

Syllabus – Elective Course

Course title:

Health: A Common Good

Credits:

6 ECTS credits

Teaching language:

English

Target students:

Students in health, nursing, sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, psychology, economy, and social work.

Teacher in charge of the course:

Laure Liénard, PhD (ESSLIL, *Université Catholique de Lille*)

COURSE PRESENTATION

Prerequisite:

Students undertaking this course should normally have successfully completed at least one semester at university or have equivalent experience. They must have some ability to work as a group and be able to communicate easily in English at a standard university level. In other respects, the course is intended to serve a mix of profiles and learning backgrounds for a more diverse international learning experience.

Content:

This course explores how societies define, pursue, and protect health as a common good. While health is often reduced to the *absence of disease* in Western biomedical frameworks, the World Health Organization and many cultural traditions emphasize a broader notion of wellbeing—one that integrates social, economic, environmental, and political dimensions.

Drawing on the concept of social determinants of health, students will examine how factors such as gender, ethnicity, migration, social capital, and governance shape access to care and experiences of illness. The course situates these issues within a European and global perspective, connecting local realities to global trends such as climate change, digital health, and post-pandemic inequalities.

By tracing the historical emergence of welfare systems in Europe and their contemporary transformations, we will question how health came to be considered both a right and a collective responsibility—and why major inequities persist despite universalist ideals.

Through interdisciplinary lectures, case studies, and field visits, students will critically map health inequalities across different contexts and explore alternative ways of thinking about wellbeing, justice, and solidarity in the 21st century.

Class sessions will cover the following topics:

- Introduction: Social Justice + the basics of comparative Health Policy.
- Health systems in France and Europe.
- Planetary health and One Health;

- Gender, diversity & interculturality;
- Well-being and social capital.
- European Health Union & cross-border care.
- Health as a human right vs. a market commodity.
- Visit to three health care providers (health insurance services, hospital, community center) in Lille with opportunities to interact with French practitioners and decision-makers in the field of public health.
- Final assessment: students' Country Reports, and Group presentation.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, the students should:

- Analyze how European and global frameworks shape health as a common good.
- Compare welfare and health systems through the lens of equity and sustainability.
- Critically evaluate the social and digital determinants of health.
- Apply interdisciplinary tools (social science, ethics, and public policy) to a concrete health challenge.
- Communicate across cultures and disciplines in addressing global health issues.

WORKLOAD

French contact hours = 60 minutes (in some countries/institutions, 1 contact hour = 45-50 minutes)

Form	Number of hours	Comments
Face-to-face, in-class, on-site learning	39 hours	13 sessions of 3 hours, includes visits to healthcare providers Additional Fieldtrips
Approximate personal work/homework	15 hours	
Student total workload	54 hours	

EDUCATIONAL METHODS

Lectures, discussion, meeting with professionals, case studies, group work.

RESOURCES

All course materials will be supplied in class. They include slides and readings, such as:

- Kickbusch, I., & Gleicher, D. (2011). *Governance for Health in the 21st Century*. WHO Reg office Europe.
- Replication of Layte, R. and Whelan, C.T. (2009) "Explaining Social Class Inequalities in Smoking: the Role of Education, Self-Efficacy and Depression", *European Sociological Review* 25(4): 399-410.
- Levy B., Patz J. (2015): *Climate Change and Public Health*. Oxford University Press.
- Myers, Samuel S. & Frumkin, Howard (Eds.). (2020). *Planetary Health: Protecting Nature to Protect Ourselves*. Washington, DC: Island Press
- Persad Goving (2019). Justice and Public Health, in *Oxford Handbook of Public Health Ethics*.
- Venkatapuram, S. (2011). *Health Justice: An Argument from the Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

- Whitehead, M., & Dahlgren, G. (2006). *Concepts and principles for tackling social inequities in health: Levelling up Part 1*. Copenhagen:
- World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe. <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289013710>
- WHO Europe (2021). *European Programme of Work 2020–2025: United Action for Better Health*
- World Values Survey Association. (2022). *World Values Survey: Official aggregate (1981–2022)* [Data set]. World Values Survey Association. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>

ASSESSMENT

Form	Number	Comments
Final Individual Assignment (40%)	2	Approximatively 2 hours of your own country report.
Final exam (50%)	1	Group presentation on transversal issue.
Other (student participation...) (10%)		Attendance, participation, and contribution to group discussion.

This syllabus is based on information available at the time of publication (October 2025). Changes may occur.
For updated information about course content, please contact us: lilleprograms@univ-catholille.fr