

International Online Course Pandemics in History

Access to education and participation in academic dialogue have taken on an increasingly global dimension. Digitalization opens numerous opportunities for academic collaboration that far exceed the geographical, political, and social boundaries of traditional teaching and learning. In order to incorporate these aspects in their curriculum, partners from the University College and the Center for Medicine and Society at University of Freiburg (Germany) as well as Stony Brook University (NY, USA) developed a joint online course on “Pandemics in History”. The course is part of the [VirtualLAS](#) project at University College Freiburg and is sponsored as an [International Virtual Academic Collaboration](#) by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

Partners

Prof. Dr. Bettina Fries, Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Stony Brook University
 Prof. Dr. Axel Kroeger, Center for Medicine and Society, University of Freiburg
 Dr. Simon J. Buechner, Major Life Sciences, University College Freiburg, University of Freiburg

In a joint credit-bearing course for up to 15 students the partners will develop a 360°-view of five different pandemics that occurred in human history and are still ongoing:

Dengue



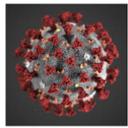
Dengue viruses are spread to people through the bites of infected Aedes species mosquitoes
<https://www.cdc.gov/dengue/index.html>

Malaria



Malaria is spread by the bite of an infective female Anopheles mosquito
<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/malaria/index.html>

SARS/Covid-19



Viruses are constantly changing, and this includes SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19
<https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV/>

Tuberculosis



In 2018, 1.5 million people died from TB, including 251,000 people with HIV.
<https://www.who.org/en/60-countries/world-tuberculosis-day-2020-who-infographic-pdf-tuberculosis-top-infectious-killer-world>

HIV-AIDS



HIV/AIDS awareness ribbon, solidarity symbol of people living with HIV/AIDS.
<https://2012-2017.usaid.gov/results-data/success-stories/usaid-hivaids-service-capacity-project-completes-work>



A group of three students from the different partner institutions and with different academic backgrounds will explore one of the pandemics in a research-oriented way. They will be supervised by an expert from an internationally staffed panel. Each student group will analyze different aspects of one pandemic, for example, its pathology, related burdens and consequences as well as measures taken against it. The course will particularly deal with the fact that pandemics are of global concern, while measures against them are usually taken on a national level.



In addition, students will gain insights into the work of public health institutions such as:



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The screenshot shows the course platform interface for 'WS 20/21 - Pandemics in Human History'. It includes a navigation menu, a 'Welcome to the course!' section with a detailed description of the course structure and goals, a 'Your Tutors:' list, and a 'MOST IMPORTANT DATES' section. The interface also features a 'Communication' section with a forum, 'Lectures' with a list of lecture slides and recordings, and 'Upload for Student Projects' sections. A sidebar on the right lists various course components like 'Pandemics', 'Dengue', 'HIV-AIDS', 'Malaria', 'SARS/Covid-19', and 'Tuberculosis'.

About VirtualLAS

VirtualLAS focusses on collaborative, digitally based teaching and student-instructor dialogue as well as intercultural competencies and team-working skills. The project is particularly suited to strengthen students' understanding of global responsibility, diversity, and interculturality. VirtualLAS ultimately aims to:

- expand internationalization endeavors into the virtual domain and to increase internationalization at home for our students;
- develop, pilot, and evaluate unique student-centered formats of virtual international learning together with our international partners;
- assess and document the results together with our international partners for consolidation;
- foster learning and transfer of these student-centered formats of virtual international learning to other courses