

Course manual  
Joint Master's Programme in  
International Humanitarian Action

University of  
Warsaw, Poland

*version Oct 2016*

# Public Health in Humanitarian Action

Semester 1



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See above

**Credits awarded:** 4 ECTS, equivalent to 100 work hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours)**Period:** First semester, block 1.**Venue & hours:** Old Library, room 108 on Wednesdays from 15:00 until 16:30 unless indicated differently in the programme schedule.**1. Introduction**

The module is an element of the second component (Core Course, 25 ECTS) of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the first semester. It forms a recognised part of the curriculum and is a requirement for obtaining the NOHA Master's degree.

The overall objective of the module is to provide an insight into necessary public health actions at emergency and other humanitarian crisis. Health is a basic human right and emergency situation (both sudden as well as longitudinal crisis) has always a negative impact on health of people involved. A prompt and relevant coordinated help may mitigate serious health risk and alleviate long term consequences affecting physical and mental status.

Graduates should be able to actively participate in managerial activities and support field work onsite. The module will deliver necessary knowledge on medical, social and psychological aspects of needs assessment. Moreover, it equips students with a "tool box" of practical solutions useful when a crisis requires prompt actions.

**2. Learning outcomes**

In conformity with the learning outcomes set out by the NOHA network, students should achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of this module:

## Knowledge

- Has a clear understanding of personal health and safety risks in disasters.
- Has a comprehensive understanding of public health in different emergency contexts, including the impact of various humanitarian action interventions on the needs and rights of crisis-affected people.

## Skills

- Has demonstrated ability to integrate a public health response into the often complex social and cultural environment.
- Has developed capacity to cope with personal health & security issues.
- Has demonstrated the necessary skills for communicating public health situations

and conclusions, to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

- Has demonstrated ability to plan and implement health interventions in emergencies regarding food security, water & environmental health, communicable diseases, psycho-social/psychological issues, health care services and health information systems.

#### *Competences*

- Has demonstrated the capacity to take responsibility for specifying clear ethical standards in humanitarian intervention.

### **3. Course material**

Basic literature:

1. Teller, Siri and Roche, Niall (eds). *Public Health in Humanitarian Action*. University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, 2016. – downloadable at <http://globalhealth.ku.dk/phha/>
2. The Sphere Project. *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*. Available online: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/the-humanitarian-charter/>
3. Save the KidsUK. *Toolkits: A practical guide to planning, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment*. Downloadable at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/toolkits-practical-guide-planning-monitoring-evaluation-and-impact>

Selected chapters from the reading above will be announced in advance a week before a relevant seminar. Additional short readings from CDC&P, UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR (not longer than 20 pages each) will be announced in advance during seminars and made available on NOHA Blackboard.

### **4. Teaching and learning methodology**

Each seminar begins with a brief introduction and summary of the necessary knowledge regarding the main topic (not more than 30 minutes). The next stage is a presentation of a problem/question/case study requiring engagement of students. The rest of the seminar consists of discussion on the potential causes/solutions and is summarised from the practical perspective (what can be used in real life). Finally, students receive recommendations for readings necessary for the next seminar.

Problem-based learning is intended to provide students with both knowledge and practical tools to be trained during seminars. As a final assignment students will write an essay with a practical analysis of selected crisis (voluntarily chosen).

## 5. Programme and training activities

### Week 1

Introduction to the Module – interdisciplinary context of public health and basic health needs  
15:00-16:30

### Week 2

International public health system and priorities in an emergency – international cooperation and its challenges (1)  
15:00-16:30

- Overview of public health definitions, health determinants, social context of health and health beliefs.

### Week 3

International public health system and priorities in an emergency – international cooperation and its challenges (2)  
15:00-16:30

- Communication and management in case of emergency – local and global events. Responsibilities of local authorities.
- Hurdles to effective cooperation between many partners

### Week 4

Rapid Health Needs Assessment and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Humanitarian Action (1)  
15:00-16:30

- Methodology of rapid health needs assessment.

### Week 5

Rapid Health Needs Assessment and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Humanitarian Action (2)  
15:00-16:30

- Model WASH – the basic model for needs assessment and shaping actions in public health

### Week 6

Food and Nutrition in an emergency and after it (1)  
15:00-16:30

- Food security and food safety – two main challenges in nutrition
- Food-borne diseases and education on food processing

### Week 7

Food and Nutrition in an emergency and after it (2)

15:00-16:30

- Food-borne diseases and education on food processing

#### **Week 8**

Outbreaks of infectious diseases (1)

15:00-16:30

- Main infectious diseases with potential of outbreak during a crisis and its vectors (sources of germs).
- Prevention of infectious diseases by vaccination schemes and isolation of infected patients.

#### **Week 9**

Outbreaks of infectious diseases (2)

15:00-16:30

- Epidemiological tools for disease monitoring and containment

#### **Week 10**

Psychosocial aspects of humanitarian actions and negotiations for health needs. (1)

15:00-16:30

- Prevention of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Support for family member of victims.

#### **Week 11**

Psychosocial aspects of humanitarian actions and negotiations for health needs. (2)

15:00-16:30

- Social aspects of reconciliation in religious or military conflicts.

#### **Week 12**

Management of health and social resources (1)

15:00-16:30

- Planning, mobilizing resources and operational schemes for coordination of humanitarian actions. Cooperation with governmental and non-governmental donors.

#### **Week 13**

Management of health and social resources (2)

15:00-16:30

- Evaluation of humanitarian actions – sharing experiences as a basis of building international competence.

#### **Week 14**

Health care systems and sustainability of humanitarian help  
15:00-16:30

- Challenges to maintain the emergency solution in the health care system – threat of a fragmented and interim support.

#### **Exam week**

Analysis of projects provided by students – what lessons can be drawn from previous experiences?  
15:00-16:30

Presentations and discussion on final assignment. Final conclusions and evaluation of the module.

#### **6. Workload**

Seminars account for 30 teaching hours (1 ECTS)  
Readings for each seminars – 50 hours (2 ECTS)  
Preparing a final essay requires at least 25 hours (1 ECTS)

Total – 105 hours (4 ECTS)

#### **7. Assessment methods**

All participants will be requested to provide a 4 page report with a critical analysis of voluntary selected crisis or emergency. The task include literature research and selecting necessary information and drawing lessons sections (what went well and what should be improved).

#### **8. Assessment criteria**

1. The scope of literature/fact research results (quantitative – at least 10 sources)
2. The critical approach for evaluating facts – drawing conclusions (qualitative – precision and logical relevance of conclusions).

#### **9. Appendices**

None.