



# Principles of International Health

 Study Abroad: Geneva

September-October 2013

## Course Description and Syllabus

**Course dates:** 6 September – 4 October 2013

**Venue:** UniMail Building, University of Geneva

**Mandate:** This course, jointly organized by the Boston University Study Abroad-Geneva and the Division of International and Humanitarian Medicine of the University Geneva

**Organizers:**

**Boston University Geneva Programs**

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**Course description:**

Globalization has increased the ability of people and diseases to travel more widely and rapidly so that a health problem or an outbreak of a new disease, even in a remote country, can rapidly become a global problem. Many examples of this exist, such as the spread of HIV, influenza, drug resistant malaria and tuberculosis. In addition, principles of human rights and international solidarity imply that the health of people in low- and middle income countries is also of concern to populations and professionals of rich countries.

Global Health is a complex area with a broad range of factors affecting whether countries (and areas within countries) have better or worse health outcomes, or higher or lower life expectancies. An easily prevented or treated condition in one country can be a life threatening condition in another. Differences in health conditions (both between and within countries) are affected by many non-health factors, including level of economic development, differences in climate, lifestyle and communications.

This course provides an overview of global health issues mainly from a global perspective, with a focus on selected major topics such as malaria, tuberculosis, health systems, HIV/AIDS, NCDs and maternal and child health. Students will gain an understanding of the main issues in global health based on lectures, readings, documentaries and presentations by experts working in the field.

Background reading for each session will be assigned (relevant journal articles, fact sheets and other documents), to enable students to come to each session with some background on what will be discussed and with points that they would like to explore.

**Course objectives**

1. Understand the major components of global health
2. Understand the major factors affecting global health
3. Understand considerations in planning and implementing health interventions in different socio-economic settings
4. Understand the complexity of the global health context and interaction between major global health actors/organizations

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Describe the complexity of global health
2. Describe certain key concepts in global health
3. Describe the major diseases impacting the health of individuals throughout the world
4. Describe the actors involved in global health

**Methodology:**

1. Readings
2. Class lectures
3. Interactive class discussions with the instructor and guest expert lecturers to better understand the realities of global health in various settings
4. Two exams
5. Preparation of a personal policy paper

**Course requirements, on which evaluation of the student is based, are as follows:**

1. Class participation: 10%
2. Mid-term exam: 25%
3. Final exam: 25%
4. Personal paper for a selected country and program area: 40%
  - a. 5% for the 1-pager
  - b. 35% for the complete paper

**Class Participation:** Class participation is a vital element of this course. All students are expected to raise questions and discuss issues based on the readings, the lectures, and comments from guest lecturers or the instructor. Relevant comments or questions based on past work or academic experiences are encouraged. Class participation also includes any group or individual presentations that are given throughout the course.

Class participation is graded on the quantity and quality of content.

Participation at “A” level is based on the following criteria:

- The participant has insightful comments and questions that prompt on-topic discussion.
- Varying opinions bring richness to discussions. If disagreeing with another class member’s ideas, the participant states his/her disagreement courteously.
- The participant states informed comments and opinions which draw upon relevant readings, lectures, class discussions and/or other experiences. The student’s participation helps clarify or synthesize issues.
- The student’s participation demonstrates that s/he has read the assigned readings with a “critical eye”. Participation should demonstrate not only mastery of the content of the assigned materials but an ability to critically analyze.

Please note that the visiting lecturers are taking time from their busy work schedules to share their expertise, so sessions need to start on schedule. Students are expected to attend each session, but if there are circumstances that will result in an absence or tardy attendance please notify the instructor in advance. Excused absences will only be granted under special conditions and must be pre-arranged ahead of time with the instructor and approved by the Program Director. Any unexcused late arrival or absence will be taken into account when grading class participation.

**Midterm and final exams:**

Both the midterm and final exams are take home exams. Students can refer to course material during their exam, but it is expected that students will not work together on these.

The mid-term exam is due: 23 September at 23:59 Geneva Time

The final exam is due: 4 October at 18:00 Geneva time

These exams will be comprised of two sections. Section 1 worth 50% of the mark will be based on material from the readings, presentations and class discussions. Section 1 will be graded on quality of answer. Section 2: will be an essay type question, comparing or contrasting issues, asking students for their opinion, etc. Section 2 will be graded on clarity and quality of answer.

Indications will be given in the exams as to the expected length of answers.

**Final paper:**

1-pager due: 27 September at 23:59 Geneva time

Final paper due: 11 October at 18:00 Geneva time

The paper should cover a particular program area in a selected country (not more than 2,500 words). This assignment will focus on the ability of the student to prepare a short presentation of a specific health problem in a specific context building on material from the course as well as additional research when necessary. The paper should highlight the specific problem in the country and offer how this could be solved. It should also include what type of organisation(s) might be involved in this solution.

A 1-pager for discussion with the Course Organiser is to be submitted on the 27 September. The student and Course Organiser will then discuss this 1-pager on a one-to-one basis on the 30 September and 1 October.

The final paper is due 11 October. The country will be decided during the second session. This paper should include an overview of the country and health issue chosen. It should highlight why this problem is important in this country versus other health problems. It should then highlight ways of addressing this problem and organisations involved in this and conclude by making recommendations as to which approach and organisation are best suited to address this problem.

The paper will include a bibliography and at least 10 references from peer reviewed journal articles/WHO documents, websites, the lecturers' presentations as well as authoritative class discussions. Sufficient references of adequate quality are required to support arguments. However, as this is not an extensive, in-depth, research paper, it is not expected that there will be a large number of references. Extra credit will not be provided based on the total number of references.

As a general rule, a good paper should convey to the reader that the selected problem is an important one, and that the solution is supported by internationally recognized experts and organizations, is evidence-based, is relevant for the country, feasible to implement, will have or lead to an impact on the lives of a large number of beneficiaries, and will be successful, making the investment of time and effort by the senior official worthwhile.

The paper should show that the student understands the solutions being proposed, the country situation related to the problem addressed by the global program, how the recommendations fit in with country needs, and how the global program or strategy will be adopted or adapted to be relevant to the requirements of the selected country. It should also include an understanding of which organisations might be involved in developing a response to the given problem in the selected country.

Clarity, accuracy and completeness of information and analyses, and provision of relevant authoritative evidence/sources to support arguments, will be considered when grading the paper. In addition, as part of the semester abroad learning experience, it is expected that the student will look into an area of international health new to him/her, building on the topics covered during this course, rather than repeat a topic covered in previously prepared papers.

An electronic version (MS Word document) of the final paper must be submitted through the Blackboard Digital Drop Box. The following formatting of the paper is required:

- Heading at the start of the paper includes student name, full paper title, the number of words, the date, and the course name (Principles of International Health-PH 506e).
- When submitting the paper electronically, include your name and a short summary of the title of the paper in the filename (e.g. DavidBeran-TB-Ethiopia) and also in the subject of the Blackboard Drop Box submission. This makes it easier for the instructor.

The above information and description aims to assist students in preparing their paper and is not intended as a "roadmap" or an outline for the paper. It is expected that all course participants have substantial experience with preparing course papers, so that the above information is complementary to what has been studied before.

**Teaching material:**

Most of the teaching material will be made available on the Blackboard prior to each session in specific folders.

Reading assignments for a particular class session should be completed before class as we will discuss the reading in class and/or the session content will take off from where the text ends. We will usually limit the number of compulsory readings to one or two articles per session. Additional references/websites links/audio-visual material will be provided allowing those willing to deepen their understanding of the issues to do so. These references will also be useful to students to build their arguments for the group discussions and the written assignment. Evidence of having read the weekly assignment before the class discussion will count toward the participation grade.

**Class discussions:**

This course is meant to foster debates and interactions. Students will be asked to work in groups, to synthesize and comment the content of the assigned materials. Individual contributions will also be encouraged and assessed. Students should bring insightful comments and questions that prompt on-topic discussion. Varying opinions bring richness to discussion. This said, we expect students, to state any disagreement or objections to another class member’s idea in a respectful and courteous manner.

**Grading:**

| Letter grade | Quality      | GPA (grade point average) |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| A            | Excellent    | 4                         |
| A-           |              | 3.7                       |
| B+           |              | 3.3                       |
| B            | Very good    | 3.0                       |
| B-           |              | 2.7                       |
| C+           |              | 2.3                       |
| C            | Satisfactory | 2.0                       |
| C-           |              | 1.7                       |
| D+           |              | 1.0                       |
| F            | Low pass     | 0                         |
|              | Fail         |                           |

**A**

This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-**

Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or infelicities of expression.

**B+, B, B-**

This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and syntax.

**C+, C, C-**

Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range. Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a passing grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student's own work except where properly cited.

**D-F**

Work that is fatally flawed in one or more ways, such as: so poorly written as to defy understanding; so insubstantial or irrelevant that it fails to address the subject; is guilty of plagiarism.

Academic code of conduct: Please make sure that you are familiar with the BU Academic Conduct Code which covers cheating, plagiarism and other related topics.  
<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/>

Instructor "Office Hours": For questions that cannot be resolved by email, the course instructor is available to meet with students by appointment to discuss questions or concerns related to the course during the lunch hour of class, before class, some days after class, and sometimes on non-class days. Please send an email to set up an appointment:  
[david.beran@unige.ch](mailto:david.beran@unige.ch)

In addition during the sessions 11, 12 and 14 February the instructor will be available to discuss the 1-pager and any remaining questions relative to the mid-term.

## Course Schedule

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>6 September 2013 – M2160</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Course Introduction; Introduction to Public, International and Global Health</i></b><br>1. Introduction of David Beran, Students and Course<br>2. Discussion of articles on Global Health<br>3. Lecture<br>4. Discussion of assignment for 9 September |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Choose a newspaper article, peer reviewed publication, blog, etc. on a topic that is of interest to you in Global Health for a brief discussion during class   |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>9 September 2013 – M2160</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Health Economics and Healthcare Financing</i></b><br>1. Preparation of group presentations on the Public Health walk<br>2. Presentation in groups<br>3. Lecture on <i>Introduction to Health Economics and Healthcare Financing</i><br>4. Selection of countries for assignments and discussion of group reading presentations (Asia, China, Ghana, and USA case studies) for 10 September |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings and Presentation of pictures and videos from Public Health Walk<br>Selection of country   |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>10 September 2013 – M1170</b>   |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Health Systems</i></b><br>1. Group presentations on case studies<br>2. Lecture on <i>Health Systems</i><br>3. Documentary – Sicko by Michael Moore |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | General Readings<br>Readings and preparation of group work<br>Visit World Health Organization Country page for your chosen country                       |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>11 September 2013 – M1160</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00   |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Inequalities, Social Determinants of Health and Human Rights</i></b><br>1. Group presentations on analysis of Sicko and different health systems presented<br>2. Lecture on <i>Inequalities, Social Determinants of Health and Human Rights</i><br>3. Selection of readings for group presentations |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings, research your country's health system including health financing and preparation of group presentations based on Sicko  |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>12 September 2013 – M1130</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00   |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Actors in Global Health</i></b><br>1. Group presentations on readings<br>2. Lecture <i>The Big 3: HIV, Malaria and TB</i> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings  |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>13 September 2013 – M1160</b>   |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 09:00-12:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Poverty and Development, the Millennium Development Goals and after 2015</i></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lecture on Poverty and Development, the Millennium Development Goals and after 2015</li> <li>2. Presentation Medicines for Malaria Venture</li> </ol> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Visit Medicines for Malaria Venture website  |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>16 September 2013 – M4020</b>   |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b><i>Poverty and Development, the Millennium Development Goals and after 2015</i></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback from Medicines for Malaria presentation</li> <li>2. Continue Lecture on Poverty and Development, the Millennium Development Goals and after 2015</li> <li>3. Presentation GAVI Alliance</li> </ol> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings and visit GAVI Alliance website <b>Mid-term exam due 23 September at 23:59 Geneva time</b>  |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>18 September 2013 – M5250</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00   |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback on GAVI presentation</li> <li>2. Visit to Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria</li> </ol> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings and visit Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria website  |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>20 September 2013</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 09:00-12:00   |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback on GFATM visit</li> <li>2. Visit to WHO</li> </ol> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings  |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>23 September 2013</b>   |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | Independent study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mid-term</li> <li>- One-pager</li> </ul> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | <b>1-pager due 27 September at 23:59 Geneva time</b>   |

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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>25 September 2013 – M3141</b>  |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00   |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | <b>Maternal and Child Health</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback on WHO visit</li> <li>2. Lecture on Maternal and Child Health</li> <li>3. Documentary</li> <li>4. Class discussion</li> </ol> |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | Readings  |



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| <b>Date:</b>        | <b>26 September 2013 – M3341</b>   |
| <b>Time:</b>        | 14:00-17:00  |
| <b>Topic:</b>       | Non Communicable Diseases and their Risk Factors<br>1. Lecture<br>2. Presentation Union for International Cancer Control |
| <b>Assignments:</b> | <b>Readings and visit UICC website Final exam – due 4 October at 18:00 Geneva time</b>                                   |

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| <b>Date:</b>  | <b>30 September – M3141 and 1 October M3389</b> |
| <b>Time:</b>  | 14:00-17:00                                     |
| <b>Topic:</b> | Discussion and feedback on 1-pager              |

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| <b>Date:</b>  | <b>4 October 2013 – M3141</b>       |
| <b>Time:</b>  | 09:00-12:00                         |
| <b>Topic:</b> | Open for discussion; revision; etc. |