UGS 303 (62400, 62405, 62410)
Disease/Difference, Pathology/Power:
Critical Geographies of Health

Instructor: Professor Caroline Faria (cvfaria@austin.utexas.edu) (she, her, hers)
Teaching Assistant: Abe Heath (aheath@utexas.edu) (they, them, theirs)

Course meets: Lectures: MW, 2-3pm BUR 130 (unless otherwise planned); Sections: Th, 3-4pm (62400), 4-5pm (62405), 5-6pm (62410) CBA 4.342 (unless otherwise planned)
Instructor office hours: MW 3-4pm or by appointment, BUR level 1

Course Description
Is access to health care a universal human right?
How are public health campaigns political?
How do different national models of health care compare?
How is disease linked to the problems of patriarchy, racism and poverty?
Should essential medicines for global pandemics be patent-free?
How did HIV/AIDS and H1N1 become global epidemics? Is Ebola next?
Should the global trade in human organs be legalized?

Welcome to UGS 303: Critical Geographies of Health! The questions above demand an analysis of health and disease that centers people, place, and questions of power, key ideas in human geography. In this class we will examine how these shape health and health care provision around the world. In particular, we will focus on differences of class, race, gender, sexuality, citizenship, and human/non-human inequalities underlie, 1) global and historical inequalities in health outcomes and 2) the powerful ways in which different subjects and spaces are represented and depicted in health discourses.

The class will cover case studies of health and illness including studies of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, environmental illnesses like toxicity related cancers, and natural life course events like childbirth and pregnancy that are linked to health and well-being. We will also consider some of the ongoing debates in global and national health policy. Although a study of health may begin with the body, the course material will ask you to identify connections between the body and local, national, global processes -- to move beyond a focus on the physiology and biology of health and illness to an understanding of the socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental context in which health and illness is produced. In doing so, we will use these studies of health and illness as a way to think critically about power -- in particular how social relations of power operate through places to produce well and unwell bodies. The topics we will cover include:

• How neoliberal globalization has shaped health outcomes around the world in the last 30 years
• The links between different kinds of social inequalities and health outcomes
• Efforts to address health problems at a range of scales; from the global to the local, and as promoted by governments and non-governmental activists
• Representations of healthy and diseased bodies in popular culture, public health campaigns, and in medical and health-based discourse
**UGS core requirements**
Undergraduate Signature courses have a number of requirements. These include: integration of the University Lecture Series and the University “Gems” (for example the libraries and galleries); Oral and Written skill development; Information Literacy; and Critical Thinking. We integrate these elements into the course carefully.

A note that this course at the 303 size does not carry a writing flag. However, writing (and reading) is central to the course. Indeed, a substantial portion of your grade will come from your written work. That means that you will write regularly, and in varied ways, over the course of the semester. Our writing will include; short informal blogs on the weekly reading material, a series of written mini-assignments related to a research project, written tests, and regular in-class write-to-learn exercises. You will regularly revise your writing, and you will work with your peers in improving their writing. We write together in a supportive, low-stakes, and community-based setting. This is most conducive to improve and learning to love writing! If you’re nervous about writing (and of course if you love writing) this is a great class for you!

**Key learning goals**
At the end of the class students will be able to:
- *Connect* individual bodily experiences of health and illness with broader socio-cultural, political, economic and historical processes, *ie geographic* processes
- *Review and critique* a range of geographical approaches to the study of health and illness including political economy, political ecology, feminist, and postcolonial theories
- *Analyze* dominant visual and textual knowledges and representations of health and illness.
- *Discuss* intelligently a range of health-related case studies from a geographic perspective

**Key skill-based goals**
- During the class students will:
  - *Critically engage with and evaluate* geographic arguments on health and health care presented in textual and audio-visual media
  - *Practice geographic writing* in a range of formats and for a range of audiences
  - *Collect, critically evaluate and utilize* geographical academic research in order to make a strong argument/answer a carefully crafted research question
  - *Strengthen skills of peer-review* in a variety of forms
  - *Develop* technical skills in website development, and possibly short film/podcast production

**Required Texts**
- A series of articles, book chapters, films and media links are available via Canvas or the library.

**Using Canvas**
- Our course will be web-assisted via [canvas.utexas.edu](http://canvas.utexas.edu). Check this website at least twice a week. You will log in to the site with the same username and password that you use for your email.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to the course website. For tech support with Canvas, contact them via [http://canvas.utexas.edu/](http://canvas.utexas.edu/), or see the guidelines for a host of student questions at [http://guides.instructure.com/m/4212](http://guides.instructure.com/m/4212). You can also contact UT tech support via 512-475-9400.
Expectations of you:
The following are strategies for completing this class with a strong and stress-free grade. Take note!

Attend and participate in lecture and section
Attendance and participation in both lecture AND section is a very important part of this class. Your thoughtful and regular participation is central to your peers’ learning, and your own. All in-class and homework exercises will connect closely to the tests and assignments. Completing all of these is a very important and helpful way to obtain a high standard in this class. We understand that family, illness, and unexpected events may require you to miss class. With this in mind, we only select a sample of classes where participation is assessed. However do note that missing class or section and/or coming to class unprepared to contribute thoughtfully, will affect your final grade. Bear this in mind as you plan your semester schedule. In the event of an absence, you must make arrangements with other students in the class to get notes. Though not a substitute for class attendance, to aid in your review of the material I do post the lecture materials on Canvas following class.

Complete all assigned readings before class
All lectures and discussion will assume a familiarity with the assigned readings. You are expected to come to all classes having completed all reading assignments, to be prepared to discuss the reading material, and to be able to participate in the class activities on the readings by sharing your thoughts, views and questions. These activities are designed to develop your critical reading skills. You will not just complete the readings, but you will put the readings to work! You can do so by asking:

• What are the connections between the readings and the theories and case studies we’ve discussed in class?
• What intellectual perspective is the author writing from?
• How does the reading help me understand the course material better and/or problematize it?
• What questions does the reading raise for me?

In particular, raising questions about the readings in class, in your blogs and in office hours shows you are engaged and participating. I will often ask you what your questions are, come prepared to raise and discuss them!

Laptops and cell phones
Laptops can be useful tools for your learning and I recognize that completing our readings online enables you to avoid costly printing/book purchase fees. However, as we all know, they can be distracting when used in class. For this reason, and with the exception of certain workshop dates, I do not permit laptop or tablet use in the classroom during lectures, in-class exercises and discussion unless you have an exemption from the disability resource center. During lectures, take notes by hand. Since we will actively use the reading material in class and section sessions, you are required to come to class with printed versions of these pieces. On occasion, this will form your participation grade for that class day. Though this involves a small cost, it is far less than that of a textbook/reader, which I do not require. This may seem like an inconvenience. However, you will be more than compensated for by the improved attention and focus you and your classmates will feel during the course.
We expect your full attention during our class time. **Cell phones must be turned off and in your bags throughout our sessions.** Students with phones on their desks or who use their phones in any way will not receive participation for that day’s class. If you repeatedly use your phone in class you will not receive participation credit for the semester. Please take note.

**Respectful engagement**

The varied experiences you bring to the classroom are our best resources for exploring the many issues raised. The course is designed to be provocative, to engage you, and to push you and your peers to rethink taken for granted assumptions. Doing so can be unsettling and that’s ok, that is what learning is all about. However, we must work hard in-class to ensure that we are always respectful, empathetic and supportive. We expect you to **listen actively** and attentively to the opinions and thoughts of your peers, to **respect the ideas of others** even when they contradict or challenge your own, and to **keep confidential** any conversations we have in class that relate to particular individuals.

If you recognize yourself as someone who often contributes, work on listening to others and encouraging them to speak. If you know you are quieter, push yourself to share at least one reflection with the class or in small group discussions during each session. We will call on you to do so.

**What you can expect from us:**

**Intellectual engagement**

Our role is to provide you with a foundation in the geographic theories around health and the connections between these ideas and ‘real world’ examples. To ensure this is as rich, compelling and engaging process as possible we will regularly use a mix of media in class, combining short lectures with group discussion and individual work. Our most important role is to push your thinking beyond taken for granted assumptions using the lecture material, the readings we assign, the assignments we have designed, and the questions we ask you in class. Sometimes (often) we will take on a position that feels uncomfortable for you, sometimes this will reflect our opinions and sometimes not. The point is that we stretch ourselves to think critically about the ways we think about the world. We will encourage you to engage as actively as possible in this process and to push yourselves and your peers, respectfully, as we move through the class together.

**Advising**

You can expect us to be available via email from 9am-5pm on weekdays and to respond to your respectful emails within 2 days (usually far sooner). Dr Faria will also be available twice a week during office hours. You may also arrange to meet by appointment outside assigned office hours.

**Grading**

You can expect your assignments to be carefully reviewed and fairly graded according to transparent grading policies we will share with you in advance. Your assignments and tests will usually be returned within two weeks.
Other Important policies

Disability Accommodation
To request academic accommodations due to disability please contact the disability resource center through their website http://ddec.utexas.edu/disability/. Accommodating students with disabilities is an important and valued part of my job. Please inform me as soon as possible of your needs.

Academic Integrity
Plagiarism, cheating and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. You are expected to know and follow the University’s policies. Plagiarism includes:

- Using another writer’s words or ideas without proper citation
- Citing your source but reproducing exact words without quotation
- Borrowing the structure of another author’s phrases or sentences without crediting them
- Copying from a peer the main argument, use of examples, concepts etc in your blog
- Buying or borrowing the work of other students.
- During exams, academic dishonesty includes the use of shared review documents (like google drive/docs) to memorize set answers.

It is very easy to identify plagiarism in its varied forms. Any student who plagiarizes in any form, however minor, will receive no credit for the assignment/exam in question. Without exception and however minor, in cases of plagiarism I instigate the required procedures with the university administration. Please see the following website for more details: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php and this useful guide to avoiding plagiarism: https://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/cwgs/_files/pdf-4/ai2012.pdf.

Due Dates
Except in the case of a verifiable medical/ family emergency late work and e-mailed work will never be accepted. In-class participation, designed to stimulate learning in that moment, cannot be made up. Please note (extenuating circumstances aside) there are also no makeup provisions for review sessions, course assignments, blogs and tests. It is your responsibility to stay on top of your due dates.

Grade contestations and incompletes
Contestations (in writing please) will receive a response within a week. On rare occasion, I offer an incomplete (“I” grade) if you have completed most of the class but have serious medical/family-related issues that have affected your ability to finish. Please come to one of us as early as possible once you recognize that this applies to you.

Campus Carry
Texas state law now authorizes licensed adults to carry a concealed handgun in University classrooms. The law requires that the handgun be completely concealed at all times. Please note that in accordance with University guidance, if a handgun is seen at any time the carrier will be reported immediately to the police.
Course assignments
There are 5 kinds of assessment in the class.

1. Three Tests (15%)
Due during class sessions
You will complete three tests during our class. These will assess your comprehension of the course reading and lecture material, and support your engagement with this material. See our syllabus below for test dates. We will discuss the form of our class tests in more detail during the semester.

2. Weekly In-class Participation (25%)
Due during class sessions
You are expected to attend all classes and be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that week. All students will be called upon to participate. Examples of ‘participation’ include the following and will be a useful way to prepare for in-class tests and writing exercises.

- Noting down the key words that arose for you from the readings
- Commenting on the readings and connecting readings to the lecture/other student’s comments
- Raising questions about the content of the reading or lecture material
- Responding to questions that may be posed
- Providing insights into your understanding of the key concepts
- Connecting different students’ comments and ideas together

In addition, during class we will complete a variety of short exercises intended to help you make connections between the class material and the course readings for that day. These exercises may take the form of a pop quiz on the readings, a worksheet connected to a film or another class material, a short free writing activity, an in-class debate or mock test review session or a group activity. A portion of these exercises will be collected at the end of class sessions for grading.

3. One Class Facilitation (5%)
Due once per semester, Thursday by 10am (document emailed) and in-class on your assigned day
Once during the semester you will facilitate class discussion with 3-4 peers. Facilitation will occur during Thursday’s section each week. To prepare for facilitation you should review your peers’ blogs and prepare answers to the following questions. These are posed in a facilitation worksheet provided on Canvas. Email this worksheet to Abe no later than 10AM the day before your facilitation.

- What did your peers identify as the main argument in the material, what was it for you?
- What were 1-3 key words/ ideas that kept coming up?
- How did the material make your peers feel? Note the feelings that were articulated in the blogs, and what prompted these feelings.
- What critical geographies of power (ie related to the interaction of people and places infused with racial, class-based, gendered, sexualized etc power) emerged in these readings?
- What ties can you identify (at least 1) between this material and other week’s material?
Most importantly, what were 5-6 of the most thought-provoking and/or helpful questions raised by your peers in their blogs? (Their questions will be bolded for easy access!)

Please note that, depending on the structure of section each week, we may or may not focus on the facilitation worksheet in detail. However, it is expected that your group is prepared to present regardless.

You will sign up/be assigned a facilitation week by Thursday of week 2. We begin facilitation in week 3 of class. Note, if your facilitation day falls on a library/fieldwork day please check with Abe for our alternate plans.

4. Seven blogs (15%) 1 practice blog in week 2 (max. 1 pt) + 6 per semester on assigned weeks (max. 2 pts)
Due by 12 noon on or before each Tuesday at noon.
Blog week 1* is required (week 2 due September 5th by 12 noon). Remaining blog due dates determined by blog group. Group 1 blogs in weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13*. Group 2 blogs in weeks 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 13*. See canvas for your assigned blog group. [*Note, all students blog in weeks 2 and 13].

Over the course of the semester you will post 7 short (350-400 word) blogs to Canvas. The word limit is important and will be strictly monitored. Why? Writing at least 350 words ensures you engage in the required depth, keeping within 400 words develops your skills in editing and crisp writing, and it protects the time of our class TA. The first blog is required, no makeups are permitted. This enables us to practice the blog process together as a class. Over the remainder of the course you are required to post on your relevant blog week. Note that keeping up with your blogs is key to a strong class grade.

Your blogs will provide a thoughtful commentary and critical engagement with the readings assigned for the week. Your blog should compare/contrast the readings for the week. Your blog must be original. Copying words and ideas from other students constitutes plagiarism and will result in disciplinary action and a failing grade. The first blog (due in week 2) has particular guidelines (see the text box below). Subsequent blogs should follow the 4 similar, but more general, guidelines detailed below:
1. Open with a catchy blog title (not included in the word limit)
2. Include 1-2 sentences reviewing the heart of the readings, what they have in common and/or how they differ. Unless readings are optional, your review should touch on all of the readings, even if just briefly.
3. Describe how 1 or more of the readings make you feel? Discuss the most interesting/frustrating/exciting/engaging etc aspect of the pieces for you and tell us why they made you feel that way.
4. Close with 1-2 thoughtful questions raised by the readings to prompt in-class discussion. Write these in bold text. Your facilitators will thank you.

**A note on asking questions well:**
Raising questions about the class materials is one of the most important ways you can demonstrate you are engaging critically and actively. To ensure these questions are useful to us as a class take note of the following:
Avoid very big, general and open-ended questions (“When will these problems ever end? What can we do about this?”, “What does the future hold?”, “Why does this problem exist?”) These are important, but they are fairly easy to pose and don’t push you to really engage with the specific material in front of you. These kinds of questions will probably result in reduced points. Instead use this blog space to articulate questions that would make for constructive discussion and that are answerable (even if several answers are possible).

Pose questions that put the readings/audio-visual material into conversation (“How do author x and author y’s understanding of z differ? What would author x have to say about author y’s argument? How does author x’s example /argument challenge that of author y?”

Pose clarifying questions (“What does author x mean when she uses the word “y”?"

Connect readings/class material from across the weeks (“How does the argument presented by author x connect with the readings on y from week z?”

Blog grade scheme: (0pts = late/not completed, 1 pt = under/over word count, missing/weak on any one of 1-4 elements listed above, or failing to demonstrate some engagement with all the readings for that week (though you can do so briefly and then focus in on one piece), 2 pt = a nice job, the blog addresses the 1-4 points listed above, demonstrates engagement with all the readings, and is within the word limit). You can expect feedback from Dr Faria during class session in week 2, and from Abe via Canvas, for your first and perhaps second blog. After that time, you have the information you need to achieve a 2 pt score for each blog. We will divert our time at that point to other aspects of the class. If you receive a 1 or 0 pts on the blog after week 2, check this syllabus carefully to understand why.

5. Research Project (40%): Critical Geographies of Health

Grade is weighted between mini-assignments and a final output and between individual and group components

Please note that no late or emailed mini-assignments are accepted. You can only receive credit for these pieces if you hand them in on time and in class.

Over the course of the semester you will explore a health-related issue from a critical geographic perspective. i.e you will consider the role of power (race, gender, class, citizenship, etc) and place and spaces (the body, nation, region, urban, rural for example) in creating, spreading, reducing or otherwise shaping your health-issue. Your research will address the following questions: What is the issue and its history, who does it affect, where does it take place? How is your issue related to power (class, race, gender, citizenship etc) and particular spaces/places?

Your project will rely primarily on secondary research (ie published articles and/or data completed by other scholars) but should also include a small amount of primary research (an interview, visual/textual analysis, participant observation etc that you complete yourself). Your chosen issue will teach some of the key class concepts, approaches, arguments to the reader.

You will work both individually and as a group on this project. You will be assigned a topic in the early weeks of class, and will share this topic focus with a group of 3-4 peers. Over the course of the semester you will complete several mini-assignments, some individually and some as a group.
These are designed to develop a range of research and writing skills, to train you as critical geographic researchers. They will include: conducting archival research, critically assessing academic and other sources, visualizing data, and writing in varied forms. For each assignment, you will conduct peer-reviews of your work.

The research project mini-assignments will build up to your final “output”. This output will showcase a highlight of your semester’s research. It can take a range of written and/or audio visual forms (an op ed, infographic, annotated map, podcast, short film, poem, comic…). It will be published on your personal page on a website you create with your group. Each student will be graded individually on the final output they have produced and published on their personal page. The group will also be graded collectively on the website as a whole. See the final project hand out for more information.

Blog post 1: “Seeing” health and disease with a critical geographic eye
Due: 350-400 word blog to Canvas in week 2, by 12 noon on Tuesday September 5th.

Goals:
• Begin thinking about health and disease through a critical geographic lens
• Prompt you to access and explore our canvas page
• Practice blog writing for the class

Health and disease are not universal and fixed ideas but are in fact highly contested and geographic. That is, health and disease both emerge out of particular places while at the same time shaping those places. The geographies of health and disease include a wide range of aspects; the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects that come together to shape health and disease outcomes and experiences. All of these are shaped by power. When we pay attention to power relations of class, race, gender, sexuality etc, we are taking a critical geographic approach to health and disease.

Public health campaigns and news articles about health are often very rich visual ways to get at these power-infused geographies. They are also a lot of fun to analyze and think about. To get you thinking about the geographies of health and disease, and as a way to practice writing your bi-weekly blogs, your first homework will be a 350-400 word blog on a couple of these kinds of images.

Go to our class canvas page and click on “Blog week 1”. You will see this set of instructions there, along with a link to a set of images. These are all public health campaigns and/or news media coverage of health issues. Select TWO images to discuss, using the questions below to structure your blog. You should write about 2-3 lines on each point. Given the word limit constraints (and to hone your skills in synthesis not just description) review both pieces together, highlighting connections, rather than discussing each one in turn.

Description
1. What do you see in each of the selected images? Who is portrayed (or what body parts)? What are they doing? How are they positioned? What colors are used? What is included in the piece and what has been left out by the creator of the piece?
2. What is the purpose of the piece? Who is the assumed audience and what are they expected to do/ how are they expected to behave? Who else (that may be responsible) is left out?
3. How is it supposed to make the viewer feel? How does it make you feel? (Describe actual feelings: fear, happiness, anxiety, joy etc)

Discussing the critical geographies of health: place and power
4. What are 2-3 of the places and people depicted in the pieces and how are they presented to the reader? What impression do you get about those places and people?
5. How does the piece reflect certain kinds of power? What does the piece assume about people of a particular race, class, gender, sexuality…Does it challenge stereotypes about these people or reinforce them?

Your questions:
6. What are 2-3 questions you have? (see the note on writing good blog questions above on this syllabus)
**Course Content**
Each week you will work with at least ONE academic geographic article and at least ONE popular article, piece of creative writing, audio-visual piece, podcast, image etc. All required reading information will be posted to our canvas page at least 1 week in advance of your blog deadline. In most cases links to the actual piece will be provided. On occasion I will ask you to use your own research skills to find the piece. This content should be completed before our class meets on Mondays, even though your blogs are not required until Tuesday. In lecture sessions you will regularly be asked to connect the material to that week’s assigned readings, either through discussion, pop-quizzes and/or group or individual class exercises. In these exercises I emphasize the reading material heavily.

**Week 1, August 28th-September 1st: Introductions**
Due: Thursday, 8/31 – Have reviewed our Canvas page and read this syllabus

**Weeks 2-3, September 4th - September 15th**
The Circulatory System: globalization and global flows of health and disease
Note, week 2: NO CLASS, Monday 9/4 (Labor Day)
Due, week 2: Tuesday 9/05 at noon - First homework blog (see box above)
Due, week 2: Thursday 09/07 - Facilitation sign-up complete
Due, week 3: Thursday 09/14 – Group 1 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email.
Due, week 3: Thursday 09/14 - Group project sign-up complete, Mini-assignment 1 (group) “Fake news!? - What makes a “good” source?”

**Week 4-5 September 18th – 29th**
The Immune System: health care research and provision in global perspective
Due: Weekly readings and blog post by Tuesdays at noon
Note, week 4: Thursday 09/21 - Library session 1 (no facilitation) PCL Learning Lab 3
Due, week 5: Monday 09/25 - Mini-assignment 2 (individual) “Finding and Assessing Quality Research”
Due, week 5: Thursday 09/28 - Group 2 & 3 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email.

**Week 6-7, October 2nd – 13th**
The Digestive System: critical geographies of food and eating
Note, week 6: Monday 10/02 - Test 1 (on weeks 2-5)
Due: Weekly readings and blog post by Tuesdays at noon
Due, week 6: Thursday 10/05 - Group 4 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email.
Due, week 7: Thursday 10/12 - Group 5 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email.

**Week 8-9, October 16th – 27th**
The Renal System: toxic environments and the critical geographies of waste
Due: Weekly readings and blog post by Tuesdays at noon
Due: Weekly readings and blog post by Tuesdays at noon
Note, week 8: Thursday 10/19 – Library session 2 (no facilitation) Location TBD
Due, week 9: Monday 10/23 – Mini-Assignment 3 (individual/group) “A Critical Eye on the Archives”
Week 10-11, October 30\textsuperscript{th} – November 10\textsuperscript{th}  
The Reproductive System: sex/uality, pregnancy and other critical geographies of the body

Due, week 9: Thursday 10/26 - Group 6 & 7 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email

Note, week 10: Monday 10/30 - Test 2 (on weeks 6-9)  
Due: Weekly readings and blog post by Tuesdays at noon  
Due, week 10: Thursday 11/02 - Group 8 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email.  
Due, week 11: Thursday 11/09 - Group 9 facilitation paperwork, 10am via email.

Week 12-13, November 13\textsuperscript{th} – 24\textsuperscript{th}  
The Exocrine System: hair, skin, nails and the critical geographies of beauty

Due: Weekly readings and blog post by Tuesdays at noon. [All groups blog week 13, 11/21]  
Note, week 12: Thursday 11/16 – Library session 3 (no facilitation) Location TBD  
Due, week 13: Monday 11/20 – Mini-Assignment 4 “Visualizing Your Research”  
Note: NO CLASS 11/22, 11/23 for Thanksgiving

Week 14-16, November 27\textsuperscript{th} – December 11\textsuperscript{th}  
Rest, Review, Reflect, Resolve

Note, week 14: Monday 11/27 - Test 3 (on weeks 10-13)  
Note: No readings, blogs or facilitations due. Work on your final projects  
Due, week 14, Sunday 12/03: Final project website submission via canvas, by noon.  
Due week 15, Monday 12/04, Wednesday 12/06 and Thursday 12/ 7: Final project festival  
Last class day, Monday 12/11: New reflections, directions, and resolutions as critical geographers.