

**EPIDEMICS & SOCIETY**  
SOC 598 (Class #85289)      Fall 2007

**Day & Time: Monday 1:40-4:30**

**Room: Coor 5501**

**Instructor:** Dr. Victor Agadjanian

**Office:** Coor 5588

**Office hours:**

Mondays: 10:30-1:00 and by appointment

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**Course description:**

Human history has been marked by countless epidemics that have left profound demographic, epidemiological, economic, and cultural imprints on affected societies. Despite the revolutionary advances of medicine in the past century, many infectious diseases remain widespread and epidemics continue to occur. This course will look at the social dimensions of infectious diseases and epidemics in cross-national settings. We will consider how epidemics reflect and affect the demographics, social structure, economy, and culture of societies, and how societies mobilize their medical, economic, and cultural resources to respond to epidemics. We will focus in particular on the role of socioeconomic inequality—both within and between countries—in how epidemics emerge, spread, and are dealt with. We will pay special attention to social and structural aspects of the AIDS epidemic worldwide. The class sessions will have a seminar format: instead of lectures, we will discuss the readings and their implications.

**Requirements and grading:**

The seminar is fully participatory. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. Each student will be in charge of organizing and leading discussion for one class session. Students will submit reaction papers to each weekly set of readings. In addition, each student will submit a critical literature review on a more specific topic of their interest. There will be no final paper or exam.

The **course grade** will be determined on the following basis:

**Reaction papers (~50%)** A reaction paper is a critical review of the assigned weekly readings. It should be about 3-4 pages long and is due on the day for which the readings are assigned. A reaction paper is not a summary of facts contained in the readings but rather your assessment of the authors' arguments and their contribution to the explanation of issues under consideration.

**Participation in class discussion (~15%)** is an essential part of the course and is expected of all students. Class discussions will be structured around assigned readings. The instructor will make sure that each student has an opportunity to express her/himself in class discussions. Even so, individuals' abilities and willingness to speak in public may differ, and the instructor will make reasonable efforts to accommodate these individual particularities.

**Preparing and leading a class discussion (~10%)** Depending on the number of students involved, each student will be in charge of a class discussion for one class session. This will involve preparing discussion questions based on the assigned readings and leading the class discussion. Students in charge of specific sessions are encouraged to review and share additional readings they might find relevant and interesting.

**Critical literature review (~25%)** This paper should be focused on social dimensions of infectious diseases and epidemics. You can choose a topic or topics that fit your own longer-term research goals, but the review must involve some cross-national, cross-cultural, or historical parallels in issues and processes under consideration. It is expected that your review covers about 15 or more scholarly articles and/or books (scholarly, popular non-fiction, or fiction), not counting readings assigned for the class (if you choose to include them). If you are reviewing articles, you must attach the abstracts to your review. The students must get the instructor's approval for his/her topic by October 1. Each student will make a brief presentation on her/his paper on the last day of classes and turn in the typed version by the same day. The review should be about 15 pages long (excluding references).

**Readings (not in Bookstore but can be purchased online, etc; see Instructor if you need help)**

1. Camus, Albert. *The Plague*. McGraw Hill College Division (1965 or any other edition)
2. Farmer, Paul. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Updated Edition. Univ. California Press (2001)

*Additional readings: Available online free of charge or will be provided by the instructor.*

**Main topics and reading assignments**  
(may be modified with sufficient advanced notice)

**1. (Aug 20) Course overview**

**2. (Aug 27) Epidemics and Infectious Diseases in History**

Boccaccio, G. 14<sup>th</sup> century. *The Decameron*. First Day, Introduction

<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/decameron/engDecShowText.php?myID=d01intro&expand=day01> (read through [097])

McNeill, William H. *Plagues and Peoples*. Anchor. (1998) Ch. 4, 161-207, Ch. 5, 208-241 McNeill, Ch. 6, 243-295

**3. (Sep 3) Labor Day (no classes)**

**4. (Sep 10) The epidemiological transition and its implications**

Omran, A. 1971. "The epidemiological transition." *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 49(4):509-538.

Olshansky, S. J. and B. Ault. 1986. "The fourth stage of the epidemiologic transitions" *The Milbank Quarterly* 64 (3): 355-91.

Vallin, J. and F. Meslé. 2004. "Convergences and divergences in mortality: A new approach of health transition"

Demographic Research, Special Collection 2, Article 2, <http://www.demographic-research.org/special/2/2/>

Riley, J. C. 2005. "The timing and pace of health transitions around the world." *Population and Development Review* 31 (4): 741-764.

Caldwell, J. 1986. "Routes to low mortality in poor countries." *Population and Development Review* 12(2): 171-220.

Soares, R. "On the determinants of mortality reductions in the developing world." *Population and Development Review* 33(2): 253-288

"The maladies of affluence" 2007. *The Economist*, Aug 11-1, pp. 49-50

**5. (Sep 17) Epidemics and Infectious Diseases in the Modern World: old, new, emerging, and reemerging**

Lashley, F. and J. Durham (eds). 2002. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, New York: Springer. Ch. 1, 2, 3, pp. 3-70.

Knobler, S., A. Mahmoud, S. Lemon (eds). 2006. *The Impact of Globalization on Infectious Disease Emergence and Control*. Washington, DC : National Academies Press. Ch. 1 (pp. 21-48), Ch. 2 (49-79) [available electronically through ASU library]

Farmer, P. 2001. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Updated Edition. Univ. California Press, Ch. 2 "Rethinking 'Emerging Infectious Diseases'" pp. 37-58.

Fauci, A. S. 2001. "Infectious Diseases: Considerations for the 21st Century" *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 32:675-685

**6. (Sep 24) HIV/AIDS in focus**

UNAIDS. 2006 Report on the global AIDS Epidemic [www.unaids.org/en/HIV\\_data/2006GlobalReport/default.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/HIV_data/2006GlobalReport/default.asp)

Iliffe, J. 2006. *A History of the African AIDS Epidemic*. Ohio University Press. Ch. 7 (pp.58-64)

Caldwell, J. 2000. "Rethinking the African AIDS epidemic." *Population and Development Review* 26(1):117-135.

Gisselquist, D. et al. 2002. "HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa not explained by sexual or vertical transmission" *International Journal of STD & AIDS* 13: 657-666.

Zhang KL. Ma SJ. Xia DY. 2004. Epidemiology of HIV and sexually transmitted infections in China. *Sexual Health*. 1(1):39-46.

Yan X. et al. 2007. "Expansion of HIV/AIDS in China: Lessons from Yunnan Province." *Social Science & Medicine* 64(3) 665-675.

Steinbrook, R. 2007. "HIV in India--a complex epidemic". *New England Journal of Medicine*. 356(11):1089-93

Kelly J.A. and Amirkhanian, Y.A. 2003. "The newest epidemic: a review of HIV/AIDS in Central and Eastern Europe" *International Journal of STD & AIDS* 14(6): 361-371.

**7. (Oct 1) Demographic, Social, and Economic Impact of infectious diseases and epidemics**

Heuveline, P. 2004. "Impact of the HIV epidemic on population and household structure: the dynamics and evidence to date" *AIDS* 18(suppl 2):S45-S53

Lewis, J.C., C. Ronsmans, A.C. Ezech, S.Gregson. 2004. "The population impact of HIV on fertility in sub-Saharan Africa" *AIDS* 18 (Supplement) 2:S35-S43.

Mtika, M.M. 2001. "The AIDS epidemic in Malawi and its threat to household food security" *Human Organization* 60(2):178-188.

- Young, A. 2005. "The gift of the dying: The Tragedy of AIDS and the welfare of future African generations" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120 (2): 423-464.
- Bray, R. 2003. "Predicting the social consequences of orphanhood in South Africa" *African Journal of AIDS Research* 2(1): 39-55.
- Sachs, J. and P. Malaney. 2002. "The economic and social burden of malaria" *Nature* 415 (Feb): 680-5.
- Blanc, L. and M. Uplekar. 2003. "The Present global burden of tuberculosis" Ch.5 pp. 95-111. In M. Gandy and A. Zumla (eds) *The Return of the White Plague: Global Poverty and the New Tuberculosis*. Verso.
- Anonymous. 2006. "Economic and social impact of epidemic and pandemic influenza." *Vaccine*. 24(44-46):6776-8.

### 8. (Oct 8) Epidemics and structural inequalities

- Hunt, C.W. 1996. "Social vs. biological: theories on the transmission of AIDS in Africa." *Social Science & Medicine* 42 (9):1283-96.
- Stillwaggon, E. 2002. "HIV/AIDS in Africa: Fertile Terrain" *Journal of Development Studies* 38 (6): 1 - 22.
- Gilbert, L. and L.Walker. 2002. "Treading the path of least resistance: HIV/AIDS and social inequalities—a South African case study" *Social Science & Medicine* 54(2): 1093-1110
- Hunter, M. 2007. "The changing political economy of sex in South Africa: The significance of unemployment and inequalities to the scale of the AIDS pandemic" *Social Science & Medicine* 64 (3): 689-700.
- Wojcicki, JM. 2005. Socioeconomic status as a risk factor for HIV infection in women in East, Central and Southern Africa: a systematic review. *Journal of Biosocial Science*. 37(1):1-36.
- Farmer, P. 2001. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Ch. 3 (pp. 59-93) and Ch. 5 (pp. 127-149). Updated Edition. Univ. California Press.

### 9. (Oct 15) Epidemics and social inequalities (cont.)

- Mamelund, S-E. 2006. "A socially neutral disease? Individual social class, household wealth and mortality from Spanish influenza in two socially contrasting parishes in Kristiania 1918–19." *Social Science & Medicine* 62(4): 923-940.
- Grineski, S. E., B. Bolin, and V. Agadjanian. 2006 "Tuberculosis and urban growth: Class, race, and disease in early Phoenix, Arizona, USA" *Health and Place* 12 (4): 603-616.
- Thorson, A. and Diwan, V.K. 2003. "Gender and tuberculosis" Ch.3 pp. 55-69. In M. Gandy and A. Zumla (eds) *The Return of the White Plague: Global Poverty and the New Tuberculosis*. Verso.
- Farmer, P. 2001. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Updated Edition. Univ. California Press, Ch. 7, 8, pp.185-261

### 10. (Oct 22) Local perceptions and experiences of infections disease and epidemics

- Oppong, J.R. and E. Kalipeni. 2004. "Perceptions and misperceptions of AIDS in Africa" In E. Kalipeni et al. (eds) *HIV and AIDS in Africa: Beyond Epidemiology*. Pp. 47-56
- Liddell, C., L. Barrett, and M. Bydawell. 2005. "Indigenous representations of illness and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa" *Social Science & Medicine* 60: 691-700.
- Farmer, P. 2001. *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Updated Edition. Univ. California Press, Ch. 6 "Sending Sickness" pp. 158-183.
- Gausset, Q. 2001. "AIDS and cultural practices in Africa: the case of the Tonga (Zambia)" *Social Science & Medicine* 52 (4): 509-518.
- Stansbury, J. P. and M. Sierra. 2004. "Risks, stigma and Honduran Garífuna conceptions of HIV/AIDS." *Social Science & Medicine* 59(3): 457-471.
- Yanqiu, R.Z. 2007. "If you get AIDS... You have to endure it alone": Understanding the social constructions of HIV/AIDS in China. *Social Science & Medicine* 65 (2): 284-295
- Cooper D. et al. 2007. "Life is still going on": Reproductive intentions among HIV-positive women and men in South Africa." *Social Science & Medicine* 65 (2): 274-283.

### 11. (Oct 29) Confronting epidemics: individual and community responses

- Parker, R., D. Easton, and C. Klein. 2000. "Structural barriers and facilitators in HIV prevention: A review." *AIDS* 14 (suppl.): 1522-32.
- Epstein, Helen. 2003. "The Invisible Cure: AIDS in South Africa." *The New York Review of Books*
- Easterly, W. 2007. "How, and How Not, to Stop AIDS in Africa" *The New York Review of Books* (Review of H. Epstein, *The Invisible Cure: Africa, the West, and the Fight Against AIDS*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.) 54 (13), August 16.
- Baylies, C. 2002. "The impact of AIDS on rural households in Africa: A shock like any other?" *Development and Change* 33 (4): 611-632.

- Watkins, S.C. 2004. "Navigating the AIDS epidemic in rural Malawi" *Population and Development Review* 30(4): 673-706.
- Agadjanian, V. 2002. "Informal social networks and epidemic prevention in a third world context: Cholera and HIV/AIDS compared." Pp. 201-221 In *Advances In Medical Sociology*, Vol.8 (Social Networks and Health), edited by J. A. Levy and B. A. Pescosolido. JAI-Elsevier Science.
- Hearst, N. and S. Chen. 2004. "Condom promotion for AIDS prevention in the developing world: Is it working?" *Studies in Family Planning* 35 (1): 39-47.
- Mantell, J. et al. 2006. "The promises and limitations of female-initiated methods of HIV/STI protection" *Social Science & Medicine* 63(8): 1998-2009.
- Dworkin, S. L. Ehrhardt, A. A. 2007. "Going beyond 'ABC' to include 'GEM': critical reflections on progress in the HIV/AIDS epidemic." *American Journal of Public Health*. 97(1):13-18

## 12. (Nov 5) Confronting epidemics: Policies and politics

- Garrett, L. 2007. "The challenge of global health" *Foreign Affairs* (January-February)
- Patterson, A.S. 2006. "The African state and the AIDS pandemic" Ch. 2 (pp.21-58) in *The Politics of AIDS in Africa*, Lynne Rienner.
- Patterson, A.S. 2006. "External donors and political commitment" Ch. 2 (pp.21-58) in *The Politics of AIDS in Africa*, Lynne Rienner.
- Parkhurst, J. O. and L. Lush. 2004. The Political Environment of HIV: Lessons from a Comparison of Uganda and South Africa. *Social Science and Medicine* 59(9):1913-1924.
- Parker, R. 2002. The Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic, Structural Inequalities, and the Politics of International Health. *American Journal of Public Health* 92(3): 343-347
- Fenton, L. 2004. Preventing HIV/AIDS through poverty reduction: the only sustainable solution? *The Lancet* 364 (9440): 1186-1187.
- Smith, R. D. 2006. "Responding to global infectious disease outbreaks: Lessons from SARS on the role of risk perception, communication and management" *Social Science & Medicine* 63 (12): 3113-23.
- Hongyi, Lai. 2004. "Local Management of SARS in China." Ch.3 In J. Wong and Z. Yongnian *The SARS Epidemic: Challenges to China's Crisis Management*. Singapore: World Scientific. Pp. 43-97
- Suarez, M. R. et al. 2005. "Is what I have just a cold or is it dengue? Addressing the gap between the politics of dengue control and daily life in Villavicencio-Colombia" *Social Science & Medicine* 61 (2): 495-502.

## 13. (Nov 12) Another kind of epidemic

- James, P. T., R. Leach, E. Kalamara and M. Shayeghi. 2001. "The Worldwide Obesity Epidemic" *Obesity Research* 9:5228-5233.
- Finkelstein, Eric A. et al. 2005. "Economic causes and consequences of obesity." *Annual Review of Public Health*. 26: 239-57.
- Christakis, N. A., J. H. Fowler. 2007. The spread of obesity in a large social network over 32 years. *New England Journal of Medicine* 357(4): 370-379.
- Kaufman, L. and A. Karpati. 2007. "Understanding the sociocultural roots of childhood obesity: Food practices among Latino families of Bushwick, Brooklyn." *Social Science & Medicine* 64 (11): 2177-2188.
- Gordon, R.A. 2000. "Dimensions of an epidemic" Chapter 3. *Eating Disorders: Anatomy of a Social Epidemic*. Oxford-Blackwell.
- Lee S. 1996. "Reconsidering the status of anorexia nervosa as a western culture-bound syndrome." *Social Science & Medicine* 42(1): 21-34.
- Byers, T. and R.L. Sedjo. 2007. "Public health response to the obesity epidemic: too soon or too late?" *Journal of Nutrition* 137(2): 488-92
- Oliver, J.E. 2006. "The politics of pathology: how obesity became an epidemic disease." *Perspectives in Biology & Medicine*. 49(4): 611-27.

## 14. (Nov 19) Social construction of epidemic

Camus, A. *The Plague*. Part 1 pp. 3-59; Part 2 pp. 61-150.

## 15. (Nov 26) Social construction of epidemic (cont.)

Camus, A. *The Plague*. Part 3 151-168, P. 4 pp. 169-240; P.5 pp. 241-278.

## 16. (Dec 3) Students' presentations of literature reviews. *Papers are due*. Course conclusions