

Health, Culture and Society Learning Compact

Health, illness, and disease can only be fully understood if one considers the complex interaction of biological, social, and cultural realities in societies past and present. The Joint AOC in Health, Culture, and Societies (HCS) fosters an understanding for the importance of these interwoven factors. It is designed to complement and/or deepen the learning experience in other AOCs for students who are interested in health-related careers, broadly defined. It is radically interdisciplinary (i.e., cross-divisional) and transdisciplinary (i.e., crossing the lines between academia, professional work outside of academia, and community engagement). This program provides an opportunity for students to explore different aspects and conceptions of health in their broader socio-cultural contexts. The underlying organization and cross-divisional design, make this program appropriate for students who are interested in health from a humanistic (i.e., artistic, literary, historical, philosophical, or ethical), social scientific (i.e., anthropological, psychological, social, economic, or political), and natural scientific (i.e., biological, biochemical, physiological, or epidemiologic) perspective, regardless of AOC. This Joint AOC will make students more competitive in traditional medical, nursing, and public health professions, as well as in allied health fields and specialized areas including, but not limited to, art and music therapy, biophysics, data science, health advocacy, and policy analysis. Moreover, this program allows students to become holistically educated citizens of health while providing flexibility, global vision, focus on equity, and practical skills.

Upon completion of a joint concentration AOC in HCS, students will be able to:

- understand key determinants of health from a socio-ecological perspective, and explore socio-economic, behavioral, biological, environmental, and other factors that can have an impact on human health and contribute to health disparities;
- calculate and interpret common epidemiologic measures and statistical tests used in public health;
- summarize and distill events in the history of medicine and employ them to analyze longer trajectories of particular issues relating to health, illness, and disease;
- investigate approaches to addressing major public/global health concerns with cultural humility within the constraints of limited resources and health infrastructure;
- recognize and refute simplistic claims regarding the health or health-related structures and practices of a certain population;
- apply concepts of ethics and cultural relativism to assess claims about and interventions in health on individual, local, and global levels;

- clearly communicate health-related scientific, historical, cultural, and ethical information or concerns in both written and oral form;
- convincingly communicate skills and experiences in professional interviews, including practicum experience and skills gained during coursework;
- apply the knowledge and skills gained during academic coursework in a professional work environment.