

HNRS 192: Infectious Disease in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### The Longest Year in History

The day we evacuated Springfield College over a year ago already feels like a lifetime ago. I consider the early days in 2020 where we took family walks every night, met up with friends in parking lots, and bought gas for \$1.00 a gallon to be a different life than the days of late 2020 into early 2021 where I attended college during a pandemic. I had never lived through so much panic and unknown that I did from March through the summer of 2020—nobody knew anything. And then when we did figure some stuff out, not everyone agreed nor listened. There was a lot of doubt casted on science and on the government. Unfortunately, information about coronaviruses had already been previously known. I say “unfortunately” instead of “fortunately” because we’ve had outbreaks of coronaviruses (SARS, MERS), yet a pandemic was still able to break loose. From reading the book in this class, *Covid-19, The Pandemic That Never Should Have Happened and How to Stop the Next One*, and various textbooks for my other classes, they all mention the concern with coronaviruses. All the information and precautions were there about the exact crisis that has happened. It has been a frustrating year, needless to say. The biggest lesson to take from this is to be serious from the start. Even 100 years ago during the Spanish Flu, the handling of viruses was by hand washing and isolation, which has been the core of handling Covid-19. The information had been there all along. This class constantly tackled the question of “will we learn from this pandemic?”, and the only answer I can give is hopefully, because there is more to come whether we are ready or not.

As a future healthcare provider, I have been eager now more than ever to start making a difference and helping people. As much as I will have a duty to protect from harm, the people

also have a duty to protect because we are all in this together, so it is important to listen to the science and take the proper precautions. The pandemic has personally tested my limits in social and academic reasons. I am fortunate that my family, friends, and I have made it out strong, and it is all more reason to keep our heads held high and to take care of one another.