



THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC FROM STUDY ABROAD PERSPECTIVES  
Developed with the support of the Office of International Programs,  
Brown University and The Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad (CASA)

Fall 2020  
September 15–December 3, 2020  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12-1:30 pm ET

Instructors:  
Prof. Evelyn Hu-DeHart  
([evelyn\\_hu-dehart@brown.edu](mailto:evelyn_hu-dehart@brown.edu))  
Prof. Daniel Rodriguez  
([daniel\\_a\\_rodriguez@brown.edu](mailto:daniel_a_rodriguez@brown.edu))  
[Department of History](#), Brown University

Contact: Erin Goodman  
Coordinator, CASA Research Initiatives  
[research.initiatives@casa.education](mailto:research.initiatives@casa.education)

### Course Description

In view of the abrupt disruption last semester and suspension of Study Abroad programs in fall 2020, we propose this course on the global pandemic for those students who were recalled from study abroad in spring 2020, and prospective spring 2021 study abroad students. What ties all the host countries is their common experience battling Covid-19.

A key element in the history of medicine is how the same virus, plasmodium, or bacterium, as it travels across the globe, comes to take on particular meanings and affect people differently according to local conditions, cultures, and inequalities. This course is an opportunity to explore these dynamics in real time by bringing together researchers, community activists, and public health workers from across the Atlantic and giving students an opportunity to explore the social, cultural, economic, political and public health impacts of the current pandemic from the perspective of eight host sites:

Paris, France ♦ Bologna, Italy ♦ Dublin, Ireland ♦ Barcelona, Granada and Seville, Spain ♦  
Havana, Cuba ♦ Rio de Janeiro, Brazil ♦ Buenos Aires, Argentina ♦ Santiago, Chile

Students will work with the corresponding site director, as well as academic staff and local experts to examine the pandemic's outbreak history; progression of the disease over time and space; local, state and national responses; impact conditioned by race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, immigration status and other forms and sources of social inequality.

The course is interdisciplinary regarding theory and methods. Students will gather and use a wide range of sources and resources, to include printed material (such as books and academic journal articles; newspaper and magazine articles; government and NGO reports), visual and audio materials (such as videos, photographs, art work and recorded performances; lectures, podcasts) as well as personal memories, stories, interviews and ethnographic fieldwork.

The first portion of the course (Weeks 1-4) will consist of a series of weekly lectures and discussions in which all students partake, to hear guest speakers, discuss common readings, and share preliminary research ideas, as well as breakout sessions by country, led by the on-site staff. During the second portion of the course (Weeks 5-9) students will break into country or regional groups, and meetings will consist of a weekly country-specific presentation, facilitated by the on-site staff, as students begin to carry out individual research projects. In the final week of the course, students will reconvene as a full group and to share their final projects, either in the large group or in site-specific breakout groups, depending on the overall number of students participating in the course.

### Eligible Students and Academic Credit

The course is open to students from the disrupted spring 2020, suspended fall 2020, and prospective spring 2021 semesters, from all CASA programs as well as programs in Paris, France and Bologna, Italy, and in **all fields of study** (max. 20 students per host site). Brown University students will receive Brown independent study credit from Brown's Department of History. Students from other CASA member schools and visiting CASA students are encouraged to seek **Independent Study academic credit** from designated faculty at their home institution. Students who are unable or uninterested in obtaining academic credit may still participate for enrichment purposes, provided they commit to participate for the duration of the course.

To **sign up for the course**, fill out this [online form](#). Please note that there will be no “shopping period” for this course.

### Teaching Staff

Evelyn Hu-DeHart and Daniel Rodriguez, History professors at Brown University, are lead designers of the course, with contribution from site directors and coordinator Erin Goodman, and input from Associate Dean Kendall Brostuen, Director of the Office of International Programs. The Resident Director (RD) of each site organizes weekly discussion groups and, from Weeks 5-9, organizes country-specific sessions with guest speakers. The RD provides overall advising for the students corresponding to their program. If Independent Study credit is sought, the final grade will be given by the home institution faculty contact, with input from a narrative provided by the on-site director.

### Assignments, Grading and Course Requirements

The course will be conducted synchronously on Zoom, and students are expected to attend two sessions per week. Students should complete assigned readings (available in a Zotero Course

site), and conduct research towards their final report. Students may be asked to write short reflection papers on assigned readings, or give weekly updates on research activities.

Students will be asked to submit a final paper following guidelines provided. In some cases, it may be possible to do a final project in lieu of paper. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the format of the final paper/project comply with the Independent Study requirements at their home institution.** The Course concludes with program and site-centered presentations online, which may also be published on the CASA website.

### Work Expectations

During the semester, students are expected to spend approximately 180 total hours on the course. That breaks down to spending about 42 hours in class, 68 hours reading and preparing for class (6 hours per week), 30-40 total hours on research and writing, and 30-40 total hours writing and putting together the Final Report, then planning and making the presentation. Actual times spent on each task may vary from student to student, but all students are expected to devote the same total amount of time on this course.

## **PART I**

### **WEEKS 1–4: ALL Students**

Part I Readings: All required and additional readings are available in a searchable (tagged) format in this [Zotero Global Pandemics Course Library](#)

### **WEEK 1: Introductions and COVID-19 from a Global Public Health Perspective**

*September 15, 2020*   **Introductions & Course Overview**

Introduction to the teaching staff and the students: Brief self-introductions. Overview of the course and the syllabus

*September 17, 2020*   **Q & A with Dr. Ashish Jha**, Dean of the Public Health School at Brown University; director of Harvard Global Health Institute

Note: Class will begin at 12pm, and Dr. Jha will join for a Q&A with students from 12:30-1 pm.

Assigned Podcast: Dr. Ashish Jha **TBD**

Assigned Readings:

1. Marcos Cueto (Fundação Oswaldo Cruz), [Covid-19 and Globalization Epidemics](#)
2. [Charles Rosenberg](#), “Framing Disease: Illness, Society and History” in Charles Rosenberg, *Explaining Epidemics and Other Essays in the History of Medicine*

3. Charles Rosenberg, "What is an epidemic: AIDS in Historical Perspective." *Daedalus* 118, no. 2 (1989): 1-17.

## **WEEK 2: Global Pandemic, Local Politics: History, Bubonic Plague, and the 1918 Influenza Outbreak**

*September 22, 2020*    **Lecture by Prof. Daniel Rodriguez**, Brown University

Assigned Readings:

1. Myron Echenberg, "Pestis Redux: The Initial Years of the Third Bubonic Plague Pandemic, 1894-1901," *Journal of World History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall, 2002), pp. 429-449.
2. Daniel Rodríguez, "Salus Populi Suprema Lex: Medical Modernity, Neocolonialism, and the 1914 Bubonic Plague Outbreak," *The Right to Live in Health: Medical Politics in Postindependence Havana* (UNC Press, 2020), pp.86-116.
3. *New York Times*, [What New York Looked Like During the 1918 Flu Pandemic](#)
4. *New York Times*, [Cities That Went All In on Social Distancing in 1918 Emerged Stronger for It](#)
5. Edson, Cyrus. "The Microbe as a Social Leveller." *The North American Review* 161, no. 467 (1895): 421-26.

*September 24, 2020*    **Country breakout session reflecting on the week's theme**

## **WEEK 3: Germs, Hygiene, and Power**

*September 29, 2020*    **Lecture and Q&A with Dr. Nancy Tomes**, Department of History, Stonybrook University; author of *The Gospel of Germs*

Assigned Readings:

1. Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Harvard University Press, 1998), Selections TBD
2. *Statnews*, [‘The direct result of racism’: Covid-19 lays bare how discrimination drives health disparities among Black people](#)
3. *New Yorker*, [Punishment by Pandemic](#)

*October 1, 2020*    **Country breakout session reflecting on the week's theme**

## **WEEK 4: The Pandemic's Impact on Higher Education**

*October 6, 2020*    **Lecture and Q&A with Dr. Eric Estes**, Vice President for Campus Life, Brown University

**READINGS FORTHCOMING**

## PART II

### **WEEKS 5–9: Country-Specific Lectures and Discussions; Individual Research and Production of Report**

A weekly lecture on Tuesdays and occasional Thursdays on the topics below, by a local expert or community actor such as journalists and health workers, followed by group discussion, with 1-2 corresponding weekly readings. There will also be a weekly drop-in opportunity to discuss respective research topics/progress with site directors and/or home school faculty. Site directors may also coordinate to organize lectures or panels involving a comparative perspective, or open their lectures to students from other sites.

*Week 5: October 13, 15*

*Week 6: October 20, 22*

*Week 7: October 27, 29*

*Week 8: November 3, 5*

*Week 9: November 10, 12*

#### **Broad themes, as they pertain to epidemics:**

- **Media: Sensationalism, Panic and Fake News**  
Guiding questions: How does the media shape our perception of a disease, virus, or epidemic? How does media coverage affect the population's response and behavior? What is the impact of fake news? Who controls the narrative?
- **Government and Power**  
Guiding questions: To what extent can local or national governments mandate responses to pandemics and other disasters? How have governments been able to control (or not) the impact or spread of the virus through policy?
- **Economic and Social Change**  
Guiding questions: Which social groups have been most affected by the virus? Have any groups or sectors of the population or business world benefited? How can inequalities further revealed by the impact of the virus effect change in the longer term?
- **Popular Attitudes and Cultural Approaches to Disease**  
Guiding questions: Do cultural beliefs and behaviors affect responses to perceived or real threat of the virus, and its management?
- **Immigration/Migration; Race, Racism, and Racial disparities; Policing and Incarceration**  
Guiding questions: How do pandemics and other disasters affect migrants? How have the disparate racial outcomes of the Coronavirus led to or fueled the Black Lives Matter movement around the globe? What does it mean to protest during a pandemic?

- Gender/Sexuality and Reproductive Rights; Mental Health; Disabilities  
Guiding questions: Beyond immediate health concerns from the virus, how has the pandemic affected reproductive rights, domestic violence, and other issues? How has it affected people with other health concerns, such as learning disabilities, mental health, or physical disabilities or terminal diseases?
- The Environment  
Guiding questions: Has the pandemic led to reduced pollution and contamination? What about all of the non-disposable and single-use products that are being produced? What is the effect on the environment of people procuring goods in a different way, or doing less air travel?
- K-12 and Higher Education  
Guiding questions: How will schools and universities respond to the virus? What are the challenges of online learning at elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels? Are there any benefits? Are there alternative models?

Parts II & III Readings: See the [Zotero Global Pandemics Course Library](#) for country-specific and thematic required and/or additional readings in a searchable (tagged) format.

## **PART III**

### **WEEKS 10 & 11**

*November 17, 19, 24 (TBC) ALL STUDENTS Work on final papers or projects*

### **WEEK 12**

*December 1 & 3, 2020 ALL STUDENTS Online Presentations & Discussions*

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND READINGS**

[Doing Fieldwork During a Pandemic Toolkit](#)

## **INDEPENDENT STUDY CREDIT GUIDELINES**

Students may participate in this course either for enrichment (no credit), or they may seek credit, to be granted **by their home institution**. Non-Brown University students are responsible for contacting an appropriate faculty member/department to supervise the course, which primarily

entails checking in on the student's participation and progress in the course and assessing the final paper.

**CASA Member Institutions**

Brown University: *Enrolled students will receive [ISP credit](#) through the Department of History*

Cornell University: *Information on [Independent Study](#)*

Harvard University: *Information on [Independent Study](#)*

Columbia University

Dartmouth College

Georgetown University

Johns Hopkins University

Northwestern University

Trinity College, Dublin

The University of Melbourne

The University of Pennsylvania

Vanderbilt University

**CASA Associate Member Institutions**

Amherst College

Barnard College

Grinnell College

Swarthmore College

Williams College