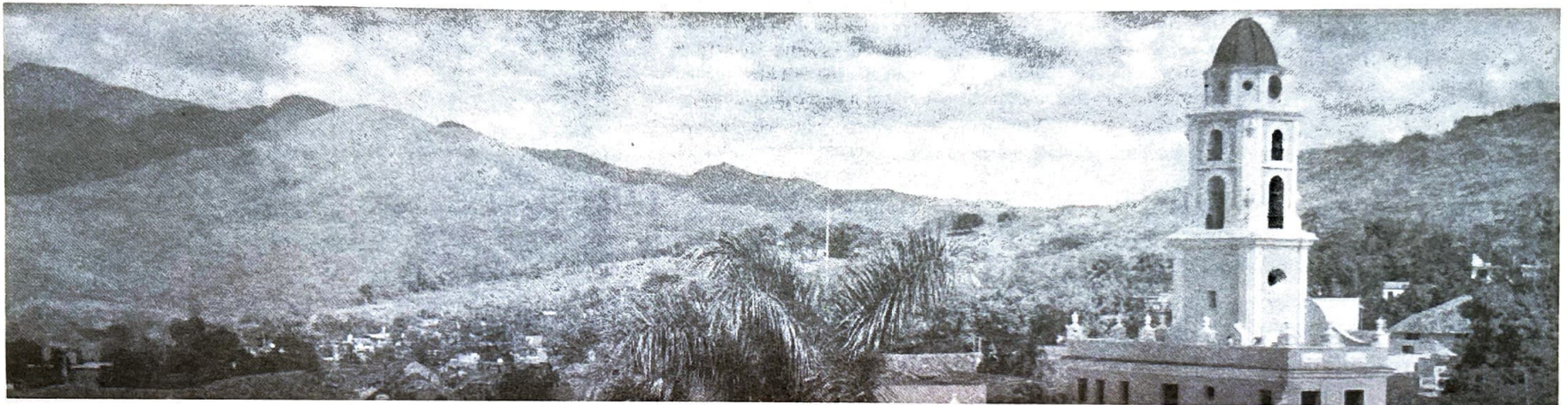


HEALTH

YorkU Community

Transformational course will take York students to Cuba to study health equity

Students enrolled in HLST 4170 will visit Cuba in late April and early May to learn about Cuban healthcare policy with the University of Holguin.



University of Holguin.

Photo Courtesy of Educations.com

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HEALTH EDITOR

This spring, York students will have a chance to visit Cuba and learn about health equity in a “transformational learning experience,” according to Program Coordinator and Assistant Professor Jessica Vorstermans. “You will sit at Cuban dinner tables, in parks and museums, in clinics, and in Cuban university classrooms” as a part of a course called Experience Cuba: Enacting the Human Right to Health & Health Equity (HLST 4170).

The course was developed by Vorstermans in partnership with colleagues at the Medical School of Holguin and the University of

Holguin in Holguin, Cuba.

According to the course description, students will explore how “Cuba has built their social fabric in a way that delivers exceedingly high health outcomes, rooted in a health equity approach.”

Vorstermans, an assistant professor in the School of Health Policy & Management, emphasizes the locally-developed element of Cuba’s health care system: “Cubans have much to teach, as they have dramatically transformed their society to ensure each person has the right to health. They are welcoming us to learn with and alongside them.”

Particularly interesting is how Cuba has maintained healthcare outcomes in line with the Global North, while typically being

grouped into Global South countries, Vorstermans says — all “despite a decades-long US blockade.”

The course runs from April 26 to May 10, 2025, delivers 3.00 credits upon completion, and is open to all York students. A \$2350 program fee covers meals and accommodations, excursions, and local transportation. Students also pay a standard tuition fee and a separate cost for airfare.

During the course, students will be hosted by Cuban families in Holguin, and have a chance to learn from Cuban residents of various backgrounds — professors, healthcare professionals, cultural experts, and students at Cuba’s universities.

The experience is one of “mutuality and solidarity,” according to Vorstermans. She encourages all interested students to “come and find out” what it looks like “to approach learning in this way.”

This study abroad course is a part of a wider selection of international courses offered through York. These opportunities also complement the university’s own ‘eco-campus’ in Las Nubes, Costa Rica, which hosts various health-related courses.

Interested students can attend one of two information sessions being held on Nov. 20 and 21. Scan the qr code (right) for more information. An application form, due by January 23, 2025, is also available there.

