

FRESHMAN SEMINAR PROPOSAL

The number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) is continually increasing at an alarming rate in the U.S. and in other countries around the world, particularly in third world countries like Africa, where the spread of AIDS is out of control. In the U.S., alone, chlamydial infections are a serious and real issue. Antibiotic and anti-viral drug resistance is also increasing at an alarming rate, in parallel with increasing numbers of STIs and STDs, making it more difficult to control or slow their spread. Some STDs cause permanent physical damage, and even death, if they not properly diagnosed and treated at early times during the course of disease.

One of the major issues facing all of us who are interested in combating the spread of STIs and STDs is ignorance in the population. Moreover, seeming lack of concern among young adults for a healthy sexual well being exacerbates this situation. Education and open discussions are keys to controlling the spread of STIs and STDs and should begin in youngsters, with appropriate level of depth and proper supervision, of course, depending on age. Each year, thousands of young adults arrive on college campuses with little knowledge of the seriousness of STIs and STDs and the chances of acquiring and recovering from them. A lack of basic understanding of the properties of the etiologic agents and their diseases and knowledge of how the diseases are spread and how they may be controlled or held in check are central issues. This freshman seminar course will address these issues, as they occur in U.S., Europe, and developing countries around the world. This will be accomplished by exposing students to very basic information about the organisms that cause STIs and STDs and the means available to stop or control their spread. Students leaving this class will be more aware of their role in protecting themselves against disease, more comfortable in discussing STIs and STDs with their peers and with other contacts, and they should feel a greater responsibility (and comfort) in offering help and understanding to others in their communities. The spread of accurate information by well informed and caring individuals is crucial to controlling and limiting the spread of STIs and STDs. Education, then, is key here.

Students will have the opportunity to identify and discuss the basic properties of the major agents causing STIs and STDs, and they will be able to associate the etiologic agents with their diseases and with the symptoms in man. They will be asked how the spread of STIs and STDs may be controlled, at a very basic level, in individuals and in society, in general, and they will be asked to distinguish between the myths and realities that are promulgated by popular media, regarding disease risks, treatments and controls.

A central argument of this course is that discussion and openness is an essential ingredient in reducing or controlling the incidence of STIs and STDs in the community. Many of these diseases have been plaguing man for centuries and continue to do so at an alarming rate. Another central issue is how the advances of modern science and the miracles of modern medicine have not only helped to control STDs but at the same time have helped to exacerbate the negative side that they bring. The availability of the pill, condoms, and other methods of contraception are central discussion points, as are popular phrases that appear in science articles, other press, and the news media such as, "safe sex," "protected sex," "abstinence," and others.

Instructors Histories:

James Shaw and John Hughes are Ph.D. microbiologists in the Department of Molecular Virology, Immunology and Medical Genetics (MVIMG). For more than 20 years, they have taught microbiology to undergraduate, graduate, graduate-professional, and medical students, and during this period they have conducted research with sexually-transmitted disease agents and have published their findings in major national and international journals.

Course Strengths:

The strengths of this course are that the students will have active participation and sharing of knowledge regarding sexually transmitted diseases, and that they will have the opportunity to discuss the important issues that are associated with these diseases and their etiologic agents.

Course Meeting Times:

This course will meet once a week for 2 hrs, each Tuesday, during Spring quarter.

Title: Myths and Realities Associated with Sexually Transmitted Infections and Diseases**Course Details:**

Instructors: James Shaw and John Hughes

Quarter: Spring

Day: Tuesday, Time: 1-3 p. m.

Instructor Contact

Office: 2078 Graves

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description:

This course is designed to generate awareness of and interest in sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), their histories, control, and the myths and realities that have been associated with them in the popular press and science articles. STDs are increasing in number at an alarming rate, worldwide, and the organisms causing them are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics and anti-viral agents. Individual and community efforts are needed to control the spread of STIs and STDs and education is the key in this endeavor. It is the intention of this course that youngsters should be “street smart” with proper and accurate knowledge at the earliest possible time in their lives (preferably before becoming sexually active). Unfortunately, youngsters become sexually active long before most of them become fully informed of the dangers and consequences of acquiring a STI or STD. Therefore, this course is an orientation to make freshmen students (males and females) “street smart” with professional information regarding these agents and their diseases, so that they (the students) can properly inform acquaintances, peers and the general community with accurate information, when an opportunity should arise that demands dissemination of accurate general information.

Format:

This course is designed to elicit active student participation. There are weekly reading assignments to prepare students for class discussions. The class will meet for 2 hours once a week during the 10-week quarter. Class sessions will be comprise of discussions, video/slide shows, and student presentations.

Academic Accommodations:

Any student who needs accommodation based on a disability, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in determining the nature of accommodation to be provided. If the student has not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, he/she is encouraged to do so.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated or permitted. If students have questions about what activities constitute academic misconduct they should consult Faculty Rule 3335-23-04. The procedures to follow, should suspected academic misconduct occur, are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-23-05.

Context:

This seminar is designed as an introductory basic level entry course on the general aspects of STIs and STDs. It is especially tailored to freshmen. However, students of senior ranks will find it informative as well. The course begins with a description of the properties of etiologic agents that cause STIs and STDs

and terminology associated with this topic. Students are encouraged to select topics of interest to them and to research, write and present position papers on these topics to the class.

Textbook:

There is no textbook assigned for this course. However, reading assignments will be given and students are encouraged to use the library and particularly the Internet to research their topics or to obtain information that needs clarification in the reading assignment.

Requirements:

The following are expected of all students in the course:

- Attendance is mandatory. Please contact the instructor if you will be late or absent.
- Students will come to class prepared, work diligently, and will exhibit respect for others' views.
- Participation in discussion and final presentations is essential.
- All assignments must meet established deadlines.

Project:

Each student must author a 4 to 5 page paper (single-spaced, using 12 point font) on a subject of interest that is relevant to sexually transmitted diseases, such as “sexually-transmitted herpesviruses”; “sexual transmission and agents that increase risk of cervical or other cancers”; “strategies for decreasing and controlling STIs in the community,” etc. The goal is to get students engaged in a process of self-discovery about diseases that can adversely affect humankind and to get them to think along lines that will provide helpful knowledge to citizens in their communities. A final issue will be to get the students to critically analyze and distinguish myths from realities about STIs and STDs that are perpetuated inaccurately through ignorance by others, and by both literature and popular press.

Grading:

The following grading scale will be applied:

A = 95+	B- = 80-82	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-94	C+ = 77-79	D = 63-66
B+ = 86-89	C = 73-76	E < 63
B = 83-85	C- = 70-72	

Grade distribution:

- Research paper 40 %
- Paper presentation 20 %
- Class attendance and participation 20 %
- Final examination 20 %

Regarding late assignments:

Late assignments will receive a failing or a lowered grade. Extra credit or make-up projects are not possible.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Course Overview: (1) The importance of education and the importance of feeling comfortable when discussing sexual transmission of diseases among students, colleagues, and others who might feel inhibited about talking of such issues. (2) The importance of distinguishing STIs from STDs. (2) General description of the properties of sexually transmitted disease agents and their diseases. (3) The history of STDs, and (4) how attempts to assign blame to individuals or countries has hindered the discovery, cure and control of STIs and STDs.

Week 2: Chlamydia and Mycoplasma

Week 3: Gonorrhea and Syphilis

Week 4: AIDS and HIV. Video.

Week 5: Sexually transmitted herpesviruses. Who has herpes and how do you know?

Week 6: Sexually transmitted papilloma viruses and cancer of the uterine cervix.

Week 7: Control of STIs and STDs. Are the words “safe sex” an oxymoron? Are condoms full proof against transmitting or acquiring a STI or STD? Discuss why or why not? How have contraceptives helped and how have they also hindered the fight against transmission of STIs and STDs? How does “abstinence” fit into the equation of preventing STIs and STDs. Does abstinence have a role in today’s society? How has religious belief both helped and hindered society’s ability to control STDs?

Week 8: Video on sexually-transmitted diseases: “The Band Played On” - a documentary on the Center’s for Disease Control (CDC) struggle with the federal government at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic.

Week 9: Paper presentations.

Week 10: Paper presentations, continued; course evaluation handouts to students.