



## HED209/SOC380 Health Issues in Developing Countries

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### Course Description

This course is intended to introduce students with little or no exposure to developing countries to the major issues in international public health and developing countries. The course will orientate students and broaden their perspectives on health care and public health in countries and cultures substantially different from more developed countries while focusing in and using as a specific example the country of Ecuador. The course will be taught in a seminar format and will stress practical illustrations of course topics through guest speakers and field study.

### Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Appreciate a short history of public health.
- Understand the elements of primary health care.
- Discuss the ultimate determinants of health, including the connections between poverty, income inequality and health. We will explore the definition of equity as "the right to the highest attainable standard of health as indicated by the health status of the most socially advantaged group. We will additionally look at the larger roles that poverty and education play on the health of individuals & societies.
- Recognize & describe the many social and cultural factors that affect health and health care, such as various cultural beliefs about the etiology of disease.
- Appreciate demographics and the demographic transition. We will further consider the causes of, and controversies associated with, population issues, including the social, economic, and health consequences and then define what roles reproductive health programs can play to address these.
- Explain the structure of health services in developing countries.
- Describe the most common worldwide infectious and tropical diseases, especially ones that affect Ecuador.
- Appreciate the basics of health economics.
- Describe the many connections between individual & community health and the larger development picture. We will cover the economic and political contexts in which people live their lives and how these, both local and large-scale forces of structural violence (inequity, ad-hoc apartheid and marginalization, racism and gender discrimination) impact health and development.
- Understand how international development and the environment that shapes and influences its policy, such as the many contrasting policies of NGOs, lending agencies and donor institution, affects the health outcomes of both societies and individuals. Throughout we will illustrate these ideas in the Ecuador context.

### Exams/Grades

The grading will be based on student presentations, class participation, and a final research paper that exemplifies knowledge of basic public health issues in Ecuador.