Geog 242: Medical Geography
Fall 2012
Tuesday and Thursday, 5:35 to 6:50 pm
HN 1022

Instructor: Prof. Henry Sirotin
Office: 1032 Hunter North
Office Hours: Thursday, 7-7.30pm and by appt.
Email: hsirotin@hunter.cuny.edu; please make sure that all email messages include GEOG 242 in the subject line, and also sign your text with your full name. I do not respond to unsigned emails from addresses like kissmesweetie2960

Course Description and Objectives:

The course will cover an introduction to medical geography, which, over the last several decades, has emerged as a significant subfield integrating medicine with human and physical geography and climatology. Medical geography includes two major themes, disease ecology (the relationship of disease to both the natural and human environment) and the spatial/social aspects of the provision of medical care in society. This course will examine both of these themes, as well as the concepts and methodologies that form the basis of the study.

The course is recommended for any student interested in medicine or a medically related career, either professionally or out of general interest. As a 200-level course it will be taught at the general interest level, but I can adjust the content to the class interest, and I can certainly work with students who are interested in more advanced material.

My teaching perspective is epistemologically pragmatic objectivist. In other words, “Just facts and solutions, folks. Leave the ideologies at home.” Other views, however, will be welcomed, if well defended.

Learning outcomes include
1. Knowledge of disciplinary content, including the evolution of medical and health geography, basic health statistics, the demographic and epidemiological transitions, transmissible and environmental disease, the spatial pattern of health care, and the social, economic, and medical factors underlying these issues.
2. An understanding of the use of geographic tools, including elementary statistics, maps, remote sensing, and geographic information systems, in tracking health and disease patterns and the spatial analysis of health care provision.
3. An understanding of the potential health outcomes that may result from changes in our physical environment, and the spatial state of our health care system. In addition, non-Western health care systems will be examined.
4. The ability to think and write critically about the above topics.
Course Materials:


Additional readings will be assigned in the course of the term, using the Library’s ERes system.

I will be communicating with you both in class and by Blackboard, so make sure your Blackboard account is active. I will not be responsible for bounce backs from your accounts. Please note that this has been a particular problem with transfers still using CUNY community college accounts. Except for changes that substantially affect grading, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. Any changes will be given in class and through Blackboard notification.

Requirements and Grading:

There will be a midterm and a final exam, with a format to be announced in class. The exams will not be cumulative. The midterm date is tentative, but I will provide at least one week’s notice on the date of the exam. Both exams, or approved make-ups, must be taken. Makes-ups will be scheduled at my convenience.

There will also be a required five to seven page research paper on a subject of your choosing related to the course material. I will allow considerable leeway in choosing subject matter, but the subject, or any changes in same, must be approved by me before you begin research. The paper must be literate and include sources in either footnotes or endnotes. I will provide further guidance on format at a later date, as well as individual guidance on subject and sources. A timeline for the paper is included in the Calendar below.

The two exams and the paper will each count for 30% of the final grade, with the remaining 10% based on class participation, and the grade will be assigned as a letter grade based on the numerical standards that can be found in the Hunter College Undergraduate Catalogue

*Please be aware that the number of students I have each term makes it impossible for me to offer extra credit assignments.*

To receive an incomplete (IN) a student must present evidence of a satisfactory reason and must have done “C” work or better PRIOR to the filing of the incomplete; otherwise, the student will receive a grade of WU.
Statement on Academic Integrity:

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations.

Classroom Electronics:

I permit the use of electronic recording devices and dictionaries during lectures. ALL other personal electronics should be turned off before coming into the classroom. This includes mobile phones, PDAs, etc. A computer may be used FOR TAKING NOTES ONLY, but if what you are doing becomes a distraction to others around you, I will ask you to shut it off. In-class text messaging is a sign of disrespect both to the instructor and to your fellow students, and may be reflected in your grade. If you have an emergency message, take it outside the room.

NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES OF ANY KIND ARE PERMITTED DURING EXAMS. Violation of this rule will result in an automatic grade of zero for the exam, and the possibility of further disciplinary action.

ADA Policy

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772-4857 or (212) 650-3230.

Other Notes

I would suggest you develop a “buddy system” with one or more classmates to cover notes should you miss a session.

Well-behaved children are welcome at any time.
Calendar:

Tu Aug 28\textsuperscript{th} 
First day of classes
Tu Sept 18\textsuperscript{th} 
No Class, Rosh Hashana
Tu Sept 25\textsuperscript{th} 
No class; Yom Kippur
Th Nov 22\textsuperscript{nd} 
Research paper due
Tu Dec 11\textsuperscript{th} 
Last day of class
Tu Dec 18\textsuperscript{th} 
Final

Course Outline:

1. Introduction to Medical Geography (Introduction and pp.13-14, 77-81) [Aug 28\textsuperscript{th}, 30\textsuperscript{th}]
   a. What is medical geography, and why is it important?
   b. Approaches to the study: positivism vs. post-modernism
   c. Medical geography and the geography of health

2. Demographics and Disease (pp.33-38) [Sept. 4, 6]
   a. Demographic statistics
   b. The Demographic and Epidemiological Transitions

3. Disease Ecology
   a. The natural environment: biosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere
   b. Biogenic disease (chap. 2 and pp. 36-55) [Sept. 11\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th}, 20\textsuperscript{th}, 27\textsuperscript{th}]
   c. Geogenic disease (chap. 4) [Oct. 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 9\textsuperscript{th}]
   d. Social and economic conditions underlying disease ecology (chaps 5, 6)
      [Oct 11\textsuperscript{th}, 16\textsuperscript{th}, 18\textsuperscript{th}, 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 25\textsuperscript{th}]

Midterm [Oct 30\textsuperscript{th}]

4. Provision of Medical Service (chaps. 7, 8) [Nov. 1\textsuperscript{st}, 6\textsuperscript{th}, 8\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th}, 15\textsuperscript{th}, 22\textsuperscript{nd}]
   a. Resources and politics
   b. Utilization

5. Methodologies (chaps. 9, 10) [Nov. 27\textsuperscript{th}; Dec 4\textsuperscript{th}, 6\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th}]
   a. Field work
   b. Remote sensing
   c. Mapping
   d. Geographic information systems [GIS] and computer modeling

Final Exam [Dec 18\textsuperscript{th}, 5.20-7.20pm, in the classroom]