Five College Certificate in Culture, Health, and Science (CHS)

Overview

The certificate in Culture, Health, and Science complements a traditional disciplinary major by allowing students to explore human health, disease, and healing from an interdisciplinary perspective. The CHS program recognizes that the study of any aspect of health requires theoretical frameworks and research strategies that integrate physical, political, psychological, and socio-cultural elements of human experience – and students in this rigorous program thus design a plan of study that links the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

Under the guidance of faculty advisors on each campus, students take CHS-approved courses available within the five colleges and complete an independent research project or internship.

Completing a CHS certificate provides students a solid liberal arts background and equips them with a range of tools to think cross-culturally about health issues. Students will learn, for example, to:

- Recognize historical patterns of intervention and disease transmission;
- Be media literate and assess various forms of technological advancement for health;
- Navigate healthcare systems and be an advocate for themselves and others;
- Recognize important contributions from multiple disciplines in the realm of health promotion, disease eradication, and global health.

It is increasingly clear that the best health practitioners, researchers, and policy analysts need to understand how behavior influences disease distribution, how biomedical categories change across time and culture, and how political and socioeconomic factors are integral to both intervention protocols and the manifestation of disease. They also must understand how to interpret and communicate research results to audiences of policy makers and to the general public.

The interdisciplinary CHS training is aimed at developing the above skills. CHS students take courses in a range of fields, are exposed to a variety of scholars and practitioners across the five colleges and beyond, and conduct an independent capstone project to bring these experiences together.

Requirements for the Certificate

Courses

- Seven CHS-approved courses with a grade of B or better, with at least one course from each of the five categories.:
  - Biocultural Approaches: Courses providing interdisciplinary and/or comparative approaches that explore the interdependent influences on human health and disease.
  - Mechanisms of Disease Transmission: Courses on mechanisms of disease growth and transmission within individuals and populations.
  - Population, Health, and Disease: Courses exploring the relationships among social, behavioral, economic, and other aggregate population forces on human health and disease.
  - Ethics, Policy, and Practice: Courses that cover structures of knowledge about health and healthcare decision-making, including ethical and philosophical issues and their corresponding policy platforms, as well as the implementation of healthcare in practice.
  - Research Design and Analysis: Courses involving research design and methods that expose students to concepts of evidence, data collection, research ethics, measurement, and analysis.
  - An approved independent research project, such as an internship, thesis, Division III project, course project, independent study, or other activity acceptable to the CHS campus advisor.

Further Details

- Students must receive a grade of “B” or better in each of their seven chosen courses.
- No course can be used to satisfy more than one category.
- At least four of the courses must be above introductory level.
- No more than three courses can “double count” toward a student’s major. The remaining four courses must be from departments outside your major.
- If possible, it is best to begin with courses in Categories 1 and 2.
- It is also recommended, but not required, that at least one of your courses expose you to knowledge of health and disease processes at the level of the population.
- Four semesters—or the equivalent—of a second language is also recommended but not required. Such language training may be required for students seeking internships and summer research positions available through the program.

Faculty/Contact

For further details, consult a Mount Holyoke College CHS certificate advisor: James Harold (philosophy), Lynn Morgan (anthropology), or Pam Matheson (pre-health advising). Also see www.fivecolleges.edu/sites/chs/ for a complete list of CHS campus advisors, CHS-approved courses, internship opportunities, and upcoming events.