Instructor: Carola Eisenberg, MD, (617) 868-0112
Kris Heggenhougen, PhD, (617) 432-2561
Kari Hannibal, MA (617) 667-7028 (teaching assistant)
Room MEC448, Thursdays, 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Course Description:

The course examines the links between health, health care, and human rights. Through lectures and class discussions, the course aims to empower students with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognize, prevent, and alleviate the human suffering caused by human rights violations. It presents an overview of the extent of human rights violations in the world and an analysis of their physical and psychological consequences on the health of victims, their families, and communities. The class will examine the ethical obligations of physicians in the face of violations, and provides a framework for the protection of human rights by physicians. The class will discuss the pro-active role of the physician in documenting the health consequences of human rights violations, treating survivors of trauma, identifying the impact of health policies on human rights, and participating in human rights education and advocacy. The special needs of women and children will be highlighted. Particular attention will be paid to the experience of the physician working in the United States. Course participants will also learn to recognize and mediate secondary traumatic stress.

Required Books:

1. 1998 Course Readings
3. Ethical Codes and Declarations Relevant to the Health Professions. 3rd edition (London: Amnesty International, 1993.)

Assignments:

By the middle of the course, students will choose a topic related to some aspect of human rights as covered in the course. Each student will be expected to present orally a research study proposal and a one-page description of their topic that includes: a research question, background information, significance, methods, and a plan of action. At the end of the course, students will submit their research paper and present their work in class for 15-20 minutes.

Evaluation:

Students' conceptual understanding and knowledge will be assessed through their participation in class and by their oral and written presentation of their research project.

Hours of the Course:
Outline

Session 1: September 17

Carola Eisenberg, MD; H.K. Heggenhougen, PhD

Course Introduction and requirements

Susannah Sirkin, MEd

How Does Medicine Apply to Human Rights Issues?

A presentation of the health effects of human rights violations and an overview of the health professional contributions to the documentation and prevention of human rights violations.

Readings:


Session 2: September 24

Kris Heggenhougen, PhD

Structural Violence and its Implications for Health and Human Rights

Review of the impact of structural violence on populations, obstacles to improvement of health, constraints and leverage of the medical community in these situations.

Readings:


Session 3: October 1

Felton Earls, MD, and Mary Carlson, PhD

Human Rights and Children: The Interconnection between Human Rights and Medical Research - Case Examples from Romania.
Readings:


**Session 4: October 8**

**Carola Eisenberg, MD; H.K. Heggenhougen, PhD; Kari Hannibal**

**Historical Perspective on Human Rights:**


Readings:


Optional Reading:


**Session 5: October 15**

**Sofia Gruskin, JD, MIA**

**Reproductive Health and Women's Rights:**

How does gender discrimination manifest as abuses of women's human rights? Review of the definition of reproductive health, definition of the right to information, and the impact the right to information has on reproductive rights.

Readings:


**Session 6: October 22**

**H. Jack Geiger, MD**
Race, Health, and Human Rights in the U.S.

Readings:
To be determined

Session 7: October 29

Roberta Apfel, MD, and Bennett Simon, MD

Children and War

Asylum and Medical Documentation


Readings:


Session 8: November 5

Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic; Kathleen Allden, MD

Metal Health and Human Rights: The Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic

Students will meet with Kathleen Allden, MD; Thang Pham, LICSW; and a group of patients from the Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic. The group will consist of seven former political detainees who were imprisoned in re-education camps for 8-10 years following the Vietnam War. They all suffered torture, starvation, isolation, and hard labor.

Readings:


Optional Readings:

Session 9: November 12
Elaine Alpert, MD

Domestic Violence as a Human Rights Violation

Current perspectives on the documentation of domestic violence, with a focus on its analysis as a human rights violation. The responsibility of the government to act to protect victims of domestic violence. Health professional responses to domestic violence.

Readings:
To be determined

Session 10: November 19
Peter Rosenblum, JD

International Humanitarian Humanitarian Law and Health consequences of Armed Conflicts

What are the immediate and long-term effects of attacks on civilian populations, destruction of infrastructure, disruption of supplies of food, water, housing, health services during times of war and civil conflict? What are the immediate and long-term health needs triggered by mass migrations of people during armed conflict? What constitutes appropriate health care in these circumstances? What methods are used to monitor the health effects of human rights violations in these conflicts? Examination of international humanitarian law and issues of medical neutrality, ethical dilemmas in responding to human rights issues, and role destruction between human rights workers and relief workers.

Readings:
To be determined

Session 11: December 3
Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

Case Study: Response of the South African Medical Profession to Human Rights Violations

Readings:
To be determined

Session 12: December 10

Human Rights Day
Student Presentations
Session 13: December 17

Student Presentations and Course Wrap-up