

CRITICAL READING AND
DISCUSSION

Epic

Measures

Interterm 2016

January 19-22, 2016
Location Wright Hall 237



Left: Mixed media (mostly recycled) of motorbike driver and passenger.
Top: Sculpture depicting recent road traffic accident.
Both images courtesy of the Fondation Zinsou in Ouidah, Benin.

Smith College | IDP 100-01 | Instructor: Kim Yi Dionne, Ph.D.

Course Description

This course deals with three important questions. What ails the world? How do we measure health? How can we improve global health, given what we know? Through a close reading of a new non-fiction book, *Epic Measures: One Doctor*, *Seven Billion Patients*, and exploration of related public health data, students will try to answer these questions and identify promising health policy solutions. Students will write blog posts critically evaluating the measures and subsequent policy prescriptions detailed in *Epic Measures*.

Course Expectations

Attendance: This course relies entirely on discussion. You must be present and on time. Anyone with more than one absence will not pass. Please get drinks/snacks and visit the toilet before we begin, rather than disrupt discussion.

Reading: The course schedule details what should be read after each class. The readings provide all of us with a common ground upon which we can develop new ideas. Bring the book with you to class and be able to succinctly state the arguments made in the text as well as your critique of the author's work.

Participation: Students will maximize the course's benefits by actively listening and contributing to the discussion. It is the responsibility of the student to raise questions when something is unclear.

Assignments: The assignments provide you with opportunities to articulate your responses to the topics and issues we will be covering. You will get the most out of the course if these are turned in on time.

Assignments

Essay 1 (20%): Write a 500-word essay about your knowledge of what ails the world, prior to reading *Epic*

Measures. What health issues are most pressing?

Essay 2 (40%): Write a 1000-word essay responding to the prompt, "How do we measure health?" In terms accessible to a layperson, explain (1) how global health data are collected and (2) what a DALY is.

Essay 3 (40%): Write a 1000-word essay about your policy prescription for improving global health drawing from the evidence in *Epic Measures*, your evaluation of that evidence, and exploratory data analysis using GBD Compare.

Assignments are subject to change. Late work will be penalized (dropping 10% per day).

Find the Smithie.
#smithieslead

In the book, *Epic Measures*, a Smith College graduate is featured: Katherine "Kate" Lofgren '09. According to her online bio, Kate is currently a doctoral student at Harvard University in the Center for Health Decision Science. Kate was a biology major at Smith College. We will connect with Kate via Skype during Thursday's class to learn about her experiences at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation and other things she's been doing since her time at Smith.

