

INTL 4615e: The Politics of Disease Control

University of Georgia

Spring 2021, Fully online

Instructor:	Micah Gell-Redman
Email:	mgredman@uga.edu
Website:	micah-gr.github.io
Office Hours:	By appointment

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. The current global pandemic has demonstrated that disease can threaten social order and prosperity. It has also highlighted 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.

How will you be graded?

The general approach for this fully online course is close, guided reading. Assigned readings are paired with handouts. Each handout poses a series of questions designed to deepen your engagement with the concepts. Close and continued review of the handouts should be your main method of study. Allow me to emphasize - The handouts are your guide to prepare for the assignments and exams. To accompany the handouts, you will also find lecture slides and recordings. All of this material is organized for you on ELC.

Slightly more than half of your grade will be determined by brief writing tasks labeled participation assignments (abbreviated as PA). The date for submitting

Table 1: Assignments

Item	Prop. of grade	Date due
Participation Assignment 1	10%	Jan 22
Participation Assignment 2	5%	Jan 26
Participation Assignment 3	5%	Feb 2
Participation Assignment 4	5%	Feb 9
Participation Assignment 5	5%	Feb 16
Exam 1	15%	Feb 25
Participation Assignment 6	5%	Mar 9
Participation Assignment 7	5%	Mar 16
Participation Assignment 8	5%	Mar 23
Exam 2	15%	Apr 1
Participation Assignment 9	5%	Apr 20
Participation Assignment 10	5%	Apr 27
Exam 3	15%	May 3

each of these assignments is listed in [Table 1](#). Participation assignments will be implemented as quizzes on ELC. Rather than a standard quiz, these assignments are invitations for you to share your thinking about the material. However, this does not mean that a perfect score on each assignment is guaranteed. I will expect you to demonstrate deep engagement with and careful thinking about the course material. Watch the general information tab of ELC for a rubric and further instructions.

The course material is divided into four modules. At the end of modules 2, 3 and 4, there will be a multiple choice exam. These exams will be implemented on ELC on dates listed in [Table 1](#). Each exam counts for 15% of your grade. No makeups will be offered for exams. If you have a conflict on one of the dates when an exam is offered, please let me know immediately. Watch ELC for further information on grading for the assignments and exams.

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. A complete list of the course policies is posted on my website.

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 ELC, 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, I hope you will let me know. You can always email me with questions, or to set up a virtual office hours appointment. ¹

Course Schedule

Please review [Table 2](#) closely. It contains the complete schedule for the semester. The table shows, for each range of dates, which will be the main reading to review, and which, if any assignments, will be due. Complete citation information for each of the readings is provided in the references section. Consult ELC for further information. Note that most readings will be available via UGA's electronic course reserves system (password: pandemic). Readings marked with the * are available on ELC. Please let me know if you have trouble locating the readings. The week numbers provided in the table are for ease of reference only, and do not correspond to the university schedule. Weeks marked with the † contain university designated holidays or instructional breaks.

¹A note about my name: Feel free to call me Micah or Professor Redman or Professor Gell-Redman.

Table 2: Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings	Assign.
Module 1: Foundations				
1	Jan 13-15	Introduction	Krugman (1995)*	None
2	Jan 19-22 [†]	Collective action	Troesken (2015, Preface) *	PA 1
Module 2: Vaccination as a collective action problem				
3	Jan 25-29	Vaccination today	Article packet*	PA 2
4	Feb 1-5	Vaccination attitudes	Nyhan and Reifler (2015)	PA 3
5	Feb 8-12	Vaccination history	Troesken (2015, Chap. 4)	PA 4
6	Feb 15-17 [†]	Smallpox	Stepan (2011, Chap. 6)	PA 5
7	Feb 22-26	Exam review	None	Exam 1
Module 3: Disease control and the environment				
8	Mar 1-5	Introduction to Race and Disease	Williams and Mohammed (2013)	None
9	Mar 8-11 [†]	Water, Race, and Disease	Troesken (2004, Chap. 1*, Chap. 4)	PA 6
10	Mar 15-19	Cholera	Frerichs (2016, Selected chapters)	PA 7
11	Mar 22-26	Airborne disease	Clay and Troesken (2010)	PA 8
12	Mar 29-Apr 2	Exam review	None	Exam 2
Module 4: HIV and Malaria				
13	Apr 5-7	HIV and Stigma	Article packet*	None
14	Apr 12-16	HIV in Brazil and Africa	Lieberman (2009, Chap. 4)	None
15	Apr 19-23	Malaria	Article packet*; Szreter (2003)	PA 9
16	Apr 26-30	Finish malaria and review		PA 10
17	May 3			Exam 3

References

- Clay, Karen and Werner Troesken. 2010. "Did Frederick Brodie Discover the World's First Environmental Kuznets Curve? Coal Smoke and the Rise and Fall of the London Fog." NBER Working Paper No. 15669.
- Frerichs, Ralph R. 2016. *Deadly River: Cholera and Cover-Up in Post-Earthquake Haiti*. Cornell University Press.
- Krugman, Paul. 1995. *Development, Geography, and Economic Theory*. MIT Press chapter The Fall and Rise of Development Economics.
- Lieberman, Evan. 2009. *Boundaries of Contagion: How Ethnic Politics Have Shaped Government Responses to AIDS*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Nyhan, Brendan and Jason Reifler. 2015. "Does correcting myths about the flu vaccine work? An experimental evaluation of the effects of corrective information." *Vaccine* 33(3):459–464.
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- Szreter, Simon. 2003. "The population health approach in historical perspective." *American Journal of Public Health* 93(3):421–431.
- Troesken, Werner. 2004. *Water, Race and Disease*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
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- Williams, David R and Selina A Mohammed. 2013. "Racism and health II: a needed research agenda for effective interventions." *American behavioral scientist* 57(8):1200–1226.