

# Medicine, Human Rights, and the Physician

Course No: HO701.0, Harvard Medical School, Fall 2005

Room MEC 426, Tuesdays, 4:00-6:00PM, September 13 – December 13

## INSTRUCTORS:

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course examines the links between health and human rights and highlights the role of the physician as a change agent. Through lectures and class discussions, the course provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize, document, and alleviate human suffering caused by human rights violations.

Class discussions will address the ethical obligations of physicians in the face of human rights violations; the role of the physician in documenting health consequences of human rights violations; the health response in complex humanitarian disasters; treatment of the physical and psychological sequelae of trauma; the impact of health policies on the protection of human rights; and human rights advocacy. The particular needs of women and children will be highlighted. Students will leave the course with a solid understanding of human rights norms as they affect the health of individuals and communities, the extent of human rights violations in the world, and the health consequences of human rights protections or violations on individuals, families, and communities. Guest lecturers include physicians who have investigated health and human rights violations in the U.S. and overseas.

## REQUIRED BOOKS:

- 1) Course Readings
- 2) J. Mann, S. Gruskin, M. Grodin, G. Annas, editors. *Health and Human Rights: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

## ASSIGNMENTS:

By the middle of the course, students will choose a health and human rights topic to research and present to the class. At that time, each student will briefly present their research study proposal and distribute a one-page description of their topic that includes: a research question, background information, significance, methods, and a plan of action. At the end of the course, students will submit their research paper and present their work in class for 15-20 minutes.

## EVALUATION:

Students' conceptual understanding and knowledge will be assessed through their participation in class and by their oral and written presentation of their research project.

## HOURS OF THE COURSE:

14 sessions of 2 hours of formal classes Lectures and Discussions  
2 hours/session of required outside-the-classroom readings  
Preparation and research involved in research project

## TOTAL: 76 hours or 2 credits

28  
28  
20

*Medicine, Human Rights, and the Physician*  
Fall 2005 Speaker List

*September 13*

*Carola Eisenberg, MD, Kris Heggenhougen, PhD, and Kari Hannibal, MA: Course Introduction*  
*Susannah Sirkin, MEd: Introduction to International Human Rights and Health*

*September 20*

*Alicia Ely Yamin, JD, MPH: The Right to Health*

*September 27*

*Hilarie Cranmer, MD, MPH, FACEP: Humanitarian Lessons Learned from Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Post-tsunami Indonesia*

*October 4*

*Joia Mukherjee, MD: Human Rights Priorities in the Global HIV Pandemic*

*October 11*

*Michael Grodin, MD: Treatment Issues in Working with Survivors of Torture and Refugee Trauma*

*October 18*

*H. K. Heggenhougen, PhD: Health and Human Rights Issues Affecting AIDS Orphans in Africa*

*October 25*

*Sofia Gruskin, JD, MIA: The Right to Information, Reproductive Rights, Sexual Rights, and Women's Health*

*November 1*

*Nancy Krieger, PhD: The Public Health Disparities Geocoding Project: Monitoring U.S. Social Inequalities in Health*

*November 8*

*Carola Eisenberg, MD: The Human Rights of Children*

*November 15*

*Len Rubenstein, JD: Dual Loyalty, Human Rights, and the Role of the Physician: The Case of Torture.*

*November 22*

*H. Jack Geiger, MD: The Forgotten Human Rights: How a Health Center Addressed Social, Cultural and Economic Rights*

*November 29: Student Presentations*

*December 6: Student Presentations*

*December 13: Student Presentations and last day of class*