118: 119-126. [continued next page]

- Rodriguez, Javier M., Arline T. Geronimus, John Bound, and Danny Dorling. 2015. "Black Lives Matter: Differential Mortality and the Racial Composition of the US Electorate, 1970–2004." *Social Science & Medicine* 136: 193-199.

10/17 **In-class mid-term exam.**  
*Bring blue-books.*

### **Part Three: Poverty Alleviation as a Path to Enhancing Health?**

10/19 *What Can and Should Policymakers Do to Reduce Poverty?*

- Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme, *Just Give Money to the Poor*, Chs. 1-2, pp. 1-26.
- As part of the assignment, also view and be prepared to discuss the Asian Development Bank's <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXMni3C9uYk>

10/24 *How Might Poverty Reduction Link to Health Promotion?*

- Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme, *Just Give Money to the Poor*, Chs. 3-4, pp. 27-68.

10/26 *Economic Growth, Targeting of Transfers, and Impacts on Health*

- Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme, *Just Give Money to the Poor*, Chs. 5-6, pp. 69-100.

10/31 *How Does Targeting Transfers Work and What Are the Effects?*

- Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme, *Just Give Money to the Poor*, Chs. 7-8, pp. 101-141.

11/02 *Can and Should Policy Makers Treat Poverty Alleviation as a Path to Enhancing Health?*

- Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme, *Just Give Money to the Poor*, Chs. 9-10, pp. 143-181.

11/07 *Proposals on Poverty and Health from Prominent Experimental Economists*

- Banerjee, Abhijit, and Esther Duflo. 2012. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*, Ch. 3, "Low-Hanging Fruit for Better (Global) Health?" pp. 41-70 (notes at pp. 280-282).

11/09 *Proposals on Poverty and Health from Prominent Experimental Economists*

- Banerjee, Abhijit, and Esther Duflo. 2012. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*, Ch. 10, "Policies, Politics," and Ch. 11, "In Place of a Sweeping Conclusion," pp. 235-265, 267-273 (notes at pp. 290-293).

Questions available today in class, will form the basis for five-page papers due 11:55 p.m. 11/14. (Recall from pp. 1-2: double-spaced and 1,000 to 1,200 words in length. Be sure that each element of the paper directly targets the question.) Collective discussion of the questions will take place in class today, whereas work on papers is to proceed individually.

11/14 No class today: short papers are due tonight.

- **Short papers due today, 11:55 p.m. Submit at Collab Assignments.**

11/16 *Understanding the Unexpected in Health Programs and Health Reform*

- Sobti, Deepak, Marcos Cueto, and Yuan He. 2014. "A Public Health Achievement under Adversity: The Eradication of Poliomyelitis from Peru, 1991." *American Journal of Public Health* 104 (12): 2298-2305.
- Ewig, Christina. 2016. "Reform and Electoral Competition: Convergence Toward Equity in Latin American Health Sectors." *Comparative Political Studies* 49 (2): 184-218.

Complete the reading assignment, even though **class does not meet on 11/16** and Prof. Mershon is participating in an international professional conference.

11/21 *International and Domestic Responses to a Recent Epidemic*

- Benton, Adia, and Kim Yi Dionne. 2015. "International Political Economy and the 2014 West African Ebola Outbreak." *African Studies Review* 58 (1): 223-236.

At the end of class today, you will form small groups to organize both your assignment for 11/28 and your in-class work on 11/28.

11/23 *Thanksgiving Recess: enjoy the holiday!*

11/28 *The Aims and Reach of International Organizations and Non-Profits: Group Projects, I*

- As part of the assignment, before class meets 11/28, "dig deep" into the website you have chosen for your focus. Familiarize yourself with the other five websites. This will prepare for in-class small-group discussions on 11/28.
  - World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org>
  - World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/en/>
  - Inter-American Development Bank <http://www.iadb.org> , also <http://www.iadb.org/en/sector/health/overview,18342.html>
  - Partners in Health <http://www.pih.org>
  - Water is Life <http://waterislife.com>
  - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation <http://www.gatesfoundation.org>
- In class today, each small group will discuss its website and use that discussion to plan a group presentation. Be sure that each member of your small group has a role in your presentation. Be creative! Slide shows, video clips, maps, and charts are a few of the possibilities.

11/30 *The Aims and Reach of International Organizations and Non-Profits: Group Projects, II*

- The class meeting will consist of small-group presentations, full-class discussion of each presentation, and, at the end, full-class discussion of the presentations as a whole. Each presentation will last ~5 minutes and we will have ~5 minutes of discussion per presentation, which leaves time for reflection on all presentations.

12/05 *Conclusions and Invitations: How to Apply Lessons to Today's Challenges?*

Readings TBA. Possibilities include those listed below:

- Dionne, Kim Yi. 2012. "Local Demand for a Global Intervention: Policy Priorities in the Time of AIDS." *World Development* 40 (12): 2468-2477.
- Daku, Mark. 2016. "What the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Can Tell Us About How to Fight Zika." *Washington Post, Monkey Cage* 7 March. [continued next page]

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/07/does-democracy-protect-you-against-epidemics-like-zika/>

- Frandsen, Grey. 2016. "We Need to Fight Zika the Way Governments Fight Terror." *Reuters* 2 June. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-publichealth-virus-zika-idUSKCN0YG2JZ>
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2016. "Eastern and Southern Africa: Communicable Diseases Snapshot." 15 August.
- Busby, Joshua. 2016. "What Could Make Americans—and Congress—Care about Zika?" *Washington Post, Monkey Cage* 17 August. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/08/17/how-do-you-get-congress-to-fund-zika-efforts-its-not-just-the-messaging/>

12/16 **Final exam, 2-5 p.m.**

The final will take place in our regular classroom. ***Bring blue books.***

**APPENDIX: STATEMENT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE** from the UVa Office of the Dean of Students.

"The University of Virginia is dedicated to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. To that end, it is vital that you know two values that the University and I hold as critically important:

1. Power-based personal violence will not be tolerated.
2. Everyone has a responsibility to do their part to maintain a safe community on Grounds.

If you or someone you know has been affected by power-based personal violence, more information can be found on the UVA Sexual Violence website that describes reporting options and resources available - [www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence](http://www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence).

As your professor and as a person, I care about you and your well-being and stand ready to provide support and resources as I can. As a faculty member, I am a responsible employee, which means that I am required by University policy and federal law to report what you tell me to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator's job is to ensure that the reporting student receives the resources and support that they need, while also reviewing the information presented to determine whether further action is necessary to ensure survivor safety and the safety of the University community. If you would rather keep this information confidential, there are Confidential Employees you can talk to on Grounds (See [http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential\\_resources.pdf](http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/confidential_resources.pdf)). The worst possible situation would be for you or your friend to remain silent when there are so many here willing and able to help."