

An interdepartmental program

Health: Science, Society, and Policy

Courses of Study:
Minor
Major (B.A./B.S.)

Objectives

The major in health: science, society, and policy (HSSP) is designed to provide interdisciplinary study of health and health care. The major has three objectives: (1) to expand students' understanding of the biological, behavioral, social, and environmental factors that promote health or cause illness; (2) to introduce students to the political, economic, legal, public health, and organizational dimensions of health care systems in the United States and throughout the world; (3) to provide students with "hands on" experience in either an internship (in a health care delivery, public health, or advocacy organization), a laboratory (studying the biological basis of health, behavior, or disease), or a field-based research project (investigating aspects of health or illness in a social context). This major draws upon courses in the social sciences, life sciences, and the fields of policy and management and is especially appropriate for students preparing for careers or further study in health and medicine as well as students who want to examine the issues and concerns of this important sector in society. The major can be completed with either a B.A. or B.S. degree.

The minor in health: science, society and policy is designed to provide an introduction to interdisciplinary study of health and medicine and to supplement a student's major.

How to Become a Major or Minor

Students can begin study in the HSSP major or minor with virtually any course in the program (except the internship, Senior Research, or Senior Seminar). The requirements and all the options are listed below. Students are encouraged to take the four required courses early in their pursuit of the major, but may take electives concurrently as well. Students interested in majoring or minoring in HSSP should make an appointment with the program chair to declare their major and be assigned an advisor. Those interested in lab experience and senior research should contact prospective mentors about these opportunities.

Faculty

Peter Conrad, Chair
(Sociology)

Elizabeth Goodman, Associate Chair
(The Heller School)

Sarita Bhalotra
(The Heller School)

Sarah Lamb
(Anthropology)

Sacha Nelson
(Biology)

Aurora Sherman
(Psychology)

Judith Tsipis
(Biology)

Requirements for the Major

A. All students will be required to take four core courses plus a "hands-on experience" and senior seminar. The core courses are: SOC 191a, HS 104b, HSSP 100b, and BIOL 15b or BIOL 42a. Students must also complete HSSP 92b, HSSP 98a or b, HSSP 99d or WMNS 92a, as the "hands-on experience" requirement. HSSP 110a is the capstone course, generally taken in the senior year. LGLS 114a may be substituted for HS 104b. Students who have already taken BIOL 22a must take BIOL 42a instead of BIOL 15b.

Students must choose one of the two tracks described below—Option I leading to a B.A. in HSSP or Option II leading to a B.S. in HSSP.

Among courses offered to fulfill the requirements for this major no course may be taken pass/fail and all grades in major courses must be at least a C-.

Option I: The B.A. Degree in HSSP

All students must complete all the requirements listed in A above, plus four elective courses, including one each from "focal areas" A, B, and C. The B.A. option requires 10 courses to complete.

Option II: The B.S. Degree in HSSP

All students must complete the requirements listed in A above, plus five elective courses, including one each from "focal areas" A, B, and C, and six additional basic science or math courses at the 10-level or above. PSYC 51a may be substituted for Math 10b. The B.S. option requires 17 courses to complete.

Students wishing to obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in HSSP must take three of the five electives from focal area A and all must be at the 22-level or above. Students must also enroll in all laboratories that accompany electives used to satisfy these requirements (i.e., BIOL 18a must be taken with BIOL 22a) but no additional credit for the major will be received.

B. Honors Program

Students wishing to graduate with honors in HSSP will be required to take HSSP 99d. The formation of a three-faculty member committee and a formal defense before that committee is required for honors. The committee will consist of the student's advisor as well as two members decided upon by the student and the advisor and must be approved by the chair of HSSP. The GPA in the major and the quality of the thesis will determine eligibility for honors designation.

Requirements for the Minor

To complete the minor students must complete the four required courses as noted in part A above (BIOL 15b, SOC 191a, HS 104b and HSSP 100b) and two additional elective courses from different "focal areas" listed below for a total of six courses.

Courses of Instruction

(1-99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students

HSSP 92b Internship and Analysis

A supervised internship in a health care or policy organization. Internship placement must be approved by the HSSP internship instructor and should focus on some aspect of health and public service. This could include work in a department of public health, hospital or health care agency, health advocacy organization, or other appropriate government or private-sector organization. Students are required to attend a biweekly internship course and submit a 20-to-25 page research paper relating to their internship. Usually offered every year.
Ms. Gonsalves

HSSP 98a Readings in Health: Science, Society, and Policy

Under the direction of a member of the HSSP faculty, students conduct a semester-long, original health-related research project (laboratory- or field-based) and write a 20-25 page paper. Usually offered every year.
Staff

HSSP 98b Readings in Health: Science, Society, and Policy

Under the direction of a member of the HSSP faculty, students conduct a semester long original health-related research project (laboratory- or field-based) and write a 20-25 page paper. Usually offered every year.
Staff

HSSP 99d Senior Research

Under the direction of a member of the HSSP faculty, students conduct an original, year-long, health-related research project (laboratory- or field-based) and write a thesis.
Staff

(100-199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

HSSP 100b Introduction to Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Population Health

[ss qr]
Core course for the HSSP major and minor.
Provides an orientation to the science of epidemiology, the quantitative foundation for public health policy. As a comprehensive survey course, students from varying academic backgrounds are introduced to biostatistics, major epidemiological concepts, and provided training in their application to the study of health and disease in human populations. Case studies examine how environmental, physical, behavioral, psychological, and social factors contribute to the disease burden of populations. Usually offered every year.
Ms. Goodman

HSSP 102a Global Perspectives on Health

[ss]
A primer on major issues in health care in developing nations. Topics include the natural history of disease and levels of prevention; epidemiological transitions; health disparities; and determinants of health including culture, social context, and behavior. Also covers: infectious and chronic disease incidence and prevalence; the role of nutrition, education, reproductive trends, and poverty; demographic transition including aging and urbanization; the structure and financing of health systems; and the globalization of health. Usually offered every year.
Ms. Bhalotra

HSSP 104b Health Economics

[ss]
Prerequisites: ECONN 2a and ECON 8b.
Emphasizes the concepts and tools of health economics applicable to both developed and developing countries. Topics include: cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis, the demand for health services, insurance and risk, managed care, provider reimbursement, national health insurance, and an overview of health care systems in other countries. Usually offered every second year.
Mr. Hodgkin

Special Notes Relating to Undergraduates Interested in Premedical Studies

The HSSP major is not meant to fulfill premedical requirements, but HSSP students could satisfy the pre-requisites for medical school in one of two ways: (1) By majoring in one of the life or physical sciences and choosing HSSP as a minor, or (2) By majoring in HSSP and selecting the B.S. option of HSSP. To assess their options premed students should consult the website www.brandeis.edu/uaafys/premed/.

HSSP 110a Integrative Seminar on Health

[ss]
Prerequisite: Senior status in the HSSP major.
The capstone course is designed to bring all HSSP seniors together to integrate their academic coursework and fieldwork/ laboratory experiences across a range of health-related disciplines. Each year the course focuses on a single issue that lends itself to examination from a variety of perspectives. Topics vary from year to year at the discretion of the faculty who teach the course. Refer to the Schedule of Classes for specific topics. Course is usually team-taught by faculty in different disciplines. Usually offered every year.
Mr. Conrad and Ms. Lamb

HSSP 192b Sociology of Disability

[ss]
May not be repeated for credit by students who have taken SOC 192b in previous years.
In the latter half of the 20th century, disability has emerged as an important social-political-economic-medical issue, with its own distinct history, characterized as a shift from "good will to civil rights." Traces that history and the way people with disabilities are seen and unseen, and see themselves. Usually offered every third year.
Mr. Gulley and Ms. Krauss

Core Courses

BIOL 15b

Biology: Its Human Implications

HS 104b

American Health Care

HSSP 100b

Introduction to Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Population Health

HSSP 110a

Integrative Seminar on Health

SOC 191a

Health, Community, and Society

Electives

The following courses are approved for the program. Not all are given in any one year. Please consult the *Schedule of Classes* each semester.

Focal Area A: Biological Dimensions of Health and Illness

BCSC 1a
Designer Genes

BIOL 22a
Genetics and Molecular Biology

BIOL 22b
Cell Structure and Function

BIOL 42a
Physiology

BIOL 43b
Human Anatomy

BIOL 55b
Diet and Health

BIOL 125a
Immunology

BIOL 126b
Protein Structure and Disease

BIOL 128a
Human Genetics

BIOL 132a
General Microbiology

BIOL 149b
Molecular Pharmacology

BIOL 160b
Human Reproductive and Developmental Biology

BIOL 172b
Growth Control and Cancer

BISC 2b
Genes, Culture, History: A Case Study

BISC 4a
Heredity

BISC 5a
Viruses and Human Disease

BISC 6b
Environmental Health

NBIO 140b
Principles of Neuroscience

NBIO 145b
Systems Neuroscience

NBIO 146a
The Neurobiology of Human Disease

NBIO 150a
Autism and Human Developmental Disorders

NPSY 199a
Human Neuropsychology

Focal Area B: Social and Behavioral Dimensions of Health and Illness

ANTH 127a
Medicine, Body, and Culture

ANTH 142a
AIDS in Anthropological Perspective

BISC 2a
Human Reproduction, Population Explosion, Global Consequences

ENG 58b
AIDS, Activism, and Representation

HIST 136a
Health and Healing in American History

PHIL 23b
Biomedical Ethics

PHIL 123b
Topics in Biomedical Ethics: Mental Illness

PSYC 33a
Developmental Psychology

PSYC 101b
The Psychology of Adult Development and Aging

PSYC 130b
Life Span Development: Adulthood and Old Age

PSYC 131b
Seminar in Health Psychology

PSYC 145b
Aging in a Changing World

PSYC 164b
Social Relations and Health Across the Lifespan

PSYC 169b
Disorders of Childhood

SOC 177b
Aging in Society

SOC 189a
Sociology of Body and Health

SOC 190b
Caring in the Health Care System

Focal Area C: Health Care Policy and Practice

Undergraduates in the HSSP program may be admitted to the graduate-level courses below (numbered above 200) with the permission of the instructor.

HS 124a
Dilemmas of Long-Term Care

HS 412b
Substance Use and Societal Consequences

HS 518a
Management of Health Care Organizations

HS 519a
Health Economics

HS 520a
Payment and Financing of Health Care

HS 521a
Political and Organizational Analysis in Health Policy

HSSP 102a
Global Perspectives on Health

HSSP 104b
Health Economics

HSSP 192b
Sociology of Disability

LGLS 114a
American Health Care: Law and Policy

LGLS 121b
Law and Social Welfare: Citizen Rights and Government Responsibilities

LGLS 129b
Law, Technology, and Innovation

LGLS 131b
Autonomy and Self-Determination in Critical Health Care Decisions

LGLS 132b
Environmental Law and Policy

LGLS 138b
Science on Trial

LGLS 139b
Medical Error and Quality of Care

SOC 176a
Nature, Nurture, and Public Policy

WMGS 106b
Women in the Health Care System