University of Vermont  
Department of Biomedical and Health Sciences (https://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/bhsc)  
HCOL 186G (Vaccines on Trial)  
Course Syllabus

Course Description: The classroom experience is set in a (not-so-distant, not-so-hypothetical) future where the World Health Organization and global leaders must decide if a universal vaccination regimen will be mandated for all citizens of the planet. Using historical and current evidence, the question of mandated universal vaccination will be put "on trial", where students will be assigned to either the “prosecution” or “defense” team and research various aspects of vaccine biology, public health policy, and the tension between what might be best for the population vs. what might be best for the individual. Students will be challenged, both individually and in a team, to consider all aspect of the issue and construct a clear persuasive argument for or against a universal vaccination mandate. The course will culminate in a fully enacted mock trial that will be conducted over the last two weeks of the semester. While rooted in the paradigm of clinical vaccine decision making, the primary goal of the course is to work with students to create a compelling, well-justified academic argument based on their own research.

HCOL Sophomore Seminar: T/TR 8:30-9:45 AM, University Heights North 016  
Professor: Eyal Amiel, Ph.D.  
Contact: Eyal.Amiel@med.uvm.edu, Office: Rowell 312D, (802) 656-0522

Textbook: There is no required textbook for this course, readings from the primary and review literature may be assigned on Blackboard. Students will spend a considerable amount of the course researching their own sources and reporting back to the class during class sessions

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Articulate and explain key concepts in the fields of vaccine public health policy.
2. Demonstrate the ability to research and analyze evidence from the literature to support an argument around public health policy with regard to vaccinations.
3. Define and evaluate different criteria used in the construction of a persuasive and logically rigorous argument.
4. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the evidence used to support an argument regarding public health policy.
5. Demonstrate proficiency in independent research of evidence in the field.
6. Demonstrate the ability to work professionally in a team environment.
7. Evaluate and critique different levels of evidence in the field with regard to public health policy decision making.
8. Construct and defend (both in-writing and in-person) a strong evidence-based argument on a public health policy issue.

Blackboard  
This course utilizes Blackboard. Course material will be largely available online.
Major Assignments

- **Weekly Assignments**: Students will be given weekly mini-research assignments to find and analyze sources pertaining to the topic that will serve as the basis for classroom discussion each given week.

- **“Discovery” Dossier (Group)**: Prior to the mock trial, each group will assemble a witness list and “discovery” dossier with research sources that will be used in the trial to be shared with the opposing team.

- **Pre-trial Trial Assignment (Group)**: Prior to the mock trial, each group will an outline of the arguments to be made and the strategy used for each witness and projected cross-examination of opposing witnesses. This assignment serves as the intended “play book” for each team’s trial strategy.

- **Trial Performance**: The team and each individual will be evaluated based on their preparation and performance in the trial.

- **Final Paper**: Each student will prepare a final paper arguing one side of the case (or the other) which will be evaluated based on the strength of the research, argumentation, and writing.

**Grading**

The grading breakdown for the course is as follows:
Weekly Assignment Portfolio – 30%
“Discovery” Dossier (Group) – 10%
Pre-trial Trial Assignment (Group) – 10%
Trial Performance – 20%
Final Paper – 20%
Class Participation – 10%

**Make-up/Missed Work Policy**

It is solely the student’s responsibility to make-up missed work, acquire handouts and assignments from missed sessions, and to turn in assignments by their due date. If you are sick or have to miss a session, it is your responsibility to notify the course instructor. At least 24-hour notice prior to assignment deadline is required for the opportunity to make-up an assignment for full credit. **Only excused medical absences will allow for making up major assignments. Other excuses for missed assignments are not guaranteed consideration and will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the instructor.**

**Class Participation**

You are expected to actively participate in class. Participation is expected in terms of answering questions during lecture and group activities that will be assigned during some class sessions. Take-home and reading assignments will be given throughout the semester. You will be expected to have completed the specified work prior to the class session according to due dates outlined in the syllabus schedule or as communicated through Blackboard.
Grading Scales: The following numerical scales will be used to assign letter grades.

Undergraduate:
97-100   A+
93-96   A
90-92   A-
87-89   B+
83-86   B
80-82   B-
77-79   C+
73-76   C
70-72   C-
67-69   D+
63-66   D
60-62   D-

Course Evaluation
Each student at the end of the course must complete an anonymous on-line course evaluation before grades are submitted.

Honors College Library Liaison
Patricia Mardeusz, Library Associate Professor
Information & Instruction Services, David W. Howe Memorial Library
802.656.5718, patricia.mardeusz@uvm.edu

Reference to UVM’s Learning Cooperative’s offerings

Religious Holidays: All students at UVM have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you wish to observe any religious holiday(s) during the semester, you should submit a written request to me by the end of the Add/Drop period. You can make up any class work missed as a result of a religious holiday observance.

Name Used in Class: The UVM roster generally uses a student’s legal name. If a student wishes to be addressed by a modified version of his/her name or by a name other than that on the roster he/she should simply make that request of the instructor and it will be honored.

Conduct in Classroom: Students are expected to treat others with respect in the classroom. Those who engage in behavior that disrupts a classroom may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities. http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf
Disruptive classroom conduct means engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor’s ability to teach or student learning.

Academic Integrity: The concepts of academic integrity apply to this course. This means that all work turned in under your name, including case studies and exams must be the product of your own work or else appropriately referenced. Copying the work of others without permission or without identifying it as someone else’s work is plagiarism and is a violation of academic honesty. Unless specifically noted, all work should be your own. Code of Academic Integrity: All academic work must conform to the UVM Code of Academic Integrity. http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf.
Violations may be in any of the following categories: plagiarism, fabrication, collusion or cheating. Any student, member of the University staff, or faculty may report any perceived violation of this Code to the Center for Student Ethics and Standards. Charges will be heard by the Academic Integrity Council. Sanctions may range from a letter of warning to dismissal from the University.

**Reasonable accommodation for learning disabilities:** In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS), the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student's accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan. Contact SAS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu; or www.uvm.edu/access.