Ebola, MERS, and the One Health Model of Global Outbreaks

Hotung, Room 6006
Georgetown University Law Center
Professors Daniel Lucey & Daniel Hougendobler

SYLLABUS

One Health: “the collaborative effort of multiple disciplines—working locally, nationally, and globally—to attain optimal health for people, animals, and the environment”

-American Veterinary Medical Association, One Health: A New Professional Imperative (2008)

The 2014-2015 West African Ebola epidemic exposed significant shortcomings in global preparedness for infectious disease outbreaks. A largely preventable outbreak was allowed to spiral out of control, killing thousands, and global agreements and national and global institutions set up to prevent such outbreaks were inadequate to the task. In the aftermath, the global community has begun a period of self-reflection, attempting to identify what went wrong and how institutions and the global governance system more broadly can be re-structured to prevent future outbreaks of infectious disease. 2016 will prove a critical juncture in infectious disease control. Will the global community come together to take concerted action to promote global health security, or will efforts at reform face insurmountable political resistance and institutional inertia?

Our course will focus on the legal, public health and medical challenges presented by the ongoing Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola epidemics within the "One Health" paradigm—a more inclusive and integrated 3-part framework that takes into account the health of humans, animals, and the environment. For purposes of this course the One Health perspective will focus on zoonotic diseases that originate in animals and jump species to humans such as Ebola and MERS, but also avian influenza, SARS, Zika, Nipah, and many others.

To better understand the dynamics of epidemic disease outbreaks, Prof. Lucey will provide his personal perspective based on on-the-ground work in responding to Ebola in Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2014, as well as to MERS throughout the Middle East in 2013 and in Korea in 2015.

The course will address the legal response to epidemic disease, focusing particularly on the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR). In addition, we will cover recent developments, such as the critical findings (released between November 2015 and January 2016) of several international panels that examined the WHO's response to the Ebola epidemic and recommended changes as part of the broader WHO reform process. At least one panel recommended changes involving the United Nations, including at the level of the UN Security Council.
We will also discuss the evolving “Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA)” that was launched in February 2014, for which Prof. Lucey is a member of the Non-governmental Sector Steering Committee. The GHSA now includes 44 nations and the WHO, the OIE (the World Animal Health Organization in Paris), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO based in Rome), Interpol, and other international organizations are playing an active role. In the United States, the GHSA has involved agencies throughout the executive branch, particularly the White House, and Departments of State, Agriculture, Defense, and Health and Human Services (especially the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC)).

The course will be discussion-based, with course materials including online readings, videos, and other materials. The class will consist of interactive lectures, general discussion, and a classroom outbreak simulation ("tabletop") exercise. During this exercise students will be given a fact pattern and assigned a role (e.g., the WHO Director-General, US Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) officials, NGOs, etc.) and asked to negotiate with others and come to resolution. Grading will be determined based on a take-home exam along with class participation, including discussion and participation in simulation exercises.

The final class session (Jan 31) will focus primarily on the major reports published between November 22, 2015 and January 20, 2016 critiquing the inadequate response to the recent Ebola epidemic in West Africa. Emphasis will be place on lessons learned and actions proposed for the near future to prepare for, and respond to, the predictable and unpredictable epidemics of 2016 and beyond.
I. Course Specifics

A. **Time and Place.** Saturdays and Sundays, January 23-24 and 30-31 from 1:00 to 4:30 pm in Hotung, Room 6006

B. **Attendance.** Because of the short duration of the course, **attendance at all sessions is mandatory.** Students who fail to attend will receive a grade of Administrative Fail (AF). Exceptions to this policy will be made only in exceptional circumstances and with prior written permission of the instructors (with the exception of documented emergencies).

C. **Class discussions.** Demonstrating rigorous thought and an informed understanding of the subject matter will be an integral part of the learning process. All students will be expected to actively participate in class discussions as well as in small group discussions.

D. **Communication Platform.** Assignments, simulation materials, supplemental sources, course updates, the final exam, and other course materials will be published exclusively on Canvas Please check the site regularly. Students may also wish to set up notifications, so that they are informed when changes are made to the site.

E. **Readings.** Readings will be listed on Canvas (http://georgetownlaw.instructure.com) at least one week before each class session. There is no required textbook. Students are expected to read the assigned materials before each class session.

F. **Simulations.** The 3rd session (Jan 30) will be devoted to a simulation (“tabletop exercise”). Each student will be assigned a role (e.g. WHO officials, government or NGO representatives) and asked to participate in an international meeting. Preparatory assignments may be given prior to each simulation (these will be posted at least 1 week in advance of the simulation). Students will be evaluated on evidence of preparation and understanding of the key concepts, the quality of any assigned work, and how well they advocate for their assigned position.

G. **Final exam.** Students will be assigned a final, take home exam, due at 5pm on Monday, February 29, 2016. Students may not consult any unauthorized sources in writing the exam. Detailed instructions will be provided by the last class on January 31, 2016.

H. **Grading.** Students will be evaluated on class participation, including simulation preparation and participation (10%) and a final take-home exam (90%). The class participation grade is determined on the basis of quality, not merely quantity.

II. Consultation with Instructors

A. **Contact Information.** We recognize that this course will be different than most offered at the law center, and its content can be challenging to master. We are happy to meet with students and discuss course material. Prof. Lucey can be reached by email at  or by phone at  and Prof. Hougendobler can be reached by email at  or by phone at  .

B. **Office hours.** By appointment.

III. **Academic Ethics.** We take academic ethics very seriously. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic misconduct are governed by the law center’s student disciplinary code, as detailed in the Student Handbook (http://www.law.georgetown.edu/campus-services/registrar/handbook/index.cfm). All academic misconduct will be referred to the law center’s ethics counsel and may face penalties including a failing grade in this class. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, do not hesitate to contact us.
### Topical Outline:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Jan. 23</td>
<td>Key Concepts in One Health &amp; Infectious Disease Outbreaks: Ebola, MERS and avian influenza.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat., Jan. 30</td>
<td>Simulation Exercise: MERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun., Jan. 31</td>
<td>Lessons learned and prospects for WHO &amp; Epidemic Preparedness Reform: Major ‘Ebola and Beyond’ Reports &amp; Commissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Feb. 29</td>
<td>Take-home exam due</td>
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**Note:** See Canvas for readings and other course materials.