

# INTL 4615: The Politics of Disease Control

University of Georgia

Fall 2020, T & Th 12:30am-1:45pm

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Office Hours:	By appointment
Classroom:	MLC 153

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## Welcome!

This is a class about how governments solve (or fail to solve) a core problem facing any society - how to limit the damaging effects of disease. Recent global epidemics like Ebola and Zika have demonstrated that disease can threaten social order and prosperity. What may be harder to perceive is the crucial and complex role that governments play in preventing and controlling disease. Our purpose will be to better understand the link between political institutions and disease outcomes. We begin by asking why disease is such a difficult social problem. We then use contemporary and historical examples of successful and failed attempts at disease control to understand how governments respond in the face of this challenge.

**THIS COURSE WILL NOT COVER THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC AND IT IS NOT A GOOD TOPIC FOR ANY OF YOUR PAPERS!**

## How will you be graded?

The bulk of this course will focus on short writing assignments (2pages). These are designed to help you hone the practical and applicable skill of concisely presenting a subjective analysis on an event and the response to that event. Please note that I said subjective and not objective. In all of the writing assignments I

am looking for you to display a perspective and back up your view with solid evidence. These papers will be due by 5pm on the Friday of the week that they are assigned.

The short papers will in many ways serve as practice for the final paper and presentation. For the final paper and presentation you will produce a five (5) page paper examining a country's response to an epidemic and what political and policy factors led to failure and success. Additionally, you will have to give a 5 minute presentation on the case.

Table 1: Assignments

Item	Prop. of grade
Country Briefs (5)	50%
Final Paper	30%
Participation	20%

## Ground rules

You are responsible for being self-motivated, self-directed, active learners. I expect you to comply with university policy and use common sense. You should complete all of the course assignments and participate fully in all of our activities. No hate speech will be tolerated in any form.

## Goals and teaching philosophy

When this course is finished, you should:

- Understand how social choice concepts apply to disease control
- Be familiar with a wide range of examples of disease control, focusing on the role of governance
- Improve your ability to think critically about these topics

As your professor, it is my responsibility to create an environment that fosters your learning. This includes keeping materials up to date on the course etc, and otherwise providing a well-organized course. You are responsible for taking advantage of that environment. If any aspect of the course is impeding your learning, please communicate that to me in whatever way you feel most comfortable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A note about my name: Feel free to call me Jeff or Mr. Auerbach

## How Class is Going to Work

Since the class has to be split up we are going to use our in-class time pretty much exclusively for discussion. There will be a heavier than normal reading load and you will be expected to complete these readings in the time when you otherwise would be in class and we will discuss them in class. Some weeks there will be notes sheets that go along with the readings to help you understand them.

For those of you who are not able to make it to class for any reason, there is another option to take care of your participation credit. You are also able to turn in a two page summary of that weeks readings. The summary should include what made sense about the readings, what did not, what questions you have, and what it made you think of. You are also encouraged to critique the readings. These reading summaries should be emailed to me directly and you will not be given a grade for each individual summary, but if there are specific things issues, I will let you know.

## Country Briefs

The goal of these country briefs is to help you develop a real world skill. These papers will be approximately 2 pages long and focus on the response of a single country to a disease. These papers are not intended to be completely objective and they should not be. As with all papers please use 12pt type and 1" margins - NO FUNNY BUSINESS (and yes, you know what funny business is).

In these papers you should examine one country and its response to one disease. These papers should look at what they did right, what they did wrong, and what lessons we can take away for future disease outbreaks. In these papers I want to hear your opinions, I am not interested in what other people think, but what you think. This means that I really do not want your citations to interfere with your writing and I do not care what style you use. Your thoughts and opinions are what is most important to me in these papers - telling me what other people think is not other same thing.

## Final Paper

The final paper is essentially an in-depth version of the country brief, but it should be about five pages long. Additionally, the longer final paper should bring in other countries' responses in order to create a comparative. As with the country briefs, this should contain a viewpoint and your own opinion backed by facts, data, and sound arguments. Again, I do not care about citation styles, but make sure that citations do not get in the way of clarity and displaying a coherent viewpoint.

## **Post-Thanksgiving**

As you know, we will be shifting to distance learning after Thanksgiving. This will only effect the last week of class which will be held over Zoom to discuss the last readings. I am unsure how office hours will work after Thanksgiving, but I am always available over Zoom and email.

# Course Schedule

Most readings will be available via UGA's electronic course reserves system. Please let me know if you have trouble locating the readings.

## Section 1: Introductions, Social Science and Public Health

### Week 1 (8/20): Getting to know you

- Syllabus and introductions

### Week 2 (8/24): Social Science and Public Health

- Social Science and Public Health - Public health and public action

## Section 2: Vaccinations

### Week 3 (8/31): Liberty and Health

- Pox of Liberty Chapter 4

### Week 4 (9/7): Modern Problems

- Obaro and Palmer (2003) & Nyhan and Reifler (2015)

### Week 5 (9/14): Modern Anti-Vaxxers

- Why is Measles Back - The Atlantic & Are Anti-Vaxxers Conscientious Objectors - The Atlantic

## Section 3: Politics of Hiding Disease

### Week 6 (9/21): Dictatorships and Disease

- Ross (2006) & Frerichs (2016) - Introduction

### Week 7 (9/28): Pellagra in the South

- Bollett (1992) & Troesken and Clay (2019)

## **Week 8 (10/5): HIV/AIDS in Marginalized Communities**

- Francis (2012) - Deadly AIDS Policy Failure by the Highest Levels of the US Government: A Personal Look Back 30 Years Later for Lessons to Respond Better to Future Epidemics & Yin and Couzin (2019) - HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination in China

## **Section 4: Public Works and Health**

### **Week 9 (10/12): The Basics**

- Gaspari and Woolfe (1985) & Troesken (2005) - Introduction

### **Week 10 (10/19): Public Works and Voting**

- Cutler and Miller (2008) & Miller (2008)

### **Week 11 (10/26): Power to the People**

- Lewis (2019)

## **Section 5: Democracy and Health**

### **Week 12 (11/2): Public Action in Health**

- Dreze and Sen (1988) - Introduction & Chapter 5

### **Week 13 (11/9): Health and Democracy**

- Kudamatsu (2012) & Blaydes and Kayser (2010)

### **Week 14 (11/16): Vacation**

- NO CLASS

## **Section 6: Opioids in the Mainstream**

### **Week 15 (11/30):**

- Deaths of Despair

### **Week 16 (12/7): Office Hours**

- Let's set up a zoom

## Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.