Beyond the Biological Basis of Disease:  
The social and economic causation of illness

FAQ for US and international applicants

Applying
Who are the intended students of the course?
This course is geared towards graduate-level health profession students, including students in medicine, nursing, dentistry, social work, psychology, and all other allied health professions. Undergraduate students focusing on global and/or community health and young professionals working in these fields are also eligible to take the course, and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Because the courses are conducted in French, all US and international students are required to demonstrate the ability to speak and understand spoken French and to read in French.

The class is comprised of 20 students-- 10 from Haiti, and 10 from around the world.

What is the tuition cost of the course?
The cost of the course is $2,400 USD for international (including US) students. This price is inclusive of tuition, lodging, three meals per day, and in-country transportation. Tuition does not include flights to Haiti, which are the responsibility of the student. For students coming from within the US, we estimate that round-trip flights will cost approximately $600-800.

Are scholarships available?
EqualHealth is able to provide a very limited number of partial need-based scholarships each year for international students based on an application process.

We highly encourage students to seek funding from external sources-- many past students have had the course partially or fully subsidized by their home institution. Additionally, many students have been successful in finding funding from sources like local community organizations and fundraising within their personal networks.

How competitive is this admission to this course?
In 2018, we received approximately 40 applications for the 10 international spots, and 160 applications for the 10 Haiti-based spots. Students are selected based on their demonstrated
interest in social justice, relevant experience, commitment to learning, and ability to communicate in French.

**Academic**

**What are the learning objectives of the course?**

- To generating solutions to global health challenges facing societies throughout the world by developing international solidarity and partnership;
- To foster reflective dialogue between Haitian and international health profession students as a means of strengthening ties between the next generation of Haitian health professionals and a global network of their peers;
- To provide a structured conceptual global health experience for health profession students with dedicated supervision and teaching in social medicine;
- To study issues related to global health in a resource-poor setting with an emphasis on local and global context;
- To foster critical analysis of global health interventions in resource-poor settings;
- To facilitate the development of a clinical approach to disease and illness using a biosocial model through structured supervision and teaching;
- To build an understanding and skill set associated with health advocacy.

**Can I receive credit for taking this course?**

In the past, many US-based students have received credit for this course as an away rotation. Ability to receive credit will be evaluated by the student’s home institution. EqualHealth is committed to supporting students applying to receive credit.

**Who serve as faculty for this course?**

The course faculty is comprised of a mix of Haitian and international health professionals and others working in social justice professions.

The course directors are:

- **Michelle Morse**, MD, MPH: Assistant Program Director for the Internal Medicine Residency at Brigham and Women’s Hospital; Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School; Founding Co-Director, EqualHealth; Co-Founder, Social Medicine Consortium; Soros Health Equity Fellow

- **Marisa Nadas**, MD, MPH: Director of Women’s Options in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Jacobi Medical Center

**Other key faculty and staff include:**

- Ruth Staus, DNP, APRN, ANP-BC, Professor of Nursing, Metro State University
- Carlo Louis-Charles, SW, Country Manager-Haiti, EqualHealth
- Zadok Sacks, MD, Founding Co-Director, EqualHealth, Hospitalist, Ventura County Medical Center
How can I evaluate whether my French skills are adequate to take this course?
The majority of international students who take the course do not speak French as their maternal language. The course is taught almost entirely in French, and students should be able read, speak, and listen to French with relative fluency in order to fully engage with the course material.

However, students are never graded on language skills, and many students in the process of learning French have thrived in the course. We recommend a base of four semesters of college-level French or an equivalent amount of experience as a minimum. Prior immersion experience is helpful, but not required. We would be happy to discuss your individual situation to determine whether your French skills are sufficient for the course.

Logistics
What happens when students arrive in Haiti?
Members of the EqualHealth team will meet students at the airport in Port-au-Prince, and the full class will travel together to the Central Plateau to the site of the course. EqualHealth takes responsibility for all in-country transportation for the duration of the course.

Where do students live during the three weeks of the course?
All students and faculty live together for the full three weeks in dorm-style housing in the Central Plateau of Haiti. Rooms with en-suite bathrooms are shared between 2-3 students of the same gender identity. Electricity, running water and wifi are relatively consistent and reliable in the housing and classroom space.

What are security plans related to the course?
EqualHealth maintains a detailed emergency plan, which we can share upon request. Course faculty work with the Partners In Health/Zanmi Lasante security team for advice in response to security concerns. With PIH/ZL, our team is reliably updated with all relevant political and security-related news that may occur and take recommended precautions. Faculty from the course maintain partnerships with the nearest medical facilities for students in case of personal emergency.

Other
How do students remain engaged after the course?
Alumni of the course have established Social Medicine Alumni Haiti (SMAH), a Haiti-based registered nonprofit that works to share teachings related to social medicine with students and professionals within Haiti and around the world via annual seminars, conferences, and community activities.

Additionally, many alumni of the course have joined the Social Medicine Consortium, an international group dedicated to social medicine pedagogy and activism.
Students also engage within EqualHealth as Assistant Professors for future iterations of the course, as well as in internship roles across EqualHealth programming.

**Contacts**

**Who should I contract if I need more information or want to apply?**

Students from institutions within Haiti should contact Carlo at clouischarles@equalhealth.org to learn more about the Haiti-based application process and timeline. International students including US based students should contact Casey at cfox@equalhealth.org to learn more about the application process and timeline.