INTL 4615: The Politics of Disease Control
Instructor: Ishtiaque Fazlul
Semester: Fall 2025
Classroom: Journalism 0505; Time 2:20 PM– 3:35 PM

Instructor Information

• Instructor: Ishtiaque Fazlul
• Office: Candler Hall 318
• Email: ifazlul@uga.edu
• Drop-in Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Course Description

This course explores some of the pressing issues in global health, how policies and institutions help solve these issues, and how researchers and professionals like us can generate credible evidence to aid policymakers in doing so. We examine how policies are designed, how institutions, politics, and power dynamics influence their implementation, and how collective action problems can hinder even well-intentioned interventions. Case studies include a cholera epidemic in mid-19th-century London, conditional cash transfers in Mexico, microcredit in South Asia, the fight against malaria in Kenya, and the Affordable Care Act in the U.S. Alongside learning about global health issues from a variety of regional contexts, students will learn how to critically engage with academic literature, identify gaps in knowledge, develop research questions, and evaluate the fit between data, methods, and the policy challenges at hand.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand some of the pressing issues in global health from different regions of the world
- Understand the scientific pursuit of generating evidence to inform policy
- Understand the process of policy design and how power, politics, and institutions play a role
- Understand the process of finding gaps in knowledge, asking important questions, and ways of credibly answering them
- Understand the fit between question, data, and methods using examples from global health literature
- Develop, motivate, and defend a research proposal that addresses a policy-relevant question of the student's choice in the field of global health (including U.S. health).

Required Texts and Materials

- Research articles and readings uploaded in eLC
- Access to eLC is required for articles, readings, problem sets, announcements and more.

Assessment

- Article summary 50% (See due dates in the Tentative Course Schedule section)
- 1-page proposal 5% (Due on 10/02)
- Draft full proposal 5% (Due on 10/23)
- Final full proposal 20% (Due on 12/02)
- Presentation 20% (Slides due on the day of your presentation)

Course Components

Article summary

Throughout the semester, you will summarize the assigned journal articles. Each summary will be **2 pages, double-spaced.** Use clear, plain language and organize your **summary** with the following section headings: **Research question(s), motivation, contribution, challenges, method, results, and implications**. Along with the summary itself, include a **highlighted and annotated pdf** of the journal article indicating sections that address each of the sections of your summary.

Purpose

The goal of this assignment is to help you learn how to break down and understand academic research, especially in global health and policy. Each article you summarize will help you practice identifying the key components of a research study: why the authors did the study, what they were trying to figure out, how they did it, and what they found. Even if you don't fully understand all the technical methods or statistical terms, that's okay — focus instead on understanding the overall research question and how the paper tries to answer it. **These summaries will also help prepare you for your final research proposal later in the course.**

What to include

Include the following sections:

- Research questions
    - State the research questions clearly and simply
- Motivation:
    - Explain why the research question or the solution is important.
    - Why did the authors choose to study this topic, and what real-world issue were they trying to understand or address?
- Contribution:
    - What is the shortcoming of the existing literature, knowledge, and practice?
    - Start by describing *what we already know* from past research on this topic.
    - What background knowledge does the paper build on?
    - Then explain the *gap in the literature* —what question hasn't been answered yet?
    - That gap helps define the *research question* of the paper
- Challenges:
    - What are the challenges in answering the research questions?
    - For example, maybe it's hard to measure something, or it's difficult to show cause and effect.
- Method
    - How does the paper solve those challenges?
    - What strategy, research design, or statistical method did the authors use?
    - You are not expected to understand the technical details, but try to name the method (e.g., randomized controlled trial, regression analysis, difference-in-differences) and explain what kind of data the authors used.
- Results
    - What are the results? What did the researchers find?
    - Were the results surprising or expected?
- Implications for policy and practice:
    - What does it mean for policy?

Tips

Use simple, clear language and organize your writing so each part of the summary is easy to follow. Don't worry if some of the methods are confusing — the goal is not to master statistics, but to understand how research is structured and how

it answers important policy questions. My lectures will provide you with an intuitive understanding of some of the methods. These summaries will serve as valuable references when you write your own proposal later in the semester.

Project proposal

The final project for this course is a research proposal. It should be **10 pages, double-spaced** (excluding references, figures, and tables). Format should be APA 7th edition, 12-pt font (Times New Roman or Arial), 1" margins, numbered pages.

Purpose

A research proposal is a structured plan that explains why a study is important and how you would go about answering the research question(s). Writing this proposal will help you understand how researchers identify problems, design studies, and choose appropriate settings, data, and methods. It's also a chance for you to apply everything you've learned this semester, from identifying gaps in the literature to connecting theory, policy, and methods in a global health context, which can include the U.S.

What to Include

Your proposal should have the following sections

1. Title Page

- Title of your proposed research
- Your name, course, instructor, and date

2. Introduction / Background

- Brief overview of the topic
- What problem or issue are you addressing?
- Why does it matter in global/public health or policy? What's your motivation? Why should we care?

3. Research Question

- What exactly are you trying to find out?
- Pose a clear, focused research question

4. Literature Review

- Summary of what's already known
- At least 10 scholarly sources
- What gaps exist in the current literature?

5. Study Design and Methods

- How will you investigate your question?
    - Type of study (qualitative, quantitative, mixed)
    - Data source (existing survey data, primary data that you will collect, administrative data, etc.)
    - Sample and population (e.g., women in Bangladesh, urban youth in Brazil, US population)
    - Key variables
    - Methodological challenges and how your proposed study would overcome these challenges
    - Basic analytic strategy (e.g., descriptive stats, thematic coding, regression analysis etc.)

6. Significance

- Why is this research important?
- How could it contribute to policy, practice, or future research?

Tips for Success

Start early and meet with me throughout the semester to refine your question and proposal. Use the article summaries as models — they were designed to prepare you for this project. Organize your writing clearly, break it into sections, and follow APA guidelines for citations and formatting. This is not just a paper; it's your opportunity to think like a researcher and practice building your own contribution to the field of global health policy.

Presentation and slides

The **last three full weeks** of the semester will be reserved for **presentations**. For the presentation of your research idea, prepare **PowerPoint** slides for a **15-minute presentation** followed by a **brief Q&A** session.

Purpose

The goal is to clearly explain your research idea to the class, including why the topic matters, what question you're asking, and how you plan to answer it. This is your chance to share your thinking, get feedback, and practice presenting a policy-relevant research idea — an important skill in both academic and professional settings.

What to Include

Your presentation should cover the sections of your proposal clearly and simply: the motivation for your project, what past research has said, the gap in the literature, your research question, the challenge in answering that question, how you plan to overcome that challenge, and the data and method you would use. You are not expected to explain complex methods in detail — just name them and say briefly why they fit your question. Focus on telling a clear and logically coherent story.

Q&A and Participation

After your presentation, your classmates will ask questions. I highly encourage you to engage in this discussion — both as a presenter and audience member. Be open to feedback and keep the conversation respectful and curious.

Presentation Scheduling

For presentation scheduling, you will be listed alphabetically by last name and then assigned a number using a random number generator. **Randomly assigned presentation days will be shared during the second half of the semester. Any scheduling conflict needs to be addressed within two weeks of announcing the assigned presentation days. After that, your assigned presentation day cannot be changed.**

Class attendance and participation

You are expected to attend and participate in class. Attending every class and asking questions is the best way to succeed in this course.

Written Assignment Formatting

All written assignments in this course — including article summaries and the final research proposal — must follow consistent formatting to ensure clarity, professionalism, and ease of review.

- **Spacing & Margins:** Double-spaced, 1-inch margins on all sides
- **Font:** 12-pt Times New Roman or Arial
- **Page Numbers:** Include on all pages
- **Length:** Follow specific instructions for each assignment
- **Citations:** Use APA 7th edition for all in-text citations and references
    - Resources: APA Style, Purdue OWL
- **Proofreading:** Check grammar, spelling, and clarity
- **File Type:** Submit as PDF or Word document unless noted otherwise
- **Backup:** Always keep a copy of your work

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be calculated on the following scale:

- 94 to 100 - A
- 90 to 93.9 - A-
- 87 to 89.9 - B+
- 84 to 86.9 - B
- 80 to 83.9 - B-
- 77 to 79.9 - C+
- 74 to 76.9 - C
- 70 to 73.9 - C-
- 60 to 69.9 - D
- 59 and below - F

AI Policy

You may not use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) to generate article summaries or the proposal draft for this course. You may, however, use them to help clarify technical terms, concepts, or methods *only if you cite this use at the end of your summary*. The goal is to strengthen your own reading and analytical skills. Summaries and proposals that appear overly generic, stylistically inconsistent, or disconnected from the assigned article may be subject to follow-up questions or resubmission.

Useful Information and University Policies

Phone, Tablet, and Laptop Usage in Class

I do not allow the use of phones in class. Laptop usage is only allowed for note-taking. Tablet usage is only allowed for notetaking.

Tips for Succeeding in This Course

- Attend class! Class provides the best opportunity to understand the material and ask questions.
- Complete article summaries on time. The articles are selected to give you
    - An overview of a global health issue,
    - Its context within a specific country or region,
    - A model for identifying gaps in the literature,
    - A well-formulated research question, and
    - An example of how to use appropriate data and methods to address that question.

  These summaries are essential for building your analytical skills and will help you prepare your own research proposal
- Ask questions and use my office hours! I am here to help.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

The following is copied from here: https://spia.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Prohibition-on-Recording-Lectures.pdf

"In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course."

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/

I expect that the Student Honor Code will guide your efforts in this course. A lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy does not explain a violation. Please email me with any questions.

Disability Services

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting http://drc.uga.edu

Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting https://well-being.uga.edu.

Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Tentative Course Schedule*

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week 1 **8/11**	• Welcome, course overview, how do we know what we know? • Michael Bailey, The Quest for Causality, in *Real Econometrics* (Chapter 1) • Podcast: Freakonomics Ep. 201 "How Do We Know What Really Works in Healthcare?" Link ○ Topic: Medical evidence vs. practice; randomized trials in health systems.	
Week 2 **8/18**	• Cholera epidemic – 19th century and now • Science History Institute. (2022). *John Snow hunts the blue death.* Retrieved from https://www.sciencehistory.org/stories/magazine/john-snow-hunts-the-blue-death • Tulchinsky, T. H. (2018). John Snow, cholera, the broad street pump; waterborne diseases then and now. *Case studies in public health*, 77.	
Week 3 **8/25**	• Social determinants of health – Income • Apouey, Benedicte and Andrew Clark (2015). Winning Big but Feeling No Better? The Effect of Lottery Prizes on Physical and Mental Health. *Health Economics*, 24(5), 516-538.	• Summary of Tulchinsky, T. H. (2018) due on 8/28
Week 4 **9/1**	• Social determinants of health –Education • Leuven, E., Oosterbeek, H., & De Wolf, I. (2013). The effects of medical school on health outcomes: Evidence from admission lotteries. *Journal of health economics*, *32*(4), 698-707	• Summary of Apouey & Clark (2015) due on 9/4 • **Schedule 1st meeting to discuss proposal topic before 9/18**
Week 5 **9/8**	• Conditional cash transfer and health in Mexico • Podcast: VoxDev S2 Ep. 18 "Macours, K., & Schady, The impact of Mexico's PROGRESA programme twenty years on." Link • Molina Millán, T., Barham, T., Macours, K., Maluccio, J. A., & Stampini, M. (2019). Long-term impacts of conditional cash transfers: Review of the evidence. *The World Bank Research Observer, 34*(1), 119–159. **(Mexico parts only)**	• Summary of Leuven et al. (2013) due on 9/11
Week 6 **9/15**	• Conditional cash transfer and health in Indonesia • Podcast: AEA Research Higlight "Hanna, R., The promise of conditional cash transfers" Link • Cahyadi, N., Hanna, R., Olken, B. A., Prima, R. A., Satriawan, E., & Syamsulhakim, E. (2020). Cumulative impacts of conditional cash transfer programs: Experimental evidence from Indonesia. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *12*(4), 88-110.	• Summary of Molina Millán et al. (2019) due on 9/18 • **1 paragraph project proposal due on 9/18**
Week 7 **9/22**	• Microcredit and health in South Asia • Innovations for Poverty Action blog. (2010). *Does Microfinance Work.* Retrieved from https://poverty-action.org/blog/does-microfinance-work • Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., Glennerster, R., & Kinnan, C. (2015). The miracle of microfinance? Evidence from a randomized evaluation. *American economic journal: Applied economics*, *7*(1), 22-53.	• Summary of Cahyadi et al. (2020) due on 9/25

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week 8 **9/29**	• Microcredit and health in South Asia • Karlan, D., & Zinman, J. (2011). Microcredit in theory and practice: Using randomized credit scoring for impact evaluation. *Science*, *332*(6035), 1278-1284.	• Summary of Banerjee et al. (2015) due on 10/2 • **1 page proposal due on 10/2** • **Schedule 2nd meeting to discuss progress and direction by 10/23**
Week 9 **10/6**	• Malaria and mosquito nets in Kenya • Jameel Poverty Action Lab. (2022). *Free bednets to fight malaria.* Retrieved from https://www.povertyactionlab.org/case-study/free-bednets-fight-malaria • Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research. (2016). *Taking the financial bite out of malaria prevention.* Retrieved from https://siepr.stanford.edu/news/taking-financial-bite-out-malaria-prevention • Jameel Poverty Action Lab. (2010). *Free Distribution or Cost Sharing? Evidence from a Malaria Prevention Experiment in Kenya.* Retrieved from https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/free-distribution-or-cost-sharing-evidence-malaria-prevention-experiment-kenya • Dupas, P. (2014). Getting essential health products to their end users: Subsidize, but how much?. *Science*, 345(6202), 1279-1281.	• Summary of Karlan & Zinman (2011) due on 10/9
Week 10 **10/13**	• Deworming • Innovations for Poverty Action. (2012). D*eworming: A best buy for development. Retrieved from https://poverty-action.org/sites/default/files/publications/deworming_policy_briefcase.pdf* • Innovations for Poverty Action. (2015). *Deworming: An informed debate requires a careful look at the data.* Retrieved from https://poverty-action.org/blog/deworming-informed-debate-requires-careful-look-data • NPR. (2020). *Could Giving Kids A 50-Cent Pill Massively Boost Their Income Years Later?* Retrieved from Link • Sections of Miguel, E., & Kremer, M. (2004). Worms: identifying impacts on education and health in the presence of treatment externalities. *Econometrica*, *72*(1), 159-217. **(Summary not required)**	• Summary of Dupas (2014) due on 10/16
Week 11 **10/20**	• Healthcare reform in the U.S.: Policy and Politics • Lecture material • Podcast: Freakonomics Ep. 201 "How Do We Know What Really Works in Healthcare?" Link ○ Topic: Medical evidence vs. practice; randomized trials in health systems.	• **Draft of the work in progress full proposal due on 10/23** • No summarization task
Week 12 **10/27**	• Healthcare reform in the U.S.: Policy and Politics • Kaestner, R., B. Garrett, A. Gangopadhyaya, and C. Fleming (2017). Effects of the ACA Medicaid Expansion on Health Insurance Coverage and Labor Supply. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 36 (3): 608-642. • Simon, K., A. Soni, and J. Cawley (2017). The Impact of Health Insurance on Preventive Care and Health Behaviors: Evidence from the First Two Years of the ACA Medicaid Expansions. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 36: 390-417.	

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week 13 **11/3**	• Healthcare reform in the U.S.: Policy and Politics	• Summary of Kaestner et al. (2017) due on 11/6
Week 14 **11/10**	• Term paper presentations	• Summary of Simon et al. (2017) due on 11/13 • Presentation slides due on the day of presentation.
Week 15 **11/17**	• Term paper presentations	• Presentation slides due on the day of presentation.
Week 16 **11/24** **	• Thanksgiving	
Week 17 **12/1** ***	• Term paper presentations	• **Final proposal due on 12/2** • Presentation slides due on the day of presentation.

* I reserve the right to change this schedule. I will notify students of any changes via eLC or in class.
Find important dates for Fall 2025 here: https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/calendars/academic-calendars/
** No class on November 25, Tuesday as I will be travelling for the Southern Economic Association Conference. No class on November 27th, Thursday for Thanksgiving.
*** Last class of the semester on 12/2.