Course Description

Most countries in the European Union have healthcare systems that rank among the best in the world. However, in recent years, they have been seriously strained by the financial crisis and by the political drift away from “cradle-to-grave” socio-economic systems. The purpose of this course is to analyze the structure and functioning of the European healthcare system, the significant differences that exist among EU member countries, the important policies of the European Commission that affect health, the working conditions for doctors and nurses, the quality of the hospital system, and an in-depth analysis of the healthcare systems in the Netherlands, France, and Italy. A special emphasis will be placed on the provision of nursing services and on the nursing profession throughout the European Union. The nursing profession in Europe is suffering from a high burnout rate, shortage of staff, job insecurity, devalued nursing image in society, and the lack of recognition of emotional and psychological dimensions of care.

This Supervised Independent Study (SIS) course will guide students through the basics of healthcare systems and the nursing profession in the European Union, while providing the opportunity for an independent exploration of the subject.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the role of the main institutions of the European Union in developing and implementing health policies
2. Evaluate the impact on health of supra-national, national, and regional policies
3. Appreciate the importance of specialized agencies, such as the European Center for Disease Control
4. Compare and contrast health status statistics throughout Europe
5. Acquire an in-depth familiarity with the healthcare systems in the Netherlands, France, and Italy
6. Appreciate the significant impact of the financial crisis on health budgets and health outcomes
7. Become familiarized with the most important public health initiatives
8. Understand the progress achieved by the numerous instances of healthcare reforms in various countries
9. Learn about the peculiarities of the nursing profession throughout the European Union and evaluate the main differences with other countries, most notably with the U.S.
10. Analyze important challenges facing the nursing profession in Europe, including a high burnout rate, staff shortages, job insecurity, and a devalued image of nurses in society.
11. Understand the training, regulation and special challenges faced by general care and specialist nurses.

**Course Requirements**

This course requires independent research, organization, and academic discipline. Students are expected to complete the required and additional readings in pace with their assignments and the course outline. Students will meet with their SIS Supervising Professor(s) regularly throughout the course for consultation and assistance. There will be an oral presentation, a midterm exam, a final exam, and five essay assignments.

Students are also required to participate in a minimum of three Forum-Nexus professional visits and three cultural visits. Students may also pursue individual visits to companies and organizations as part of their independent study.

**Essay #1 (minimum length: 1,000 words)**
- What are the main organizations and agencies involved in the healthcare industry in the European Union?
- What are the main characteristics of being a nurse in the European Union?
- Explain how you would become a nurse in the European Union if you were from a native EU member country.

**Essay #2 (minimum length: 500 words)**
- Explain the healthcare system and the nursing profession in the Netherlands
  - What are the main characteristics? Achievements? Challenges?
  - What are some statistics or interesting pieces of information you found about nurses and the nursing profession in the Netherlands?
- How is the Netherlands involved in larger healthcare policies and procedures in the EU?

**Essay #3 (minimum length: 500 words)**
- Explain the healthcare system and the nursing profession in France
  - What are the main characteristics? Achievements? Challenges?
  - What are some statistics or interesting pieces of information you found about nurses and the nursing profession in France?
- How is France involved in larger healthcare policies and procedures in the EU?

**Essay #4 (minimum length: 500 words)**
- Explain the healthcare system and the nursing profession in Italy
  - What are the main characteristics? Achievements? Challenges?
  - What are some statistics or interesting pieces of information you found about nurses and the nursing profession in Italy?
- How is Italy involved in larger healthcare policies and procedures in the EU?

**Essay #5 (minimum length: 1,000 words)**
- Compare and contrast the healthcare systems and nursing profession in the Netherlands, France, and Italy
• If you could put together the best healthcare system in the EU, what aspects of each country’s system would you choose? Are there any gaps or opportunities that you would fill with a policy of another country?

Presentation

Deliver a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing the main findings of your independent study. Required components include:
• Summary of your goals and objectives
• Overview of healthcare in the European Union
• Overview of the nursing profession in the European Union
• Comparison and analysis of the Netherlands, France, and Italy
• Reflection on what you’ve learned through the SIS course

Required Reading

Nursing in the European Union: Anatomy of a Profession
by Sondra Z. Koff
Taylor & Francis Group, 2016

Recommended Readings
Most of the following are available for free online

Health at a Glance 2017
OECD, Paris, 2017

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About European Union Health Politics but Were Afraid to Ask
by Scott L. Greer, Nick Fahy, et al.
European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies
World Health Organization, Copenhagen, 2014

Economic Crisis, Health Systems and Health in Europe: Impact and Implications for Policy
by Sarah Thompson et al.
European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies
World Health Organization, Copenhagen, 2014

Caring in Crisis: The Impact of the Financial Crisis on Nurses and Nursing
European Federation of Nurses Associations, 2012

Netherlands: Health System Review
Health Systems in Transition
European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2016

France: Health System Review
Health Systems in Transition
European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2015

Switzerland: Health System Review
Health Systems in Transition
European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2015
Components of Final Grade

- Midterm exam: 20%
- Final exam: 20%
- Essay #1: 10%
- Essay #2: 10%
- Essay #3: 10%
- Essay #4: 10%
- Essay #5: 10%
- Presentation: 10%

Grading Scale

- 93-100 %: A
- 90-92.9 %: A-
- 87-89.9 %: B+
- 83-86.9 %: B
- 80-82.9 %: B-
- 77-79.9 %: C+
- 73-76.9 %: C
- 70-72.9 %: C-
- 67-69.9 %: D+
- 63-66.9 %: D
- 60-62.9 %: D-
- Below 60 %: F

Course Outline

Module 1: Healthcare Policies in the European Union

- The main EU political institutions
  - The Commission
  - The Council of Ministers
  - The European Parliament
  - The Court of Justice
- Specialized agencies
  - European Center for Disease Control (ECDC)
  - European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
  - European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction
  - European Environment Agency
  - European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
- National and supra-national policies
- The impact of the ongoing economic crisis in Europe
Module 2: Nursing in the European Union: The Setting
- Introduction
- Definition of Nursing
- Globalization and Europeanization
- Institutionalism

Module 3: Education
- Introduction
- EU Directives, the Bologna Process, and Nursing Education
- The Case of the Newly Acceded Member States
- Numbers: Student Quotas, Attrition, and Graduates
- Nursing Education Sites
- Entry Requirements
- Who Studies Nursing and Why?
- Specialization
- Teaching Methods
- Regulation of Nursing Education

Module 4: Analysis of the healthcare system and nursing profession in the Netherlands
- Country characteristics
- Organization and governance
- Budgets and financing
- Physical resources
- Human resources
- Public health
- Provision of services
- Reforms to the healthcare system
- Assessment of the healthcare system

Module 5: Aspects of Professional Regulation
- Professional Recognition
- Nursing Demographics
- Ethical Practice
- Fitness to Practice

Module 6: Analysis of the healthcare system and nursing profession in France
- Country characteristics
- Organization and governance
- Budgets and financing
- Physical resources
- Human resources
- Public health
- Provision of services
- Reforms to the healthcare system
- Assessment of the healthcare system

Module 7: Nursing Research
- Research Development
- Research Literacy
- Research Strategies and Priorities
- Funding
- Research Initiatives
• Research Dissemination
• Evidence-Based Practice: The Integration of Research and Service
• Nursing Research Challenges

Module 8: Analysis of the healthcare system and nursing profession in Italy
• Country characteristics
• Organization and governance
• Budgets and financing
• Physical resources
• Human resources
• Public health
• Provision of services
• Reforms to the healthcare system
• Assessment of the healthcare system

Module 9: Representatives of Nursing and Their Activities
• Chief Nursing Officers
• The Professional Nursing Association
• Interest Group Systems
• Nursing Associations: The International Dimension
• Pressure Group Politics and the Institutions of European Government
• Groups and European Union Structures
• Summary and Conclusion

Module 10: Challenges to the nursing profession in the European Union
• Professional mobility of nurses within Europe
• Comparative analysis of nurses’ income
• Staff shortages
• Burnout rate
• Job insecurity
• Specialty nurses
• The future of nursing and healthcare in the EU

Schedule of Classes and Visits

The detailed schedule of classes, professional visits, and suggested cultural visits for each session is available online at [www.forum-nexus.com/schedules](http://www.forum-nexus.com/schedules).

Academic Integrity

Ramon Llull University, Franklin University Switzerland, and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart place a high value on the integrity, good conduct, and academic honesty of all students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity at all times. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F for the course.
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| 5/15 – 6/30 |          | **Pre-Program Preparation**  
Become familiar with the syllabus, identify additional readings, begin readings and research | 1 - 2  |
| 7/2       | Amsterdam| Essay #1 Due                                        |        |
| 7/2 - 7/3 | Amsterdam| **Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)**       |        |
|           |          | Complete Readings and Research                       | 3 - 4  |
| 7/5       | Paris    | Essay #2 Due                                        |        |
| 7/10-7/11 | Chamonix | **Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)**       |        |
|           |          | Complete Readings and Research                       | 5 - 6  |
| 7/11      | Chamonix | Essay #3 Due                                        |        |
| 7/12      | Chamonix | Midterm Exam                                        |        |
| 7/16      | Milan    | **Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)**       |        |
|           |          | Complete Readings and Research                       | 7 - 8  |
| 7/20      | Rome     | Essay #4 Due                                        |        |
| 7/23      | Rhodes   | **Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)**       |        |
|           |          | Complete Readings and Research                       | 9 - 10 |
| 7/25      | Rhodes   | Essay #5 Due                                        |        |
| 7/26      | Rhodes   | Final Exam                                          |        |
| 7/27      | Rhodes   | Final Presentation                                   |        |