

Healing in the Developing World and Care of the Underserved: Medical and Theological Considerations

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Medical School: IND 424C
Divinity School: PASTCARE 211
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“Healing in the Developing World and Care of the Underserved: Medical and Theological Considerations” is a working partnership between Family Health Ministries and the Theology and Medicine Program at the Duke Divinity School. This course examines issues related to health and healing in underserved populations through an integrated lens of medicine and theology. This lens provides an opportunity for gaining an understanding of shared practices of caring embodied in communities of reconciliation and service. We consider the health of individuals and communities to be inseparable and explore societal factors contributing to suffering and healing from both medical and theological perspectives.

As an interdisciplinary course divinity, medical, nursing and undergraduate students work together to learn how to provide caring and culturally relevant assistance to underserved communities and mend fractured relationships. This course is grounded in what we have learned from the poorest and least educated people in this half of the world through the work of Family Health Ministries and embodies a commitment to theologically interpreting and applying what they teach us. The course encourages students to put stereotypes aside and to find educational resources in places where resources are scarce. Education can occur in a classroom or on the street and we believe the two are complementary. Some of life’s greatest lessons come from solving problems together within the heightened awareness of interdependency found within the illness and suffering of the underserved. People in developing parts of the world face challenges difficult for us to fathom. In this course, you will come to know those people and learn from them as you join together in service to one another. A one week supervised immersion experience in an underserved context is offered as part of the course through the outreach work of Family Health Ministries.