Community Health & Sustainability: Course Overview
Instructors: Vanderpaye & Ahiabu

Course description

This course seeks to provide an overview of some of the major health challenges in the public health field in Ghana with a special focus on HIV, Sexual Reproductive Health, Food Security, and Environmental Sustainability. Students will study the impact that HIV, Sexual Reproductive Health and Environmental Degradation have had in Ghana. Students will learn about the epidemiology and biology of HIV/AIDS and the community response to the epidemic in Ghana. The course will explore the social, medical, and political correlates and consequences of the HIV epidemic through lectures – (including that of a visiting PLHIV), class discussions and assigned readings and interactions with staff involved in the HIV care cascade of various target groups such as project coordinators, case managers, and peer educators.

Students will also look at the importance of Sexual Reproductive Health with a special emphasis on the needs of adolescents. The final challenge is Sanitation and Food Security as keys to Global Health. Students will learn community entry techniques to facilitate learning about local environmental knowledge and how to introduce positive concepts and public health education around reproductive health, enhanced food security and improved sanitation.

This class utilizes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which requires government to: Focus on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (Goal 1); End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture (Goal 2); Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages (Goal 3); and Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Goal 6). An overview of key frameworks will be utilized to enhance the students’ abilities to analyse and evaluate efforts in two key communities that will provide work experiences in an urban and rural setting.

Two and one half weeks of field work follows the intensive class. Week 1 (40 hours) will involve urban work with the West African AIDS Foundation. Week 2.5 (60 hours) will involve work in a rural setting in the Volta Region.

Students will join staff of the West African Aids Foundation (WAAF) to provide HIV testing and education in hard to reach communities in the Greater Accra Region. They will join staff and partners of WAAF to conduct HIV education and screening, a few students will have the opportunity to shadow staff at work and also visit ante natal partner clinics to understand how HIV counselling and testing in context of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) is provided. Students will also interview and brainstorm ideas to control the HIV
epidemic with partner groups and peer groups. Focus group discussions, community outreaches, partner health facility visits and interactions with service providers and other stakeholders will be part of this field work.

In the Volta Region, students and community members will be introduced to the value, planting, growth and production properties of moringa from staff of the Ghana Permaculture Institute. The community will clear land and start cultivation of the new crop during the learning process. Students will also join community members on designing and implementing a major homecoming event, designed to help reverse rural to urban migration trends and family disintegration and to enhance advocacy around community service needs.

Students will also provide public health education to residents in the areas of Family Planning, Sex and Reproduction (for adolescents), Childhood Nutrition, Basic First Aid and Sanitation. Students will assist in building organizations in the community who can maintain sustainable frameworks for growth and development. Lastly, students will work to collect stories of hardship to be utilized for community advocacy efforts with stakeholders we will identify in partnership with community members,

Students should be prepared to create and complete tools (community surveys, print and video stories, and etc.) that residents will utilize for future programming, advocacy and the leveraging of resources. Students will also have the opportunity to design and implement public health talks, conduct simple health tests and do work in the village meeting places.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand Ghana’s General Health situation;
2. Explain the defining criteria for HIV & AIDS in Ghana;
3. Discuss the local and national epidemiology of HIV/AIDS;
4. Explain the pathogenesis and natural history of HIV infection and disease;
5. Explain Community entry/exit techniques in Ghana;
6. Explain the general sanitation challenges of the Ghana population;
7. Explain the modes of transmission for HIV & explain how to limit risk;

8. Utilize examples from the field to highlight special issues for People Living With AIDS (PLWA); the challenges of establishing food security; the challenges of public health education around reproduction; and

9. Demonstrate a practical skill to help improve cleanliness and sanitation.

10. Discuss challenges found in rural farming communities;

11. Explain potential solutions to rural challenges; and

12. Discuss the role of residents, government and others in building sustainable communities.

**Course Delivery:**

These sessions are organized around a series of interactive lectures (40 hours), group discussions/presentations, and group work/brainstorming. Field work (100 hours) is connected to class themes and the projects of the host agency and/or community and the course objectives.

**Class Readings:**


Readings: Provided six weeks prior to class by UC-EAP.

Assessment and Grading

50% Field Hours completion
40% Completion Class Tasks (presentations, analysis, etc.)
10% Oral Presentation on Field Activities.

Grading Scale
A 90-100
B+ 85-89
B 84-80
C+ 79-75
C 74-70
D+ 69-65
D 64-60
F 59 & below

Professional Expectations
Students will treat the class with serious professional engagement which includes being prepared; arriving promptly and remaining until the end of class; participating fully; displaying courtesy and providing constructive feedback.

**Communications**

Please check the mode of communication (i.e., email, text, board notices, etc.) selected for course changes or activities.

**Academic Integrity and Honesty**

Please note UCEAP Academic Conduct Policy applies. Mutual trust and academic integrity are required.

**Writing Assignments**

Please utilize the APA style for papers or presentations and be sure to properly cite materials in your text and bibliography.

**Field Work**

Please follow the instructions of your professors and cultural guides regarding photography and filming.