

# French 288: Doctors Without Borders (Médecins sans frontières)

Fall 2026

Taught In ENGLISH

3 credits

Fulfills requirements as an elective for the Global Health Certificate, the French major,  
and as a Humanities attribute. No Prerequisite.



Taught entirely in English, this course presents French perspectives on health and humanitarian aid, with a special focus on the international organization “Médecins Sans Frontières” (MSF), or Doctors without Borders. The course features readings in both fiction and nonfiction, film and video, and visits by international public health professionals. The lion's share of perspectives we study will come from France and the French-speaking Global South, so that you may better understand how people in those parts of the world think about health, poverty, colonialism, demographic change, and social and environmental justice.

The course also highlights perspectives on MSF and other international organizations working in humanitarian aid, with a focus on those organizations’ histories, missions, ethics, and controversies. The course is large but very interactive: students engage with the instructor throughout lecture, in both class and small-group discussion, as well as with select practitioners and scholars working in global humanitarian settings, who visit the class. In short, French 288 is a course on suffering, relief, suffering, political and historical imbalances, and attempts to find public health solutions to problems that will never completely disappear from human life.

Counts towards the Global Health Certificate and the French Major.  
Fulfills the Humanities attribute, L&S credit and Elementary Level

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM

Instructor : Professor Ritt Deitz, mdeitz@wisc.edu

