



Beyond the Biological Basis for Disease: The Social and Economic Causation of Disease

An Immersion Course in Social Medicine

Port-Au-Prince, Haiti

July 14- August 1, 2014

Course Overview

July 2014 will mark the launch of the second annual “Beyond the Biological Basis for Disease” course in Haiti. This annual three-week course, which is designed for medical students of all levels, links tropical medicine with social medicine teaching. The course will be taught in French.

This course represents the first site expansion of a course that has been offered for the past four years in Gulu, Uganda by SocMed (www.socmedglobal.org). SocMed’s implementing partner in the launch of the Haiti course is Physicians for Haiti (www.physiciansforhaiti.org), a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering Haiti’s next generation of health professionals through professional development and continuing education.

20 medical students will participate in the course, ten from the University of the Aristide Foundation (UniFA) and the other ten from around the world. UniFA (www.aristidefoundationfordemocracy.org) will host the course at its campus in Port-Au-Prince, and students participating in the course will have the opportunity to visit other sites around Haiti.

The course merges a number of unique pedagogical approaches including field visits, classroom- based presentations and discussions, group reflections, student presentations, films, and bedside teaching. These approaches are utilized to create an innovative, interactive learning environment in which students participate as both learners and teachers. We hope to advance the entire class’ understanding of the interactions between the biology of disease and the social, cultural, economic, political, and historical factors that influence illness presentation and social experience.

The course curriculum places great importance on building partnerships and encouraging students to reflect upon their personal experiences with power, privilege, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as central to effective partnership building in global health. In the spirit of *praxis* (a model of education that combines critical reflection with action) these components of the course give students the opportunity to discern their role in global health and social medicine through facilitated, in-depth conversations with core faculty and student colleagues.

Course Objectives

1. To promote international solidarity and partnership for generating solutions to global health challenges facing societies throughout the world
2. To foster reflective dialogue between Haitian and international medical students as a means of strengthening ties between the next generation of Haitian health professionals and a global network of their peers.
3. To provide a structured global health experience for medical students with dedicated supervision and teaching in clinical medicine and social medicine
4. To study issues related to global health in a resource-poor setting with an emphasis on local and global context
5. To foster critical analysis of global health interventions in resource-poor settings
6. To facilitate the development of a clinical approach to disease and illness using a biosocial model through structured supervision and teaching
7. To build an understanding and skill set associated with physician advocacy



Course Curriculum

The course structure brings together teaching in both tropical medicine and social medicine. The social medicine component is divided into the following parts:

Part 1 – Determinants of Health Beyond Biology: Social and Economic Causation of Disease

Part 2 – Global Health Interventions: Paradigms of Charity, Humanitarianism, and Structural Change

Part 3 – Social Justice in Health Interventions: Models of Community-based Healthcare

Part 4 – Health and Human Rights and the Healthcare Worker as Advocate

Part 5 – Tools for Effective Application of Global Health Experience: Writing, Photography, Research, and Political Engagement

Clinical topics will include cholera, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and other relevant diseases implicated in social determinants of health.

Course Faculty

A group of course leaders from both the U.S. and Haiti with expertise in tropical medicine and public health make up the core faculty, and will teach the courses in French.

Course Advisors

- Amy Finnegan, PhD – Sociologist and Assistant Professor and Chair of the Department of Justice and Peace Studies, University of St. Thomas; Co-director, SocMed. Dr. Finnegan's PhD work at Boston College focused on social movements, and she holds an MA from the Fletcher School at Tufts University.
- Michael Westerhaus, MD, MA – Primary care clinician and medical director, Center for International Health in St. Paul, MN; Assistant Professor in the Global Health Pathway, University of Minnesota; Co-Director, SocMed. Dr. Westerhaus also holds an MA in medical anthropology from Harvard University.

In addition, numerous experts involved with local health initiatives visit the course, deliver presentations, and facilitate conversations.

Cost

It is estimated that an average U.S. student's cost for the 2014 course will be:

- Airfare (average in recent years): \$600
- Full Room/Board for 3 weeks: \$925
- Course Fee: \$ 1375
- Total: \$2900

This estimate does not include vaccination costs, spending money for gifts and other small personal expenses, or any additional travel in Haiti not associated with the course that students may wish to do.

Limited financial aid may be available to cover a portion of the course fees for those with demonstrated financial need. If interested in being considered for this scholarship, please make note when you submit your application and an additional form will be sent for you to complete.

Eligibility criteria for applicants:

- Medical student of any year
- Fluent in French
- Available for the entire length of the course (July 14-August 1, 2014)

Application Process

Applications are due January 15, 2014.

To complete an application or for more information, please visit www.socmedglobal.org or www.physiciansforhaiti.org



Note: Credit for away electives can usually be arranged with a student's home institution