Gendered Health Impacts of Structural Adjustment Programs

Course Description

Since the 1980s, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have conditioned loans to poor countries on implementation of economic policy requirements known collectively as structural adjustment. Liberalizing trade, increasing export manufacturing, shifting from subsistence to export-oriented agriculture, and privatizing national assets and industries have been hallmarks of structural adjustment policies. This course considers the gendered effects of structural adjustment. It investigates why women are over-represented among those most negatively affected by cuts in public services, how their caretaking burdens increase and their paid employment decreases disproportionately with privatization. Comparing experiences in the global South with more recent developments in the European Union, this course provides a gendered analysis of the global health impacts of structural adjustment programs.

Course Requirements

Students are required to complete all assigned readings for the course and actively participate in the online discussion board. The class participation grade will be based on the number, volume, and quality of student comments, which will engage reading materials, films, and lectures (given by the professor and uploaded to the online lecture delivery system). Sustained, astute, and critically engaged class participation is crucial for a successful and productive online classroom experience, and such participation depends largely upon students completing the reading assignments at length. Class discussion will stay closely aligned with the reading assignments for each week. To facilitate candid discussions, it is important that each student manifest respect for the opinions of their classmates. Hostile, intolerant, and insensitive remarks will not be tolerated and will be removed from the online discussion board. Class participation as described herein will count toward 20 percent of the final grade.

Each student is required to complete three short projects, the requirements for which are outlined in the syllabus under “Course Structure.” Each short project counts toward 20 percent of the final grade; short projects count, in total, toward 60 percent of the final grade.

There will be a final examination. Students will be given their examination a week prior to its due date and may utilize all course materials (but only assigned course materials) to complete the exam. The final exam counts toward 20 percent of the final grade.

Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated and will result in serious consequences. If students are ever unclear about the meaning of plagiarism or whether or not their work may be plagiarizing, the student must discuss the issue directly with me. Again, failure to do so may, and most likely will, result in severe punishment. You may also address your inquiries online at http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html.
The following books are required for this class. They are available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore (One Penn Plaza, Ferren Mall, New Brunswick, NJ 08901). I have included ISBN numbers if you would prefer to order these books online.


**Other readings are drawn from these books, which are not required for this class.**


**Course Structure**

**Week # 1: Course Introduction: Mapping Central Coordinates Connecting Structural Adjustment and Health**

Week of Tuesday, September 4th


*Globalization and Health* (Kawachi and Wamala, eds.), “Structural Adjustment Programs and Health” (Breman and Shelton), Chapter 13, pp. 219–233; “Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: Bold New Approach to Poverty Eradication or Old Wine in New Bottles?” (Wamala, Kawachi, and Mpepo), Chapter 14, pp. 234–249.

**Week # 2: Structural Adjustment in Global Context**

Week of Monday, September 10th


**Week # 3: The Internal Mechanisms of Structural Adjustment**
Week of Monday, September 17th


Week # 4: A Glimpse into the Inhumanity of Structural Adjustment: Part I

Week of Monday, September 24th

Planet of Slums (Davis)

Week # 5: Project Week—Redefining Poverty

Week of Monday October, 1st

Small paper is due in my email inbox on Friday, October 5th, at 11:59pm

Students will write a 1000 word paper based on a discussion board exercise concerning the definition of poverty during week # 4. The assignment will be grounded in a critical reading of Davis’s Planet of the Slums.

Week # 6: Structural Adjustment: Post–Cold War Capitalist (Under) Development

Week of Monday, October 8th

Gender and the Political Economy of Development (Rai), “Global Restructuring and Restructuring Gender Relations: The Politics of Structural Adjustment,” Chapter 4, pp. 121–158.


Week # 7: Understanding the Social and Economic Consequences of Structural Adjustment: National Examples

Week of Monday, October 15th

**Film:** Life and Debt (2002) and selected scenes of The Corporation (2003)

**Week # 8: The Role of Structural Adjustment in Global Health Governance: Part I, Historical Antecedents**

Week of Monday, October 22nd

*Poverty, Inequality, and Health: An International Perspective* (Leon and Watts, eds.) “The Health Consequences of the Collapse of the Soviet Union” (McKee), 17–36; “Industrialization and Health in Historical Perspective” (Steckel), 37–36; “Economic Progress and Health” (Sen), 333–345.


**Week # 9: The Role of Structural Adjustment in Global Health Governance: Part II, Structural Adjustment and the Global Imperative to Privatize Healthcare**

Week of Monday, October 29th

*Sickness and Wealth: The Corporate Assault on Global Health* (Fort, Mercer, and Gish): Chapter 1, “The Lethal Divide: How Economic Inequality Affects Health” (Bezruchka and Mercer), 11–18; Chapter 3, “The Primary Health Care Movement Meets the Free Market” (Hong), 27–36; Chapter 4, “Sapping the Poor: The Impact of Structural Adjustment Programs” (Gloyd), 43–54; Chapter 5, “The Failures of Neoliberalism: Health Sector Reform in Guatemala” (Verdugo), 57–68; Chapter 6, “HMOs Abroad: Managed Care in Latin America” (Iriart, Waitzkin, and Merhy), 69–78; Chapter 7, “Trade and Health Care: Corporatizing Vital Human Services” (Shaffer and Brenner), 79–89.


**Week # 10: Structural Adjustment and the People without a Voice**

**Week of Monday, November 5th**


**Week # 11: Project Week—A Glimpse into the Inhumanity of Structural Adjustment, Part II**

**Week of Monday, November 12th**

**Review paper is due in my email inbox on Friday, November 16th, at 11:59pm**

Throughout the course, we increasingly see how health is related to globalization, macro- and micro- economic policy, national and global poverty, conflict and war, and debt crises. Watch the film *The Big Sellout* (2007) and write a review of it that could be submitted for consideration in “Films for the Feminist Classroom,” “an online, open-access journal [that] publishes film reviews that provide a critical assessment of the value of films as pedagogical tools in the feminist classroom.” (See [http://www.signs.rutgers.edu/ffc_home.html](http://www.signs.rutgers.edu/ffc_home.html)) More review guidelines will be forthcoming in a separate document.
Week # 12: The Structural Adjustment–Human Rights–Development Link: Empirically Measuring the Social and Economic Consequences of Structural Adjustment

Week of Monday, November 19th


Week # 13: The Mechanism of Structural Adjustment at Work in the United States

Week of Monday, November 26th

*The People’s Pension: The Struggle to Defend Social Security since Reagan* (Laursen)


Week # 14: Anti-Austerity in the United States and around the World

Week of Monday, December 3rd

*Against Thrift: Why Consumer Culture Is Good for the Economy, the Environment, and Your Soul* (Livingston)


Week # 15: Project Week: The Necropolitics of Structural Adjustment

Week of Monday, December 10th

Small paper is due in my email inbox on Wednesday, December 12th, at 11:59pm


*The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, eds.): “Governmentality” (Foucault), 87–104.

After you read Mbembe’s “Necropolitics,” and based on what you now know about the relationship between structural adjustment and health, do you believe that structural adjustment can be characterized as a form of necropolitics? Craft your answer into a 1000-word paper. Be sure to use at least six sources read in class. Outside research is not necessary for this assignment.

The final examination is open book and will appear online by 11:59pm Wednesday, December 12th. The exam is due on or before 11:59pm Thursday, December 20th.