Program: CET Vietnam: Development Studies
Course Title: Public Health in Vietnam: An Interdisciplinary Approach
Course Code: HC/PBHL 370
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Public Health / Sociology, Gender Studies
Language of Instruction: English
Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description
This seminar introduces students to public health issues in Vietnam, with reference to Southeast Asia and global development problems. The focus is on current health issues and new global pandemics. Students examine key topics in public health, including their challenges, nuances and attempted solutions, in modern-day Vietnam and in other parts of Southeast Asia and the developing world. The course provides students 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
This course provides students with:

- An understanding of key development challenges in Vietnam and Southeast Asia today and how these affect public health and health care.
- An introduction to public health issues in modern Vietnam and their historical origins.
- Analyses of the impacts of economic growth and social change on public health in Vietnam.
- Discussions of local activities related to public health promotion and communication.
- An introduction to key public health research methodologies.

Course Requirements
Active participation is essential in this course. I expect you attend each class and field trip and participate actively in seminar discussions. Course readings average around 50 pages per session and are subject to change depending on students’ interests. Student teamwork will be encouraged to analyze and dissect particular readings. I will also assign some in-class free writing. Multimedia resources will be used to aid class discussions and reflections.
This course is conducted in a seminar format, in addition to lectures. This requires that students come to class prepared to discuss readings. Read carefully and take notes (in the form of questions).
Weekly readings are not long, but they require concentration and effort. In class, we present and discuss readings and your own work. We routinely use the ‘Socratic method’ in class discussion to foster collaborative and creative thinking.
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The short essays provide further opportunities to raise questions, discuss new theories, and connect readings to previous field trips and classes. We will discuss your fieldwork exercises during the seminar after you briefly present them in class.

At the end of the semester, you will write a focused research essay on a public health topic of your choosing (10 double-spaced pages, or around 2500 words). Paper topics will be discussed in advance. You will 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 how you dealt with language and methodological challenges when conducting research.

- Short essay #1: Locating yourself in Vietnam
- Short essay #2: Meta-analysis of Zoonotic infections in Vietnam
- Short essay #3: Literature review
- Final research paper

Methods of Evaluation

The final grade is determined as follows:

- Weekly reflection papers: 30%
- Participation: 30%
- Final research paper: 40%

Primary Texts


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E-learning course – Introduction to Epidemiology  
(https://www.cdc.gov/publichealth101/epidemiology.html)


Hand, Food and Mouth Disease: Situation Updates (29 May 2013).  


“How Vietnam tries to stop false health scares from going viral”, by Mike Ives (Independent UK, 2016)

“Intervention effects from a social marketing campaign to promote HPV vaccination in preteen boys “, by Joan Cates a, Sandra Diehl, Jamie Crandell & Tamera Coyne-Beasley (Vaccine, 32(33), 2014)
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Peter Byass - Twenty Years of Public Health Progress in Vietnam, huffingtonpost.co.uk


“Rethinking Communication in the E-health Era”, by Linda Neuhauser & Gary Kreps (J Health Psychology, 8(1), 2003)


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The Political Economy Of Health Care Reform In Vietnam - Le Thanh Forsberg

The Real Cost of Developing Vietnam, Asia Society https://asiasociety.org/real-cost-developing-vietnam


“WHO Strategic communications framework for effective communications”, by WHO (2017)

“Why health communication is important in public health”, by Rajiv Rimal & Maria Lapinski (2009)


Supplementary Texts
Internet resources and additional articles as provided by instructor

Outline of Course Content
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This course covers approximately one theme every 2 weeks. The order of topics and readings may vary slightly according to your research interests and field visits. Readings are available both electronically and in printed format.

Theme 1: Overview of Public Health and Development Issues in Vietnam
- What are the impacts of globalization on Vietnamese society (since the 1990s)?
- How have these affected public health and health care provision in Vietnam?
- What are the main public health and development issues in Vietnam today?
- How do we 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, as Vietnam emerges from the post-war period?

Theme 2: Introduction to Epidemiology
- Data cleaning
- Create an Epi curve
- Determine mode of spread
- Determine most likely period of exposure

Theme 3: Introduction to Public Health Surveillance
- Define public health surveillance
- Describe the goal of public health surveillance
- Recognize the legal basis for public health surveillance
- Compare active and passive public health surveillance
- Describe the public health surveillance process

Theme 4: Gender and Public Health Today, Part 1 – Reproductive Health Issues
- What are the main health issues that Vietnamese women face today?
- How do Vietnamese gender roles affect women’s health in contemporary Vietnam?
- What are some of the key socioeconomic & reproductive health challenges in Vietnam?

Theme 5: Gender and Public Health Today, Part 2 – Sex Work Issues
- What are the links between sex work and poverty, global inequality, employment opportunities, gender roles and expectations?
- What are the most notable issues about sex work in Vietnam, compared to other Asian neighboring countries?
- How are the sexual minority groups being underrepresented and overshadowed in the general public discourse on sex work?

Theme 6: Public Health Communication
- What is public health communication?
- Why is communication important in improving the public health sector?
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- Communication methods: Shifting from one-way communication towards a more interactive approach.
- How have health communication methods changed over the past few years?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of one-way communication?
- What are the challenges using social media to communicate about health?
- How to make public health communication effective?