MÁSTER UNIVERSITARIO EN SALUD PÚBLICA

Syllabus of the course:

Understanding global health inequalities: a transdisciplinary critical approach

Departamento de Ciencias Experimentales y de la Salud

UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA - UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA

DATOS DESCRIPTIVOS DE LA ASIGNATURA

Course: 2020-2021

Name of the course: Understanding Global Health Inequalities

Type of course: Optional

Number of credits: 3 ECTS

Trimester: Third

Professor: Joan Benach

PROFESSOR

Joan Benach (MD, PhD), is Director of the Health Inequalities Research Group- Employment Conditions Network (GREDS-EMCONET), Co-director of the Johns Hopkins-UPF Public Policy Center, and Professor of Sociology in the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. His research interests include social determinants of health inequities, precarious employment and employment relations, the intersections between class, gender, migration, and geography, health policy analysis, and complex political and environmental problems of health equity. He has shown his leadership in many international research projects, being Co-chair of the Employment Conditions Knowledge Network of WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, giving many presentations, conferences, and workshops, and collaborating with social movements, unions and governments around the world on the aforementioned subjects.
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PRESENTATION

In the 21st century, humanity faces enormous challenges that can be characterized through emergent global crises such as are the climatic and ecological emergency, the crises of work and democracy, and the increase of global social and health inequalities, all of which are interrelated. To tackle these global inequalities, it is essential to accurately understand both the current limits of knowledge and the key processes generating social and environmental injustices in their association with science, technology, culture, and power. Through a transdisciplinary and critical scientific approach, both historical and political, this course examines the essential issues that make up current global health inequities and what are their possible solutions. The themes discussed in this course are the following: Types of research and action, systems thinking and embodiment (theme 1); Political economy, poverty and development (theme 2); Capitalism and neoliberal globalization (theme 3); socio-ecological crisis and climatic emergency (theme 4); Crisis, austerity and health commodification (theme 5); Democracy, policies and community action (theme 6).

OBJECTIVES

• Identify and critically analyze some of the limitations of mainstream public health research

• Review the pros and cons embedded in Social Determinants of Health research identifying a complex 'system thinking' approach across a broad range of disciplines and tools

• Describe the usefulness of an integrated approach for the analysis, monitoring and evaluation of policies to reduce health inequities

• Understand some key issues on SDH (e.g., politics, complexity, intersectionality, precariousness, etc) under a transdisciplinary integrated research approach

• Unravel some complex conditions, processes, and pathways of embodying SDH

• Explore some of the potentials and uses of making SDH transdisciplinary integrated systemic research in the next decades.

COMPETENCIES TO ACHIEVE

GENERAL

Instrumental

- Ability to ask questions, assess information critically, synthesize information, and know how to assess priorities in global health inequalities.

Personal

- Promote the capacity for personal communication, public exposure and active participation in debates.

Systemic

- Capacity building to critically interpret the readings, and evaluate the range of issues associated with global health inequalities.

SPECIFIC

- Learn some of the limitations of mainstream health research
- Identify a transdisciplinary approach on global health inequities across a broad range of disciplines and tools
- Describe the usefulness of this approach to analyze, monitor and assess policies to reduce global health inequities
- Understand key broad structural issues on Global Health Equity under a transdisciplinary integrated research approach
- Explore some potentials uses and evolution of this approach for the next decades.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

High level of oral and written English skills.

High curiosity and motivation in research/policy related to transdisciplinary studies and global health inequities.

Reading of the required texts listed in the course syllabus.

METHODOLOGY

Work plan for the course:

Type of activity	Duration	%
Seminars and Practice in the classroom	22	29,2%
Work group out the classroom	13	17,3%
Reading and individual work out the classroom	40	53,3%
Total	75	100%

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated based on their attendance (a maximum of one class loss) and their class participation (50%) and the completion of a final paper (50%) three weeks after the end of the course. The final paper will be related to the course's subject matter and might be written individually or in groups of two and must meet the following requirements: **maximum** 2,500 words (12 point font).

SCHEDULE

(3er Trimester)

Schedule	Subject	Professor
Session 1:		
	Types of research and action; systems thinking and embodiment	Joan Benach
Session 2:		
	Political economy, poverty and development	Joan Benach
Session 3:		
	Capitalism and neoliberal globalization	Joan Benach
Session 4:		
	Socioecological crisis and climate emergency	Joan Benach
Session 5:		
	Crisis, austerity and health commodification	Joan Benach
Session 6:		
	Democracy, policies and community action	Joan Benach

PROGRAM OUTLINE, READINGS, AND MATERIALS

Course **Professor Joan Benach**		
Session 1.	**Session title** Types of research and action, systems thinking and embodiment	**Aula global** (Disponible en la web)
Contents	- Reviewing types of scientific approaches in public health research: examples Social Determinants of Health: a critique - Introducing complexity and systems thinking - Understanding the bio-psycho-social interplay between biology and environment - Concept, pathways, and effects of embodying health and disease inequalities	
Place	Pending	
Required readings	- Levins R, Lopez C. Toward an ecosocial view of health. Int J Health Serv. 1999;29(2):261-93. - Susser E. Eco-epidemiology: thinking outside the black box. Epidemiology. 2004;15(5):519-20. - Diez Roux AV. Complex systems thinking and current impasses in health disparities research. Am J Public Health. 2011;101(9):1627-34	
Recommended readings	- Paneth N. A Conversation with Mervyn Susser. Epidemiology. 2003;14(6):748-752. - Krieger N, Smith GD. The tale wagged by the DAG: broadening the scope of causal inference and explanation for epidemiology. Int J Epidemiol. 2016 Sep 30. pii: dyw114 - Luke DA, Stamatakis KA. Systems science methods in public health: dynamics, networks, and agents. Annu Rev Public Health. 2012;33:357-76. - Muntaner C. Invited commentary: On the future of social epidemiology--a case for scientific realism. Am J Epidemiol. 2013;178(6):852-7. - Grant MJ, Booth A. A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. Health Info Libr J. 2009;26(2):91-108. doi: 10.1111/j.1471-1842.2009.00848.x.	
Trabajo fuera del aula		
Material	- Presentation	

Course Professor Joan Benach		
Session 2	**Session title** Political economy, poverty and development	**Aula global** (Disponible en la web)

Contents	- History, politics and health
	  Poverty, measurement and development aid
	- The debate on development and well-being
	  Colonial systems
	  The new neocolonialism
	  Dependency theories and systems
	- Some debates and controversies	

Place	Pending	
Required readings	- Muntaner C, Borrell C, Ng E, et al. Politics, welfare regimes, and population health: controversies and evidence. Sociology of Health & Illness 2011;33(6):946-964. - Ng E, Muntaner C. A Critical Approach to Macrosocial Determinants of Population Health: Engaging Scientific Realism and Incorporating Social Conflict. Current Epidemiology Reports. 2014;1(1):27-37. - Madureira Lima J, Galea S. Corporate practices and health: a framework and mechanisms. Globalization and Health 2018;14(21):1-12.	
Recommended readings	- The Lancet-University of Oslo Commission on Global Governance for Health. The political origins of health inequity: prospects for change. Lancet 2014;383:630-667. - Gill S, Benatar S. Global Health Governance and Global Power: A Critical Commentary on the Lancet-University of Oslo Commission Report. Int J Health Serv, 2016;46(2);346-365. - Waitzkin H. Commentary: Salvador Allende and the birth of Latin American social medicine. International Journal of Epidemiology 2005;34:739-741. http://scielo.sld.cu/pdf/rcsp/v38s5/sup12512.pdf	
Trabajo fuera del aula		
Material	- Presentation	

Course **Professor Joan Benach**		
Session 3	**Session title** Capitalism and neoliberal globalization	**Aula global** (Disponible en la web)

Contents	- Capitalism
	  Evolution, features and consequences
	- Globalization and neoliberalism
	  Types of power
	  Impacts on health and inequality
	- Some debates and controversies	

Place	Pending	
Required readings	- Navarro V. Neoliberalism as a class ideology; or, the political causes of the growth of inequalities. Int J Health Services 2007;37(1):47-62. - Benach J, Pericàs JM, Martínez-Herrera E. La salud bajo el capitalismo. Contradicciones sistémicas que permean la ecohumanidad y dañan nuestra mentecuerpo. Papeles de relaciones ecosociales y cambio global. 2017;137:29-56. - Prins SJ, Bates LM, Keyes KM, Muntaner C. Anxious? Depressed? You might be suffering from capitalism: contradictory class locations and the prevalence of depression and anxiety in the USA. Sociology of Health and Illness 2015;37(8):1352-1372.	
Recommended readings	- Husson M. El capitalismo en el atolladero. Sin Permiso. 2013. www.sinpermiso.info/articulos/ficheros/2Hussonfebrer13.pdf - Benach J, Muntaner C. La epidemia global de desigualdad en salud tiene su origen en la crisis socio-ecológica del capitalismo. Ecología Política. 2009;37:21-33. https://n-1.cc/file/download/771995 - Muntaner C, Chung H, Murphy K, Ng E. Barriers to knowledge production, knowledge translation, and urban health policy change: ideological, economic, and political considerations. Journal of Urban Health. 2012;89(6):915-24.	
Trabajo fuera del aula		
Material	- Presentation	

Course **Professor Joan Benach**		
Session 4	**Session title** Socioecological crisis and climate emergency	**Aula global** (Disponible en la web)

Contents	- The socio-ecological crisis
	  Origin and systemic evidence
	  The climatic emergency and its dimensions
	  Effects on public health and inequality
	- Socioeconomic and political causes
	  Degrowth and future scenarios
	  Socio-environmental and political responses	

Place	Pending	
Required readings	- Raworth K. A Doughnut for the Anthropocene: humanity's compass in the 21st century. Lancet, 2017: e48-e49. Available at: https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2542-5196%2817%2930028-1 - Benach J, Rivera Díaz M, Muñoz NJ, et al. What the Puerto Rican hurricanes make visible: Chronicle of a public health disaster foretold. Soc Sci Med. 2019 Jun 12:112367. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2019.112367. - The Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on planetary health. Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on planetary health. Lancet 2015; 386: 1973-2028.	
Recommended readings	- Figueres C, Schellnhuber HJ, Whiteman G, et al. Three years to safeguard our climate. Nature 2017;546:593-595. - Jorgenson AK, Clark B. The Economy, Military, and Ecologically Unequal Exchange Relationships in Comparative Perspective: A Panel Study of the Ecological Footprints of Nations, 1975-2000. Social Problems, 2009;56(4):621-646. - Kubiszewski I, Costanza R, Franco C, et al. Beyond GDP: Measuring and achieving global genuine progress. Ecological Economics. 2013;93:57-68. - Turner G. Is Global Collapse Imminent? An Updated Comparison of The Limits to Growth with Historical Data. Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute. Research Paper No. 4 August 2014.	
Trabajo fuera del aula		
Material	- Presentation	

Course Professor Joan Benach		

Session 5	**Session title** Crisis, austerity and commodification	**Aula global** (Disponible en la web)

Contents	- Progress: measurement and paradoxes
	- Capitalist 'crises' and 'austerity'
	  Impacts on health, quality of life and inequality
	- Universal health care and commodification of health.
	  Historical features, evolution and contradictions of the Spanish National Health System	

Place	Pending	
Required readings	- Stuckler D, Reeves A, Karanikolos M, McKee M. The health effects of the global financial crisis: can we reconcile the differing views? A network analysis of literature across disciplines. Health Economics, Policy and Law. 2015;10(01):83 - 99. - Benach J. El Sistema Nacional de Salud español: ¿Cómo se originó? ¿Qué logró? ¿A dónde debería ir? Sin Permiso 2018. Accesible en: http://www.sinpermiso.info/textos/el-sistema-nacional-de-salud-espanol-como-se-origino-que-logro-a-donde-deberia-ir - Stuckler D, Feigl AB, Basu S, McKee M. The political economy of universal health coverage, 2010. LSHTM Reseach Online.	
Recommended readings	- Bacigalupe A, Vahid Shahidi F, Muntaner C, et al. Why is There so Much controversy regarding the population health impact of the Great Recession? Reflections on Three Case Studies. Int J Health Services 2016;46(1):5-35. - Benach J. La mercantilización de la sanidad: sin salud no hay libertad, sin libertad no hay salud. Diario.es. 19-11-13. Accesible en: http://www.eldiario.es/catalunya/mercantilizacion-sanidad-salud-libertad_0_198431052.html - Lyu H, Xu T, Brotman D, et al. Overtreatment in the United States. PLoS ONE 2017;12(9): e0181970. Accesible en: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181970 - Puig-Samper F, Bravo Fernández. C. Treinta años del sistema nacional de salud. Desafíos actuales y propuestas. Fundación 1 mayo, 2016. Accesible en: http://www.ccoo.es/f1791e9b346d3a6b7321c305bf923c51000001.pdf	
Trabajo fuera del aula		
Material	- Presentation	

Course **Professor Joan Benach**		
Session 6	**Session title** Democracy, policies and community action	**Aula global** (Disponible en la web)
Contents	- Developing integrated information systems and policies - Political conflicts and public health - The search for democracy, sustainability and social justice - Recognizing advances and limits of public health research and action: the covid-19 case	
Place	Pending	
Required readings	- Wing S. Science for reducing health inequalities emerges from social justice movements. New Solutions. 2016;26(1):103-114. - Muntaner C. Democracy, authoritarianism, political conflict, and population health: a global, comparative, and historical approach. Soc Sci Med. 2013 Jun;86:107-12. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.03.004. Epub 2013 Mar 15. - Corburn J, Curl S, Arredondo G. A Health-in-All Policies Approach Addresses many of Richmond, California's place-based hazards, stressors. Health Affairs 2014;33(11):1905-1913.	
Recommended readings	- Puska P, Ståhl T. Health in all policies-the Finnish initiative: background, principles, and current issues. Annu Rev Public Health. 2010;31:315-28. - Freiler A, Muntaner C, Shankardass K, Mah CL, Molnar A, Renahy E, O'Campo P. Glossary for the implementation of Health in All Policies (HiAP). J Epidem Community Health 2013;67:1068-1072. doi:10.1136/jech-2013-202731 - Grandjean P. Implications of the precautionary principle for primary prevention and research. Annu. Rev. Public Health 2004. 25:199-223. - Lenaway D, Halverson P, Sotnikov S, et al. Public health systems research: setting a national agenda. Am J Public Health. 2006;96(3):410-3. Epub 2006 Jan 31. - Schwartz S, Prins SJ, Campbell UB, Gatto NM. Is the "well-defined intervention assumption" politically conservative? Soc Sci Medicine 2016;166:254-257. - Stokols D, Misra S, Moser RP, Hall KL, Taylor BK. The ecology of team science: understanding contextual influences on transdisciplinary collaboration. Am J Prev Med. 2008;35(2 Suppl):S96-115. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2008.05.003	
Trabajo fuera del aula		
Material	- Presentation	