

IDS 2935 (Section 2BH1): Global Patterns of Sexually Transmitted Infections

Instructor: Dr. Gabriela Hamerlinck (ghamerlinck@ufl.edu)
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Office Hours: Held in Turlington Hall 3122 and via Zoom (check Canvas for link)
Wednesday 9:00 pm – 11:00 am
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Or by appointment (please email to schedule)

Class meetings: Tues Period 3 and Thurs Period 3-4
Meeting location: Tuesday 9:35 am – 10:25 am Matherly Hall 0018
Thursday 9:35 am – 11:30 am Computer Sciences/Engineering Hall E222

Course Description

This is a 3 credit-hour course focused on the geography of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The course will begin with an overview on the types of bacteria and viruses transmitted sexually and discuss the geographic patterns of these organisms. Many bacterial STIs can be treated with antimicrobial drugs, though some bacteria are becoming drug resistant. Viral STIs cannot be treated with antimicrobials, although a human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine is now available. There are discrete geographic patterns to these sexually transmitted pathogens. Often, STIs are heavily stigmatized, and because sexual behavior is involved, often misunderstood by the public. Additionally, culture plays a major role in STI control, prevention, and transmission. Groups such as the Gates Foundation have initiated global challenges to design new condoms to promote wider use worldwide, because many cultures don't use condoms. These behavioral decisions are influenced by culture and religion, and STI reduction cannot be achieved without an understanding of these culture/behavior interactions. This course will examine several important bacterial and viral STIs and their control strategies and how culture impacts control or prevention strategies. Sexual behavior, culture, and religion are complex topics and this course aims to introduce these topics through the lens of medical geography and examine how these interactions lead to changing geographic patterns of STIs around the world.

In this course, students will be expected to (course objectives):

- 1) Define sexually transmitted infections and understand what pathogens can be transmitted during sex
- 2) Compare and contrast bacterial and viral STIs and how their biology affects control strategies
- 3) Understand the role of personal behavior and regional culture/religion in preventing or promoting STI persistence

- 4) Describe how stigmatism at the national, regional, or local level can affect STI reporting and future intervention
- 5) Discuss the role of education in STI prevention
- 6) Critically examine how STI outbreaks lead to major epidemics, such as HIV
- 7) Examine how pathogens such as Zika and Ebola may become STIs and how prevention differs from other STIs
- 8) Evaluate how STIs are portrayed in culture and public health

Required & Recommended Course Materials: *None*. Students will be assigned a set of weekly readings and videos to watch. All readings and links to all videos will be made available through Canvas.

Materials and Supplies Fees: *None*

Coursework and Schedule

List of graded work

This course will use a variety of methods to evaluate student performance. For all graded work in the course, rubrics are provided ahead of grading through the class management system Canvas – rubrics divide up assignments into specific points for specific tasks.

- Quizzes on course content knowledge (25 pts each x 7 = 150 pts; lowest quiz score dropped; assigned and completed via Canvas)
- Mid-term exam on course content, completed in-person during class. The exam will comprise of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and fill in the blank questions (100 pts).
- In-class activities and homework – students will receive reading material or concepts ahead of class or at the start of class and work in small groups or independently to review and discuss. Students will be asked to write about or orally answer critical thinking questions relating course skills to activities. For example, students may discuss the early days of the HIV epidemic and compare it to the ongoing Ebola outbreaks, where sexual transmission has been confirmed. Students will relate knowledge from lectures and readings on viral STIs and think about how HIV and Ebola differ and then how the future of Ebola may manifest if sexual transmission becomes a larger part of transmission. Points are awarded for attending and directly participating in the activity (10 points), preparedness - showing proof of knowledge of materials assigned ahead of class (15 points), and written or oral presentation/reflection (25 points). Students will be graded on each activity, but the goal of each activity is to learn through student led interactions (50 points each x 8 = 400 pts)
- Writing assignment – Position piece on STI control relating culture, biology, geography, and prevention. Students will draft a short and concise essay describing an STI and relating transmission and prevention to biology and culture, identifying opportunities to improve education or physical control (e.g. condom use) to reduce STI incidence in the future. The points for this project are divided between:
 - Selecting a topic (5 points)
 - Knowledge and synthesizing materials from primary sources, identifying the problem and defining strategies to improve/reduce STI rates (30 points),
 - Linking culture and biology (20 points)

- Linking the control and/or prevention of the chosen STI from local to global (25 points). As the course is designed with an international or global designation, students are asked to place their experiences with culture and biology into a global context within the written summary. Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of how social, cultural, and ecological differences around the world impact disease transmission and prevention/control.
- The remaining points are related to self-reflection (10). Specifically, students need to demonstrate the ability to reflect their own cultural experiences to those identified within the position pieces.
- Proper formatting (10 points).

The goal of self-reflection in this context is to identify similarities and differences in culture or ecology relative to student experience. This is designed to have students compare local culture or biology to the global context. The paper will be framed as an essay with sub-headings. Students will prepare a paper of no more than 2500 words to address the above goals. (100 points)

Total points in class = 750

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 to 100%	C	74 to < 77%
A-	90 to < 94%	C-	70 to < 74%
B+	87 to < 90%	D+	67 to < 70%
B	84 to < 87%	D	64 to < 67%
B-	80 to < 84%	D-	61 to < 64%
C+	77 to < 80%	E	<61%

Weekly schedule, readings, and due dates

The weekly schedule provides due dates, exam dates, quiz dates, and activity dates. Please note, all assigned readings will be found in the weekly module pages on Canvas. Readings include actual readings, such as distilled information from public health resources, such as the US CDC, to provide students concise information on each sexually transmitted disease we will study or discuss, and several peer reviewed papers (those that have rigorous review and editing process ahead of publication from profession equivalents). Additionally, students are provided with and asked to watch several videos ahead of or after lectures. These videos, such as Ted Talks or YouTube discussions are meant to provide context and content for discussion. As the course is international, these materials provide comparisons of different cultures, biological/ecological settings, and religious practices that may all impact sexually transmitted infection distribution and control. Readings and media are provided as links within the weekly module pages via Canvas, which are specific to the week and topic. Students should plan to read at least one public health source per class and one paper per week. When multiple papers are available, the instructor will put these into context for students. The module will identify supplemental readings from primary readings.

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	Aug 19: No class	Aug 21: Introduction to medical geography and STIs
2	Aug 26: Bacterial STIs and Control Methods	Aug 28: Activity 1 (<i>Drug resistant gonorrhea</i>)
3	Sept 2: Viral STIs and Control Methods	Sept 4: HIV - History of a Global Epidemic
4	Sept 9: Out of class movie day ("And the band played on" 140 mins); Homework 1	Sept 11: Activity 2 (<i>Changing patterns of chlamydia</i>); Quiz 1
5	Sept 16: HIV - Global patterns of spread	Sept 18: HIV - country by country patterns
6	Sept 23: HIV – Culture, religion, and HIV: how do you stop an epidemic	Sept 25: Activity 3 (<i>How do you stop an epidemic?</i>); Quiz 2
7	Sept 30: Wildlife STIs (Animals get them too)	Oct 2: (Guest Lecture: Dr. Jason Blackburn) Treating and Tracking Animal STIs; Quiz 3
8	Oct 7: HPV - the first viral STI with a working vaccine	Oct 9: Activity 4 (<i>Culture, religion, and cancer: STI stigma versus cancer prevention</i>); Quiz 4
9	Oct 14: Syphilis in American History	Oct 16: Syphilis in American History; Quiz 5
10	Oct 20: Exam review; Homework 2	Oct 23: Exam during class time
11	Oct 28: Introduction to the position piece	Oct 30: No class
12	Nov 4: STIs in media	Nov 6: Culture and condoms; Quiz 6
13	Nov 11: No class – Holiday	Nov 13: Activity 5 (<i>Sexual education as STI prevention</i>)
14	Nov 18: Emerging STI Threats (Zika, Ebola, mpox)	Nov 20: Activity 6 (<i>Evaluation of future STI threats</i>)
15	Nov 25: No class - Holiday	Nov 27: No class - Holiday
16	Dec 2: Emerging STI Threats (Zika, Ebola, mpox); Quiz 7 Position piece due	No class – reading days

NOTE: This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "[Academic Policies and Resources](#)" web page.

Course Policies & Class Environment

Meeting Policy

If you need help with any aspect of the course, you are encouraged to come to office hours (see the details on Page 1 of this syllabus). Alternatively, you can schedule a 1-on-1 meeting with the instructor. Please email Dr. Hamerlinck to arrange a meeting time. Outside of office hours, email is the preferred method of contact. I will do my best to respond to messages within 48 hours (not including weekends or holidays). As a courtesy, please check the syllabus and Canvas before reaching out; answers to many of your questions can be found there.

Canvas

Important announcements and updates will be regularly posted to the course Canvas website, so be sure to check Canvas frequently. To ensure that you do not miss anything, please make sure that your Canvas profile is set to receive notifications.

Email Accounts

It is UF policy that you use your GatorLink account or Canvas when emailing your instructors; we will not answer emails sent from other accounts (e.g., personal Gmail, etc.).

Professional Conduct

All members of the class are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times. Please use appropriate etiquette when interacting with your peers and instructors, including on Canvas and via email. Students who behave disrespectfully or disruptively will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

Extra Credit

Extra credit assignments may be posted at the instructors' discretion only. Any other extra work submitted in order to raise a grade will not be accepted and requests for additional extra credit will not be considered.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments must be submitted electronically via Canvas unless otherwise noted. Emailed or paper submissions for Canvas assignments will not be accepted. You are responsible for ensuring that all your work is uploaded correctly and completely by the deadline. Corrupted files will be treated as missing work (= 0 grade) until they are re-uploaded correctly and late penalties will apply if your resubmission is past the deadline. So, please always double check your files right after you upload them. If you experience technical problems when submitting your work in Canvas, contact the UF Computing Help Desk for assistance: <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.

Disputing a Grade

If you wish to dispute a grade for any assignment, you must contact the instructor in writing within two business days (48 hours) after the assignment has been returned. In your message, you must include a specific explanation for why you think the grade is incorrect and how you think it should be changed. An instructor will then arrange a meeting with you to discuss the issue and determine whether or not the grade should be changed. The grade assigned following this meeting will be final.

Late Work & Make-Up Assignments

All assignments must be submitted by the due date and time indicated on Canvas. If an assignment is submitted late, 10% of its total point value will be deducted for every day that it is late. Credit cannot be earned for assignments that are turned in 5+ days past the due date, or for those that are submitted after the instructor has graded and returned the assignment to the class. Late work will not be accepted after the deadline for the final assignment in the course.

Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis (at the instructor's discretion) only in the event of unforeseen emergencies. In such a case, you must contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the situation; note that the instructor may request documentation. No extensions will be granted for students who miss the due date for any other reason.

A note about deadlines: Remember, the due date does not have to be the "do" date. In other words, it is highly encouraged to work on your assignments in advance– do not wait until right before the deadline to submit your work. Last-minute computer problems or other non-emergency situations that arise right before the deadline are not valid reasons for requesting an extension; such requests will not be considered and late penalties will be applied to your work if it is not submitted before the deadline.

Academic Honesty

Instructors' note: Any action that subverts the learning goals of the course (or a particular course activity) will be treated as academic misconduct and reported to the Dean of Students Office. This includes– but is not limited to– cheating or assisting others in cheating, plagiarism (i.e., misrepresenting someone else's work as your own, whether it is copied directly or paraphrased), self-plagiarism (i.e., copying/reusing work that you have submitted previously), collaborating with others when it is not permitted, fabricating data, lying to an instructor, and bad faith attempts to undermine the intent of an learning activity. If found responsible by the Dean of Students Office, a grade adjustment will be applied, typically resulting in a score of zero on the assignment.

The Use of AI Generated Content

In this course, the use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT or Adobe Firefly) is not permitted during the completion of any assigned work. Use of a generative AI tool to complete assigned work in whole or in part may be referred under the Code of Student Conduct academic dishonesty provisions for further action by the Dean of Students Office. Students may use generative AI tools to support their independent study of course topics but should do so with the understanding that generative AI tools may not be trustworthy. If an assignment allows for the use of generative AI content, it will be clearly noted in the assignment page & instructions on Canvas.

Accommodations

Instructors' note: We want you to succeed in this course! To ensure your accommodations are in place when you need them, please be sure to have your DRC accommodation letter sent to us as early as possible– ideally at the beginning of the semester.

Understanding This Syllabus

It is your responsibility to ensure that you fully understand the policies outlined in this syllabus as well as the policies of the university as they relate to this course. By remaining enrolled in this course, you agree that you have read and understood all of these policies and that you will be held accountable to them.

At their discretion, the instructor may change aspects of the course during the semester to accommodate new opportunities, unforeseen disruptions, or other circumstances. These changes will be communicated clearly in class and through Canvas. The current version of the syllabus will always be available on our course's Canvas website. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are following the most recent version of the syllabus.

If you have any questions, please contact the instructors as soon as possible (preferably at the beginning of the course)!

Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Dr. Jason Blackburn (jblackburn@ufl.edu). Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).