

Global health governance

UGRA_016255

Departments	Department of International, European Union and Comparative Law, Department of Law
Teaching Languages	English
ECTS	6
Teacher responsible	Fernandez Fernandez Oscar - oscar.fernandez9@esade.edu

Course Goals

This course explores the intricate governance landscape of global health and its evolution over recent decades – with COVID-19 and previous health crises acting as critical junctures. Students will examine the roles of key actors, some of which are widely recognized as such, whereas others are often overlooked when it comes to their significance vis-à-vis global health matters. We will focus on formal international organisations dealing exclusively or partly with global health (such as the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization, respectively), informal fora such as the G7 and the G20, and regional organisations such as the European Union. In addition to these state-based international institutions, we will assess the impact of national governments, philanthropic entities such as the Gates Foundation, multistakeholder initiatives such as Gavi and the Global Fund, and the private sector. The course will dissect how these different actors operate internally, interact with one another, and promote or resist specific normative approaches, multilateral agreements and policies. Issues such as health equity, disease prevention, and emergency response will articulate our discussions. Students will be invited to reflect upon the trade-offs that can exist between these and other goals, as well as upon the benefits and downsides of framing (global) health as a security issue.

Prerequisites

None.

Teaching methodology

All sessions will be highly interactive, consisting of explanations combined with participatory segments where students will consolidate their understanding of the course content through discussions and exercises. In addition, students will be asked to do several readings and carry out some exercises at home, as well as prepare in-class presentations. Active participation will be encouraged and indeed expected throughout all sessions.

Description

Course contribution to program

The course engages with the interplay between the most important national, transnational and international actors that have an impact on global health. In doing so, it advances a holistic understanding of global health governance, considering a wide range of determinants of health and thus encompassing related issue areas such as trade, development and environmental policy. After completing the course, students should have acquired a solid grasp of the most relevant debates that global health scholars and practitioners have engaged in over the past decades, as well as the main vectors of the post-COVID-19 global health agenda. These matters will be addressed from a variety of critical theoretical approaches, including postcolonialism and feminism. Students will be introduced to key concepts in the study of today's global governance, such as regime complexity, and be encouraged to

draw linkages with other courses. They will also develop several transferrable skills, such as report writing, oral presentation, and teamwork.

Bibliography

Simon Rushton, Security and public health, Wiley (Book)

Activities

In-class discussions and debates

Analytical exercises

Teamwork

Group presentations

Readings

Interaction with visiting guest professionals

Case study analyses

Research work and projects

Content

#	Topic
1	[The global politics of disease] This introductory bloc will provide a historical overview of the symbiotic relationship between health and international politics. Students will be introduced to epidemics and pandemics that notoriously influenced military conflicts and diplomatic relations. In addition, we will discuss dynamics of cooperation and conflict, as well as globalisation and interdependence, from the perspective of their impact on global health. This module will also cover the first international organisations and agreements that were crafted to deal with global health matters. Special attention will be paid to the establishment of the WHO after World War II and to the successes and setbacks it has since experienced. Students will be encouraged to look beyond communicable diseases and reflect upon the role that other pathologies have played through the course of history.
2	[Global health governance in the 21st century] This module will discuss the main differences between the “international health” and the “global health” paradigms, explaining the increased popularity of the latter, especially since the turn of the century. Students will discover that, in parallel to this transition, there has been a remarkable proliferation of global health actors in the past two decades, resulting in a highly dense and diverse governance landscape. Some of these new entities – including the Gates Foundation, Gavi and the Global Fund – will be analysed in detail, in terms of their internal functioning, the approaches they tend to embrace and their overall compatibility with the WHO. This will allow students to reflect on the health impact of economic philosophies and to distinguish between different global health frames, as well as between vertical and horizontal approaches to disease prevention and control. These and other debates will be addressed from the lens of effectiveness, equity and the relationship between the Global North and the Global South.
3	[International decision-making and global health: a theoretical and practical view] This bloc will offer students a comprehensive understanding of decision-making practices across key entities in global health governance. Through concrete and timely examples, we will examine the different strategies that these actors pursue in relation to one another in an attempt to maximise absolute and relative gains. We will also unpack these entities and analyse the roles played by different bodies and stakeholders within them, such as secretariats in international organisations and interest groups in

#	Topic
3	nation-states. In doing so, we will draw upon both rationalist and constructivist accounts of decision-making processes and introduce essential concepts such as “forum shopping” and “issue linkage”, exploring their significance in a context of regime complexity. Students will delve into the experiences of national and international policymakers in their efforts to advance their respective goals, navigate inevitable trade-offs and tackle pressing global health challenges.
4	[The COVID-19 pandemic and global health security] COVID-19 was a game-changer for the politics and salience of global health. In public discourse, comparisons between this pandemic and a war became commonplace – more so than in other recent health crises. But these comparisons are hardly a new phenomenon: in the past, other diseases were also portrayed as threats to national and international security. The health security paradigm has gained traction since the end of the Cold War, in conjunction with the securitisation of other issue areas, such as migration and environmental policy. In the post-COVID era, the global health agenda has become dominated by the revisions of the International Health Regulations and the potential adoption of a WHO agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The widely accepted zoonotic origins of COVID-19, combined with escalating concerns over climate change, have reinforced a “One Health” approach to health security that puts the spotlight on the human-animal-environmental interface. With all of these developments in place, is there sufficient political space – and available resources – for non-contagious diseases? And, more generally, is health securitisation desirable from a normative standpoint? In this module, students will be prompted to reflect upon these pressing questions and the future of global health governance.

Assessment

Tool	Assessment tool	Category	Weight %
In-class analysis and discussion of issues	Attendance and active participation during the sessions will be assessed, together with in-class exercises.	Ordinary round	20.00%
Group project		Ordinary round	40.00%
Final individual project		Ordinary round	40.00%

PROGRAMS

113-Law Exchange Program (Undergraduates: Law)
113 Year 1 (Optative)

DD05-Double Degree Program (exchange) (Undergraduates: Law)
DD05 Year 1 (Optative)

GDL20-Double Degree in Law and Global Governance, Economics and Legal Order (Undergraduates: Law)
GDL20 Year 5 (Optative)