

NEW COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT—FALL 2007

EPID 663: Health, Evidence & Human Rights

Instructor: Siobán Harlow, Professor of Epidemiology



This course will consider how population research can contribute to developing evidence relevant to advancing human rights. The ability to generate and interpret evidence is critical to addressing human rights abuses both in the courts and through the development of national and multilateral policies. Though evidence takes a number of forms and demands a variety of fields of expertise, the skills unique to public health and health research expand the scope of inquiry greatly. Human rights are not an individual phenomenon. They are held at a largely individual level, but in reality—be it in the form of collective claims or as a result of their fundamental interdependence and interrelation—human rights succeed or fail to be realized on a social level, and so also require examination at the population level in order to the complexities that define human rights in the context of community systems. In this central respect, the research capacities of epidemiology and the health professions potentially play an important role in the field of health and human rights. This course will systematically examine how to frame population research priorities from a human rights perspective and how population research methodologies can be applied to human rights questions. Case studies of emerging research in the field will be used to develop a conceptual framework for applying health research methodologies to evidentiary issues in human rights.

Objectives of the course:

1. Explore the nexus of health and human rights, and examine the implications of this intersection for public health research.
2. Review the history and development of the field of human rights law, with particular attention to specific human rights instruments with implications for health.
3. Build competency in analysis of health issues in the context of human rights law through the close examination of case studies and emerging uses of epidemiologic methods to compile evidence relevant to human rights.
4. Review methodologies for the documentation of human rights violations from a population health perspective.

Course will meet Fridays from 9am to 12pm, Fall 2007.

Prerequisite: Graduate Standing