

CET Syllabus of Record



Program: Public Health and Service-Learning in Ho Chi Minh City

Course Title: Public Health Through Development

Course Code: VS230

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Suggested Cross Listings: Asian Studies; Anthropology, Sociology, Environmental and/or Gender Studies, where appropriate

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: Required for all program students

Description

This seminar introduces students to public health and international development issues in Vietnam, with reference to Asian and global problems. The focus is on public health impacts of armed conflict (refugee crises, environmental impacts of Agent Orange), rapid economic change, and new global epidemics and pandemics. This course is co-taught by the Program Director and guest lecturers, such as scholars and practitioners in the field. Students examine key topics in public health—their challenges, nuances and attempted solutions—in the context of modern-day Vietnam, Southeast Asia, and the developing world. The course provides students with context for many of their day-to-day experiences in Vietnam, giving them the opportunity to focus on the broader, global relevance of issues they encounter in their immediate environment.

Objectives

During this course, students gain the following:

- An overall introduction to public health issues in modern Vietnam and their historical origins and specificity.
- An understanding of key development challenges in Vietnam and Southeast Asia today, and how these affect public health and health care.
- Awareness of the impact of economic growth and rapid social change on the evolution of public health in Vietnam.
- A general understanding of regional variation, uneven development, poverty and marginalization in contemporary Vietnam—and their impact on health issues.

Course Requirements

Active participation is essential in this course. Students are expected to attend each class and field trip, and participate actively in discussions. They need to read all required materials before coming to class, and be ready to discuss readings and topics thoughtfully. Readings average around 30-40 pages per class session.

Students are required to complete bi-weekly reading reflection papers. These are each two pages in length, and should demonstrate the student's active engagement with the week's readings. Students use these papers as an opportunity to raise questions, discuss new theories, and tie in readings to previous field trips, classes or practicum experiences.

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Students submit a final research paper of at least 8 pages. Paper topics will be approved in advance by the course instructor. Students must consult relevant secondary sources and conduct basic fieldwork, such as a survey, personal interviews, case study, etc. Final papers need to be polished, and describe the student's methodology, explaining how he/she overcame language and methodological challenges when conducting the research.

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

Reflection papers	30%
Participation	30%
Final research paper	40%

Primary Texts

A course reading packet will be available, with readings available electronically as well.

Readings will be selected from the following sources (given here as examples):

Wells-Dang, Andrew. *Civil Society Networks in China and Vietnam: Informal Pathbreakers in Health and the Environment*. Palgrave, 2012.

World Bank. *Agent Orange and the Prevalence of Cancer Among the Vietnamese Population Thirty Years After the End of the Vietnam War*, by Quy-Toan Do. The World Bank Development Research Group, 2009.

World Bank. *On the Causes of Health Sector Inequalities with an Application to Malnutrition Inequalities in Vietnam*, by Naoko Watanabe et al. The World Bank Development Research Group, 2001.

United Nations. *Policies on Reproductive Health Care for Ethnic Minority People in Vietnam*. UNFPA, Hanoi 2010.

United Nations. *Research on Reproductive Health in Vietnam, 2006-2010*. UNFPA, Hanoi 2012.

ICRW, Washington DC. *Understanding HIV and AIDS-related Stigma and Discrimination in Vietnam*, by Khuat Thu Huong et al. International Center for Research on Women, 2004.

Supplementary Texts

Selected articles and films.

Outline of Course Content

Note: Students cover approximately 1 topic or critical question every week. The order of topics may vary slightly according to the availability of guest lecturers and scholars.

Topic 1: Overview of Public Health Issues in Vietnam and Southeast Asia

- What are the key public health issues in Vietnam today?
- How to address poverty, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, and new emerging healthcare challenges?
- Can Vietnam benefit from experiences of other countries in Southeast Asia and Asia?
- What are the impacts of collaboration from foreign governments and non-governmental organizations?

Topic 2: Postwar Development Challenges and Globalization – Emerging from Mass Poverty

- What were some of the main environmental and health impacts of 30 years of war in Vietnam?

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- What major political, economic and social challenges has Vietnam faced since then, and how have these changes impacted public health?
What are the impacts of globalization on Vietnamese society (since the 1990s) How have these affected public health and health care provision in Vietnam?

Topic 3: Health Impacts of Deep Poverty – Widespread Postwar Malnutrition

- Why was malnutrition such a widespread problem in the postwar period?
- What roles have foreign organizations and NGOs played in poverty reduction and health interventions in Vietnam, alongside government interventions?

Topic 4: Environmental Impacts of War – Ongoing Impacts of Agent Orange

- What are the health impacts of Agent Orange in Vietnam today?
- How and why did Agent Orange issues become prominent in the 2000s?
- What are the key governmental policies and international NGO interventions about Agent Orange?

Topic 5: Gender and Public Health Issues in Vietnam Today – Reproductive Health Issues

- What health issues do Vietnamese women face today? How are Vietnamese gender roles affecting women's health in contemporary Vietnam?
- What are the key reproductive health challenges in Vietnam?

Topic 6: Public Health Complexity in Globalizing Vietnam – the case of HIV/AIDS

- Why did the Vietnamese government originally see HIV/AIDS as a criminal problem in the 1990s? Where did the stigma originate from and manifest itself? Why was it a problem?
- How did local and international interventions help reframe HIV/AIDS as a public health issue, and help avert a health crisis?

Topic 7: Emerging Health Challenges – New Wealth and New Global Pandemics

- What are emerging discourses on childhood nutrition, growth and childhood obesity?
- How has Vietnam mobilized in the face of global pandemics, such as SARS and Avian Flu? Were these interventions fully successful?
- Are new notions of “health” and well-being emerging as Vietnam is developing economically (in terms of eating, drinking, smoking)?