CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS  
Course name: Costa Rican Health Care System  
Course code: HIS-3293  
Total contact hours: 60 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Costa Rica’s health care system is unique due to the fact that it’s socialized and has achieved excellent health indicators. The course focuses on the history and development of the public health care system within the context of the Costa Rican sociopolitical and economical situation. It also gives a strong emphasis on how the system actually works and points out not only the strongholds of the systems, but also it’s weak points. A third objective, of fundamental importance in order to understand this system, is the study of Costa Rica as a tropical country. Students will learn about the prevention and transmission of relevant tropical diseases.

OBJECTIVES
1. To study the fundamental aspects of the health in a Latin American country  
2. To analyze the structure of the Health System of Costa Rica  
3. To recognize the main characteristics of the tropical pathology  
4. To develop abilities to understand the binomial health and society within the Latin American culture

CONTENTS

Week 1: Ethnology of Health in the Latin American Countries.  
(Lessons 1 – 4) Anthropology, demographics and epidemiology of Costa Rica

Week 2: Costa Rican Health Care System.  
Lesson 5: Costa Rican Health Care System: Theoretical Background  
- History and development of the current health care system  
- Health Indicators: Comparison between Costa Rica and the United States  
- Legal and social bases of the Costa Rican Health Care Model  
- Structure of the Costa Rican Health Care Network  
- Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary levels of attention  
- Basic services offer at the primary level

Lesson 6: Costa Rican Health Care System: Cases and Examples
- The Health care system in the aboriginal populations (Chirripo-Cabecar)
- Demographics of the Chirripo Cabecar aboriginal reserve
- Prevalent morbidities in this population
- The impact of the health care system on the population
- The services provided and the health care network in action
- Reference and counter reference

Lesson 7: Costa Rican Health Care System: Student`s Debate

- Description of the American Health Care sytems
- Comparison of American Indicators to other countries in the world
- Advantages and disadvantages of both american and costarican health care system
- Optimal Health care system?

Lesson 8: Tropical Medicine: General theoretical background

- Definitions
- Epidemiology
- The impact of weather on the prevalence of tropical diseases
- The impact of socioeconomical conditions on the prevalence of tropical diseases
- Prevention and Promotion of Health

Week 3: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases.

Lesson 9: Tropical Medicine: Introduction to parasitic diseases: Theoretical background

- Physiology and pathophysiology of Tropical Diseases
- Clinical Examination of Tropical Diseases
- Major Clinical Syndromes of importance in Tropical Diseases

Lesson 10: Tropical Medicine: Introduction to parasitic diseases: Case Studies

- Insights into clinical examination
- Identification of major clinical syndromes
- Description of physiology and pathological events in specific cases
- Elucidation of possible clinical presentations depending on a given pathogenetic mechanism

Lesson 11: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Enteric parasites I

- Introduction and General Characteristics
- Enterobius vermicularis
- Tricocephalosis
- Ascariasis
- Visceral larva migrans
- Necator americanus
- Ancylostoma duodenale
- Angiostrongylus costaricensis
- TaeniasisFor the above mentioned parasites:
Lesson 12: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Enteric Parasites II
- Fasciolosis
- Amoebiasis
- Balantidiasis
- Giardiasis
- Isosporosis
- Criptosporidiosis
- Ciclosporosis
- Hidatidosis
- For the above mentioned parasites:
  - General Characteristics
  - Epidemiology
  - Etiology
  - Life cycle
  - Clinical Presentation
  - Complications
  - Diagnosis
  - Treatment
  - Prevention
  - Situation in Costa Rica
  - Health care system and disease

Week 4: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases.

Lesson 13: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Tuberculosis
- General Characteristics
- Epidemiology
- Etiology
- Life cycle
- Clinical Presentation
- Complications
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Situation of Tuberculosis in Costa Rica
- Health care system and Tuberculosis

Lesson 14: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Malaria
Lesson 15: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Filariasis
- General Characteristics
- Epidemiology
- Etiology
- Life cycle
- Clinical Presentation
- Complications
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Situation of Filariasis in Costa Rica
- Health care system and Filariasis

Lesson 16: First Partial Exam: Based on clinical cases (including enteric parasites)
- Identification of possible diagnosis, epidemiology, and preventive measures given a clinical case
- Description of clinical findings, epidemiology, and prevention given a specific parasite
- Depending on a given health problem, describe the actions that could be taken according to the costarican health care system and what level of attention would it belong to (primary, secondary, tertiary)

Week 5: Tropical Medicine: Dangerous Fauna and Integration of Tropical Medicine and Health Care (Health Fair).

Lesson 17: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Leishmaniasis
- General Characteristics
- Epidemiology
- Etiology
- Life cycle
- Clinical Presentation
- Complications
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Situation of Leishmaniasis in Costa Rica
- Health care system and Leishmaniasis
Lesson 18: Health Fair: Organization
   - Description of the sociodemographic situation of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiqui
   - Discussion of most prevalent disease among the population
   - Health Fair activity organization

Lesson 19: Tropical Medicine: Dangerous Fauna: Ophidic Accident
   - General Characteristics
   - Epidemiology
   - Taxonomical classification of snakes
   - Clinical Presentation
   - Complications
   - Diagnosis
   - Treatment
   - Prevention
   - Situation of ophidic accident in Costa Rica
   - Instituto Clodomiro Picado and Health care system in ophidic accident

Lesson 20: Health Fair: Review
   - Exposition and review of preventive programs, discussion with fellow students

**Week 6: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases.**

Lesson 21: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Paragonimiasis
   - Clinical case presentation: National Children’s Hospital
   - General Characteristics
   - Epidemiology
   - Etiology
   - Life cycle
   - Clinical Presentation
   - Complications
   - Diagnosis
   - Treatment
   - Prevention
   - Situation of Paragonimiasis in Costa Rica
   - Health care system and Paragonimiasis

Lesson 22: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Chagas Disease
   - General Characteristics
   - Epidemiology
   - Etiology
   - Life cycle
   - Clinical Presentation
   - Complications
   - Diagnosis
   - Treatment
   - Prevention
   - Situation of Chagas disease in Costa Rica
Lesson 23: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Ectoparasites
- Sarcoptes scabiei
- Pediculosis
- Phtirus pubis
- Ancylostoma braziliensis
- Miasis
- For the above mentioned parasites:
  - General Characteristics
  - Epidemiology
  - Etiology
  - Life cycle
  - Clinical Presentation
  - Complications
  - Diagnosis
  - Treatment
  - Prevention
  - Situation in Costa Rica
  - Health care system and disease

Lesson 24: Tropical Medicine: Parasitic Diseases: Dengue fever
- General Characteristics
- Epidemiology
- Etiology
- Life cycle
- Clinical Presentation
- Complications
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Situation of Chagas disease in Costa Rica
- Health care system and Chagas disease

METHODOLOGY
We intend to achieve the above objectives by a series of theoretical and practical exercises. Students will attend participatory lectures about the history and development of the social health care system and will also learn about the private health sector. Sessions will also include a debate that compares the health system in Costa Rica and in the United States. Discussions and debates will serve as tools, for students to gain some insight into the differences in these two societies and their concepts of health. Lectures and discussion will be complemented with a visit to one of the main private hospitals in San José, and contrasted with a visit to one of the primary health care clinics of the public system, located in the aboriginal territories.

The course develops a series of participatory lectures about tropical medicine. In order to build a common background, students will learn the most important
concepts on clinical history and exploration, relevant to tropical medicine, as well as demographic, epidemiological and environmental concepts.

There are several units that focus on the study of patho-physiological concepts and specific diseases, all this, in order to understand the fundamentals of prevention and promotion of health in the context of tropical diseases.

Students will visit several field trips to private and state health institutions and a snake farm, in order to see live examples of the most important species of snakes in Costa Rica, as a complement to the lecture about ophidic accidents.

Finally, the course aims to integrate all their knowledge acquired throughout the course in the organization and development of a health fair that will benefit an agricultural community in northern Costa Rica, which depends exclusively on banana production.

**EVALUATION SYSTEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Practical work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Debate about health care systems 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Organization of health fair 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Participation and discussion in seminars 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Homework and reading assignments 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Written Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Participatory attendance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Exam**

Evaluation of the ability of the student to face a health problem and be able to incorporate elements of public health and tropical medicine in the context of the Costa Rican health care system.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


5. Valerio L, Martinez O, Sabrià M, Esteve M, Urbiztondo L, Roca C. High-risk


10. Jaramillo Antillón, Juan. La salud, una responsabilidad compartida. Rev. costarric. salud pública, Mar 2003, vol.12, no.21, p.4-6. ISSN 1409-1429


