

GOV200X – The Politics of Plague
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Social Science and Policy Studies Department
Sample Syllabus

Course Information

Professor Patricia Stapleton
#GOV200X #PoliticsOfPlague

Course Description

Black Death. Cholera. Smallpox. Spanish flu. AIDS. Swine flu. Ebola. Humans have been the victims of infectious diseases across history, geography, and cultures. But what elevates an outbreak to the level of an epidemic or a pandemic? And when should the state step in? This class explores how states respond to epidemics. The course will be split into four modules for advanced analysis. The first section will focus on understanding disease in the context of public policy and international relations studies. Then, students will perform in-depth studies of three major outbreaks. Through readings, lectures, class activities, and research, students will learn the historical basis of state response to epidemics. They will apply international relations theories and concepts to the three case studies, in addition to developing analytic and research skills to engage effectively with the debates in contemporary scholarship on public health issues and risk assessment and management strategies in public policy. Students will explore the role of government in addressing public health threats, as well as how public health is a crucial component of national security. Recommended background: GOV1303 or GOV1320 and an understanding of basic public policy, both in the US and on an international scale.

Assessment Statement & Learning Objectives

Your understanding of the course material will be evaluated through your completed reading responses, disease profiles, final paper, and presentation. At the end of the term you will be able to: hold an informed discussion on current public health issues with emphasis on infectious disease, understand the history of state response to epidemics and public health institutional development, and produce and present academic research on state preparedness and response to an outbreak.

Required Texts:

There is **one required book** to purchase for this course.

Howard Markel. *When Germs Travel: Six Major Epidemics that Have Invaded American and the Fears They Have Unleashed*. Vintage Books, 2005.

The book is available at the [campus bookstore](#).

The majority of your required readings will be kept on reserve at or are electronically available through the Gordon Library. Additional materials are also posted to [Canvas](#).

Several videos from the [“Epidemics - the Dynamics of Infectious Diseases”](#), a Coursera offering, are posted to our Canvas site. They are marked as (video, Canvas).

Students should regularly access a news source (print, online, and/or television) to keep up-to-date with current affairs related to public health issues. Suggested sources: [The New York Times](#), [The International Herald Tribune](#), [The Washington Post](#), or the [BBC](#). Students who have subscriptions to any news source are encouraged to set up email notifications when epidemic-related key words appear in-text. In addition, I frequently re/tweet materials that are related to the course. Students may find those sources by searching: #GOV200X and #PoliticsOfPlague on Twitter.

Course Requirements

Plagiarism Tutorial	5% of Class Grade
Reader Responses (5)	15% of Class Grade
Disease Profiles (5)	15% of Class Grade
Final Presentation	15% of Class Grade
Draft of Paper	15% of Class Grade
Final Paper	20% of Class Grade
Attendance/Participation	15% of Class Grade

<u>Calendar</u>	
The reading assignment listed under a given day is <u>due on that day</u> , i.e. the work listed for Class 2 should be finished before class that day.	
MODULE 1: Public Health & Epidemics	
Class 1 Intro	Review of syllabus; Review of assignment guidelines; In-class epidemic activity.
Class 2 Background to Epidemics	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapters 1 & 2 of <i>World War Z</i> by Max Brooks (resv); - 1.IntroToEpidemics (video, Canvas); - 2.Infection&Disease (video, Canvas); - Introduction (pp.1-3) & part of Chapter 1 (p. 5-20: stop at “Foundations of Health Statistics and Epidemiology”) in <i>The New Public Health: An Introduction for the 21st Century</i> by Theodore H. Tulchinsky & Elena A. Varavikova (eGordon). <p>Assignment: Plagiarism tutorial.</p>
Class 3 Infectious Disease Transmission	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1st part of Chapter 2 (p. 55-76; stop at “Selective Primary Care”) in <i>The New Public Health: An Introduction for the 21st Century</i> by Theodore H. Tulchinsky & Elena A. Varavikova (eGordon); - 3.CriticalCommunitySize (video, Canvas); - 4.Eradication&Elimination (video, Canvas); - Introduction, Chapter 1: Facing Tuberculosis (WGT); - Kenneth S. Sherrill, Carolyn M. Somerville, and Robert W. Bailey, “What Political Science Is Missing by Not Studying AIDS,” <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Dec., 1992): 688-693 (eGordon). <p>Assignment: Disease Profile #1: Tuberculosis</p>

MODULE 2: Plague	
Class 4 Ethics & Epidemics	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michael J. Selgelid, “Ethics, Tuberculosis and Globalization,” <i>Public Health Ethics</i>, vol.1, no.1 (2008): 10-20 (eGordon); - Chapter 4: Lice, Typhus, and Riots on the Texas-Mexico Border (WGT); - Chapter 2: Bubonic Plague Visits SF’s Chinatown (WGT); - 5.BubonicPlague (video, Canvas). <p>Assignment: Disease Profile #2: Typhus Reading Response #1: What are vector-borne diseases and how do they play a role in human health?</p>
Class 5 Case Study: Plague	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kenneth L. Gage and Michael Y. Kosoy, “Natural History of Plague: Perspectives from More than a Century of Research,” <i>Annu. Rev. Entomol.</i>, Vol. 50 (2005): 505–28 (eGordon); - Chapter 5: Bubonic Plague (p. 68-82) in <i>Twelve Diseases that Changed Our World</i> by Irwin W. Sherman (resv). <p>Assignment: Disease Profile #3: Plague</p>
Class 6 Impacts on Public Health	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Samuel K. Cohn, Jr., “The Black Death: End of a Paradigm,” <i>The American Historical Review</i>, Vol. 107, No. 3 (June 2002): 703-738 (eGordon); - Remainder of Chapter 1 (p. 20-55) in <i>The New Public Health: An Introduction for the 21st Century</i> by Theodore H. Tulchinsky & Elena A. Varavikova (eGordon); - Robert M. Swenson, “Plagues, History, and AIDS,” <i>The American Scholar</i>, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Spring 1988):183-200 (eGordon). <p>Assignment: Reading Response #2: How did Black Death in the mid-1300s impact state responses to epidemics in the modern era?</p>
MODULE 3: HIV/AIDS	
Class 7 Case Study: AIDS	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 11: AIDS: the 21st Century Plague (p. 68-82) in <i>Twelve Diseases that Changed Our World</i> by Irwin W. Sherman (resv); - Kevin M. De Cock, Harold W. Jaffe, and James W. Curran, “The Evolving Epidemiology of HIV/AIDS,” <i>AIDS</i>, Vol. 26 (2012): 1205–1213 (eGordon); - “Who Was Ryan White?”: listen to the 5 audio clips posted on http://hab.hrsa.gov/about/hab/ryanwhite.html; - Marcus Gilmer, “Remembering Ryan White, 25 Years after His Death,” <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>, April 8, 2015. http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Remembering-Ryan-White-25-years-after-his-death-6184331.php <p>Assignment: Disease Profile #4: HIV/AIDS</p>

<p>Class 8 Global Response to Epidemic</p>	<p>Readings: - 1st part of Chapter 11: Hatari Vinidogodogo (Danger: A Very Little Thing) (p. 281-334) in <i>The Coming Plague</i> by Laurie Garrett (resv); - President William J. Clinton, “Turning the Tide on the AIDS Pandemic,” <i>The New England Journal of Medicine</i>, Vol. 348 (May 2003): 1800-1802 (eGordon).</p> <p>Assignment: Reading Response #3: How can stigma related to a disease affect public health responses to epidemics?</p>
<p>Class 9 AIDS in Africa</p>	<p>Readings: - 2nd part of Chapter 11: Hatari Vinidogodogo (Danger: A Very Little Thing) (p. 334-389) in <i>The Coming Plague</i> by Laurie Garrett (resv); - Kevin M. De Cock, Dorothy Mbori-Ngacha, and Elizabeth Marum, “Shadow on the continent: public health and HIV/AIDS in Africa in the 21st century,” <i>The Lancet</i>, 360 (2002): 67–72 (eGordon); - Gregg Gonsalves and Peter Staley, “Panic, Paranoia, and Public Health – The AIDS Epidemic’s Lessons for Ebola,” <i>The New England Journal of Medicine</i>, Vol. 371 (December 2014): 2348-2349 (eGordon).</p> <p>Assignment: Reading Response #4: How can delayed response to an outbreak impact transmission and attempts at eradication?</p>
<p>MODULE 4: Ebola</p>	
<p>Class 10 Disease in Developing World</p> <p><i>Final assignment distributed.</i></p>	<p>Readings: - Chapter 7: N’zara: Lassa, Ebola, and the Developing World’s Economic and Social Policies (p. 192-221) in <i>The Coming Plague</i> by Laurie Garrett (resv); - 6.Surveillance&Disclosure (video, Canvas); - WHO Fact Sheet: Ebola http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/ - WHO Timeline: Ebola Outbreaks http://www.who.int/features/ebola/storymap/en/</p> <p>Assignment: Disease Profile #5: Lassa</p>
<p>Class 11 Case Study: Ebola</p>	<p>Readings: - Selections from <i>Ebola</i> (p.72-97; p.105-111) by David Quammen (resv); - 7.EbolaOutbreak (video, Canvas); - World Bank Group, “The Economic Impact of Ebola on Sub-Saharan Africa: Updated Estimates for 2015,” January 20, 2015 (Canvas); - “The Politics and Policy of Ebola,” <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i>, Vol. 48, Issue 01 (January 2015): 3-18 (eGordon).</p> <p>Assignment: Disease Profile #6: Ebola Reading Response #5: How do levels of development impact the spread of disease?</p>

<p>Class 12 Global Public Health & Rights</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charles B. Smith et al., “Are There Characteristics of Infectious Diseases that Raise Special Ethical Issues?” <i>Developing World Bioethics</i>, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004): 1-16 (eGordon); - 8.Movement (video, Canvas); - Andrew Lakoff, “Two Regimes of Global Health,” <i>Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development</i>, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Fall 2010): 59-79 (eGordon); - Annette Rid and Ezekiel J. Emanuel, “Ethical considerations of experimental interventions in the Ebola outbreak,” <i>The Lancet</i>, Vol. 384, Issue 9957 (November 2014): 1896–1899 (eGordon); - Mit Philips and Áine Markham, “Ebola: a failure of international collective action,” <i>The Lancet</i>, Vol. 384, Issue 9949, (Sept–Oct 2014): 1181 (eGordon); - 9.SocChallengesEradication (video, Canvas). <p>Assignment:</p> <p>Reading Response #6: How should states balance public health concerns with civil rights of individuals? <i>Initial draft of paper due.</i></p>
<p>Class 13 Global Health Security & Bioterrorism</p>	<p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steven J. Hoffman, “The evolution, etiology and eventualities of the global health security regime,” <i>Health Policy and Planning</i> vol. 25 (2010): 510-522 (eGordon); - Naveen Gunaratne, “The Ebola Virus and the Threat of Bioterrorism,” <i>The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs</i>, Vol. 39, no. 1 (Jan. 2015): 63-76 (Canvas).
<p>Class 14 Presentations</p>	<p><i>Final papers and presentations due.</i></p>