I. General
A. Course number and title: MHS 237: Caring for Vulnerable Populations
B. Description: This course provides an introductory overview of interdisciplinary approaches to vulnerable populations with an emphasis on the evolvement of humanitarian aid and the risks and responsibilities in providing it. Students will analyze differences between acute and chronic crises, examining the geopolitical, cultural, clinical and practical factors that impact high risk groups. The focus of the course largely focuses on populations impacted by war, civil conflict, crime and disaster in global and domestic settings.
C. Credit: 3 hours
D. Class Time/Location: Tuesdays 2:35 - 5:10, Furman Hall 325
E. Faculty: Carol Etherington, MSN, RN, FAAN
   Office: Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health
   2525 West End Ave., Suite 750
   Phone: 343-3270  Fax: 343-7797

II. Course Objectives
   At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:
   1. Define and contrast descriptive terms applied to vulnerable populations: e.g. populations in danger, at risk populations, refugees/IDPs,
   2. Contrast the impact of natural disaster versus man-made
   3. Describe geo-political, cultural, economic and psycho-social impact of disaster
   4. Identify key elements of humanitarianism and humanitarian aid
   5. Describe methods of intervention and response in acute emergencies
   6. Discuss risk factors within specific population groups in local and global settings

III. Learning Experience:
   A. Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in discussion and group activities.
      The foundation of the course is based on a combination of lecture, case studies, interactive discussion and student presentations. There is a strong self-directed study aspect of the course with participants encouraged to attend selected campus/community lectures and required to research topics and relevant literature on their self-selected projects. A key component of the learning experience is carried out in group discussion and work. The instructor will be available for individual and group consultation; it is the student’s responsibility to initiate communication with the instructor related to student concerns or questions about assignments or other course related issues.
   B. Assignments: (refer to assignment sheet for details)
      Discussion Grade - includes general class participation, weekly articles, reflection papers - 40%
      Project Outlines and Reports to class (2) - 20%
      Scholarly/Critical Review Paper - 40%
   C. Grading Scale: A 95-100; A- 90-94; B+ 87-89; B 84-86; B- 80-83; C+ 77-79; C 74-76; C- 70-73
      D+ 67-69; D 64-66; D- 67-69
   D. Honor Code: Adherence expected and required; www.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/infofac.php
      Any incident involving plagiarism will result in failure of the course.
   E. Policy on Absences: Consistent class attendance is expected with prior notification to instructor in cases where a student must miss class; unexcused absences will be reflected in final grade.
Course Sessions and Readings

1/8  Session 1: Orientation and introduction to the course – This introductory session will provide the specifics for the course with a general overview of vulnerable populations and an opportunity for participants to introduce themselves to one another, citing their particular areas of interest.

1/15 Session 2:  This session will examine the concept of professionalism in context of working with vulnerable populations, followed by interactive discussion on factors that contribute to acute and chronic vulnerability among individuals, families and communities.


1/22 Session 3: Humanitarianism and the Delivery of Humanitarian Aid – lecture and discussion on the evolving role of humanitarianism and the delivery of care to populations impacted by disaster, war and civil conflict.


iv. Student selected articles for class discussion on historical and current disasters/ response

1/29 Session 4: The Impact of War and Disaster on Communities – lecture and discussion on the stages of disaster, the specific aspects of population based traumatic events, and their impact on communities from the earliest warning signs through the post impact phase.


** Special Class Session
1/31 (Thursday) – SPECIAL SESSION: The World’s Women: Fighting Poverty and Repression by Empowering Women and Girls; Nicolas Kristoff, Student Life Center 5:30 – 6:30 PM

2/5 Session 5: Student led discussion of Kristoff Presentation (class will be 2:35- P.M.). Those unable to attend the Kristoff lecture will be responsible for presenting on topic related articles. Reflection paper due from all students.

2/12 Session 6: Health and Mental Health in Post Trauma Environments – discussion on healing in the aftermath of traumatic experiences.
   www.nytimes.com/2008/01/01/opinion/01halperin.html


iii. Student self-selected articles

2/19 Session 7: Global Response to Vulnerable Populations: Who, What, Where, When and How? 
Students will report on an organization, institution or movement that they believe addresses issues related to health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations. This is Part I of the student project; each student will give a 5 minute verbal report to the class and respond to questions. A detailed written (hard copy) outline with descriptive bullets points and a reference page is required.* See assignment sheet for details

2/26 Session 8: CHILDREN and TEENS: 
This session will address maltreatment of children and teens through the perspectives of health and social service providers, followed by a discussion on types of interventions and an overview of how maltreatment impacts the child, the family and society at large. Guest Lecturers: Rosof-Williams, J.

   Readings: TBD by guest speakers and student selected articles

   • *Students still needing to present their reports will do so on this day.

SPRING BREAK
3/12 Session 9: WOMEN
Population Profiles: Women and Children – lecture focus on special needs and risks factors faced by women and children in global and domestic settings. Guest Lecturers: Meece, VJ & Bennett, H

| ii. Student self-selected articles |

3/19 Sessions 10: Refugees, Immigrant, Other Foreign Born – lecture and discussion on special needs and risk factors faced by refugees, displaced and undocumented groups in global and local settings. Guest Lecturer: Richardson, A.


3/26 Session 11: HOMELESS
Population Profiles: From Homelessness & Helplessness to Hopefulness – lecture and discussion on the social determinants that create homelessness and the community obstacles to successfully addressing it. Guest Lecturer Speaker: Nash, R

**Reflection paper #2 due - may be turned in by Friday 3/29 to include this session.

| i. TBD by Guest Speaker and Student Self-selected articles |

4/2 Session 12: Domestic Response to Vulnerable Populations
Students will report on an organization, institution or movement that they believe addresses issues related to health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations within the USA (may be local or national). This is Part II of the student project; students have 5 minutes for verbal report. A detailed written (hard copy) outline with descriptive bullets points and a reference page is required.* See assignment sheet for details

Student Presentations
4/9 Session 13: Student presentations continued.
Students may turn in final paper at any time between now and 4/16.

*4/11 Special Session: South Africa’s Constitutional Transition and AIDS: A Personal Account, Justice Edwin Cameron Lecture: 5:30 – 6:30 Law School, First Floor lobby. This is encouraged but optional.

4/16 Session 14: Final Class: Semester Summary; Final paper due.