Over the past half-century, scholars have debated the relationship between the quest for “endless growth”—capital accumulation on a global scale—and resource exhaustion. Domestic and global economic inequality places significant numbers of people at high risk for health crises even as they are denied access to care. This course investigates the “pathogenic” aspects of economic inequality. It examines how systems of unequal resource distribution grounded in class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality contribute to wide disparities of health risk, access to health care, and clinical outcomes. It explores how global trade and transnational migration affect health costs, health care delivery systems, and the availability of health care professionals. By tracing links between macro-economic policies and access to health care, the course analyzes industrial products and byproducts, injury from resource extraction processes such as nuclear fission and deep-water oil drilling, the manifold health hazards stemming from violent conflict over control of scarce resources in postcolonial states, and dangers that attend dislocation resulting from climate change.

This course situates women’s health in the context of these debates, investigating the health consequences of environmental crises linked to various market-based development strategies and technological innovations. Analyzing externalized business costs in the currency of human health, the course investigates illness caused by toxic chemical emissions, degrading air and water quality, and the role of pharmaceutical lobby in influencing healthcare within particular nations.

Multinational pharmaceutical companies remain the primary developers of new drug regimens. The health effects of drug research and development, however, vary markedly from one region of the world to another. This course explores the political economy of the global pharmaceutical industry, analyzing the geopolitical distribution of burdens and benefits. It examines ethical issues such as clinical trials on populations in the Global South, continuing sales of drugs across the Global South after they have been banned in the North, disproportionate investment in drugs for minor health problems while serious diseases affecting the poor remain insufficiently studied; inadequate vaccine development and manufacture; restrictions on the distribution of life-saving generic drugs in third world countries; overuse of antibiotics and the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and the role of pharmaceutical lobby in influencing healthcare within particular nations.

By checking this box I certify that I have visited the website for the Office of the Registrar, have reviewed and will follow the Policies and Procedures, including information on tuition and fees, schedule revisions and deadlines. I also understand that I am fully liable for all university tuition and/or fees associated with my registration and will make payment or arrangements for payment suitable to the university prior to attendance and will not receive confirmation of registration until such time as payment has been received. I understand that registration is not guaranteed and is contingent on space availability and/or departmental approval. I also understand that transferability of credits is solely determined by the institution(s) I have applied to or am matriculated in. In addition, I recognize that registering for courses via Rutgers Continuing Studies does not guarantee acceptance into any academic program other than the Certificate in Women’s Global Health Leadership.