

**SOC 3393**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH IN SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE (FRANCE)**  
**SPRING SPECIAL SESSION 2026 - MAYMESTER**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Carol Cirulli Lanham, PhD

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**STUDENT HOURS:** Tuesdays 1:00–2:00 p.m.; Wednesdays 1:30–3:30 p.m.

In person and by appointment on Microsoft Teams. Other times available upon request.

<https://bit.ly/StudentHours2026>

**EMAIL:** [cclanham@utdallas.edu](mailto:cclanham@utdallas.edu)

**DATES AND LOCATION:** Fridays – 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. HH 2.706 - March 23 to May 8  
May 18-May 29: Toulouse France

**COURSE PRE-REQUISITES, CO-REQUISITES AND/OR OTHER RESTRICTIONS:** None

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course explores modern-day public health challenges in France and the United States through an historical lens, tracing societal transformations and innovations that have shaped current systems. Beginning with the revolutionary changes in 19th-century Europe that gave rise to sociology, we will examine how social structures influence health and well-being. Building on these foundations, we will explore how both France and the United States have addressed public health needs through policy, innovation, and social reform. The course will focus specifically on key moments in French public health history, such as the syphilis epidemic (known as the “French disease”), the establishment of the public health system, and Louis Pasteur’s germ theory. It also will analyze responses to more contemporary crises like AIDS and COVID-19. A Virtual Exchange project with French students will focus on societal responses to an infectious epidemic, COVID-19, as well as chronic epidemics such as obesity and addiction. Field-based learning in Toulouse will deepen our understanding of the intersection of history, society, and public health

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify societal transformations that led to the development of public health systems.
- Evaluate the evolution of public health policies and infrastructures in France and the United States, identifying similarities and differences.
- Explore case studies such as the syphilis epidemic, the contributions of Louis Pasteur, the AIDS crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic to understand the relationship between historical events and contemporary health practices.
- Enhance intercultural competence and understanding of diverse perspectives through a virtual exchange with French students and field-based experiences abroad.

**RECOMMENDED MATERIALS:**

There is no required textbook for this class. All assigned readings will be provided on Perusall, an interactive platform for collaborative reading and discussion.

## **CLASS FORMAT AND INSTRUCTOR'S EXPECTATIONS**

This course will include lectures, class discussions, student presentations, and assignments completed both in and out of the classroom. Another key component is a Virtual Exchange where UT Dallas students will connect with students in France through synchronous and asynchronous activities to compare public health initiatives in both countries. Field learning will include guest speakers, field trips, and visits to non-profits and hospitals. Detailed instructions on assignments and activities will be provided in class and on eLearning.

## **GRADING**

Class Attendance/Participation	20%
Reading Assignments on Perusall	20%
Group Presentation	10%
Pre-Departure Research	10%
Virtual Exchange	10%
Reflection Journal in Toulouse	<u>30%</u>
	100%

## **LETTER GRADE PERCENTAGE POINTS**

A+	97-100	B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	59 and below
A	94-96	B-	80-83	D+	67-69		
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66		
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63		

## **CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION**

Students may only have ONE unexcused absence during the Maymester term without penalty. Since active class participation is encouraged, you will receive a grade reduction for every class you miss after your one unexcused absence. You will receive participation credit for completing in-class exercises and contributing to discussions.

## **CLASS PRESENTATION**

Students will work in small groups to examine a major public health epidemic such as cholera, tuberculosis, syphilis, influenza, polio, HIV/AIDS, or COVID-19. Each group will investigate the scientific discovery associated with the disease and explore how it shaped public health policy and everyday life in France while also drawing comparisons with the United States. Particular attention will be given to the role of French institutions, scientific advances, and government responses, including the

redesign of Paris after cholera, the work of the Institut Pasteur, and modern pandemic policies. Groups will present their findings in class and contribute to a broader discussion of how epidemics reveal the relationship between science, society, and the state.

### **VIRTUAL EXCHANGE PROJECT**

Virtual Exchange (VE) uses synchronous and asynchronous technology to connect students from different countries for cross-cultural communication and learning. As part of this course, students will participate in a structured virtual exchange with university students in France to explore how epidemics and public health challenges are understood in different social contexts. Through online discussions and shared assignments, students will examine both infectious epidemics, such as COVID-19, and contemporary chronic public health issues including mental health, obesity, alcohol use, drug addiction, and smoking and vaping. By engaging directly with peers abroad, students will gain insight into how culture, social conditions, and public policy shape population health in different national settings.

### **PRE-DEPARTURE RESEARCH**

Before traveling to Toulouse, students will complete a short research assignment on a site in the city that illustrates an aspect of public health history or the social determinants of health. Public health responses to disease and health challenges are often visible in the physical landscape of cities, including hospitals, religious institutions, markets, neighborhoods, parks, and infrastructure. Working in pairs, students will select a site in Toulouse, research its historical significance and connection to public health, and write a brief blog-style post that includes images and sources. These posts will be shared with the class before the trip to guide our visits. When we encounter the site in Toulouse, the students who researched it will briefly introduce the location and explain its relevance to the course themes.

### **READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Assigned readings will be available through Perusall, a collaborative annotation/discussion platform. To successfully complete the assignment, please read the book chapter for each unit and add comments, annotations, and questions. You have six assigned readings, and I will count your five highest grades. Your grade on Perusall assignments can be improved by accessing the readings multiple times, reading in small chunks (rather than all at once) and by responding to the questions of other students. So start early and come back to the site often. Check on the comments made by others, try to answer their questions, or respond to their posts. Be sure to look over the Perusall information posted in eLearning.

### **REFLECTION JOURNAL**

Experiential learning will be an important part of our time in Toulouse. Because learning deepens when we pause to reflect on what we have seen and experienced, 30 percent of your course grade will be based on written reflection. You will record your observations and insights in an online Reflection Journal available in eLearning. As we meet with guest speakers, visit local nonprofits, hear from physicians and public health professionals, and explore the city, you will have many opportunities to see how the ideas we discuss in class take shape in real-world settings. Your reflections should connect

these experiences to the topics we are studying and consider how they deepen your understanding of public health, social conditions, and the historical development of health systems in France.

### **LATE WORK**

All assignment due dates will be announced in class and posted in eLearning. You will receive a penalty of 5 points per day for assignments turned in late.

### **INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

The faculty expects a high level of responsibility and academic honesty from students. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

### **SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY**

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism.

### **GENERATIVE AI**

Cheating includes using unauthorized materials to complete an assignment (Student Code of Conduct - UTDSP5003). AI-generated content should NOT be presented as your own work. Instead, include an acknowledgment of how generative AI has been used in your work. More details will be provided in class. Under UTD rules about due process, referrals may be made to the Office of Community Standards and Conduct. Inappropriate use of AI may result in penalties, including a zero on an assignment.

### **EMAIL ACCOUNT**

**Please be sure that you know how to access your UTD email account and can check it regularly.**

The university provides students with free email accounts in order to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of individuals corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. Therefore, the university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's UT Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. For help with your UTD email account, call 972-883-2911 or go to <http://www.utdallas.edu/ir/helpdesk/>

### **GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The University of Texas at Dallas has developed a number of policies and procedures designed to

provide students with a safe and supportive learning environment. *Click [here](#) for additional UT Dallas Policies and Procedures related to the following topics and others.*

## **CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

*(Note that all assigned book chapters will be available on Perusall)*

**Week 1**                      **The French Roots of Sociology and Social Determinants of Health**  
**March 27**                    Introduction to the revolutionary changes in 19<sup>th</sup>-century France that gave rise to sociology, with a focus on understanding social determinants of health and societal influences on healthcare systems.

*Porter: Epidemics and Social Dislocation in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century – Due April 2*

**Week 2**                      **The Industrial Revolution and the Great Sanitary Awakening**  
**April 3**                      Overview of how industrialization and urbanization led to widespread disease and also spurred public health reforms.

*Carney' The Sanitary Crisis; Pivotal Progress in Public Health – Due*

*April 9*

- Week 3**  
**April 10**                    **Scientific Innovations and Public Health Breakthroughs**  
Explore key 19<sup>th</sup>-century scientific advances that revolutionized public health, including Louis Pasteur’s germ theory.  
*Gaynes: Louis Pasteur and the Germ Theory of Disease – Due April 16*
- Week 4**  
**April 17**                    **The “French Disease” (Syphilis), STDs and Women’s Health**  
Examine the societal and public health responses to syphilis, historically known as the “French disease,” alongside other sexually transmitted diseases. Explore their impact on women’s health.  
*Wright: History’s Worst Plagues and the Heroes Who Fought Them – Due April 24*
- Week 5**  
**April 24**                    **War and Public Health**  
Examination of how wartime conditions, including those during World War I and II, shaped public health systems and strategies.  
*Carney: Health, War and Society – Due April 30*
- Week 6**  
May 1                        **The Global AIDS Crisis**  
Analyze the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century AIDS crisis with a focus on France’s contributions to combating the epidemic and its implications for global public health.  
*Gaynes: Françoise Barré-Sinoussi and the Discovery of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus – Due May 7*  
*Tracing Public Health through Toulouse Assignment due April 30*
- Week 7:**  
May 8                        **COVID-19 and Contemporary Public Health**  
Explore the societal and policy responses to COVID-19 in France and the United States, connecting the lessons learned from earlier public health crises to the most recent pandemic.
- Week 8 and 9:**        **Field Learning in Toulouse**  
May 18 to May 29        Engage in field-based learning through visits to the Museum of the History of Medicine, a public hospital and local non-profits working on prevention and assistance to those in need, and other sites throughout the city. These site visits, paired with guest lectures, will provide insights into the intersection of history, society and contemporary public health.

*Comet Creed*

**As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.**