

SOCI 409: Social Determinants of Health

The University of Calgary, Faculty of Arts, Department of Sociology
Course Outline, Winter Semester, 2012

Instructor Alex Bierman, Ph.D. Office: SS 902 E-mail: aebierma@ucalgary.ca <i>Please note that e-mail is the best way to reach me. I cannot guarantee that phone calls will be answered or returned.</i> Office Hours: Thursdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am or by appointment.	Lecture Schedule: 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays ES 054 Final: Due printed in my office by noon, April 19 th
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Course Description

Research has consistently demonstrated that the incidence of physical and mental disorder is patterned on the basis of core social statuses and individual placement within structures of social stratification. These findings show that health is not simply a result of biological processes, but is also a result of social processes. This class will focus on the fundamental social patterns of health and illness, as well as some of the most important mechanisms explaining these patterns.

Staying in Contact

Class announcements may occasionally be sent out over e-mail. It is your responsibility to ensure that the university has your correct e-mail address and that your e-mail account is in working order. Outside of office hours or pre-scheduled appointments, the best way to reach me is through e-mail. I cannot guarantee that phone calls will be answered or returned. When e-mailing, please put "SOCI 409" in the subject line of your e-mail to help me reply more efficiently to your e-mails. I will make every effort to reply to your e-mails within 24 hours, but it may take up to 24 hours to respond. I generally do not respond to e-mails after 6:00 pm.

I am happy to meet with students, but please observe the following so that I can respond to students in a way that is fair and attentive:

- 1) Except for cases in which I have instructed you to email something, I prefer that you contact me by email for administrative purposes only. For instance, you may email me to schedule an appointment outside of office hours.
- 2) Students with substantive questions should come to office hours or schedule an appointment. If you have questions related to grading or course content, see me during office hours or make an appointment.

Grading System

Because grading will be based on oral presentations and papers, only letter grades will be assigned. To combine these grades into a final grade, letter grades will be converted into the **midpoint** of the range described below and the mathematical average of these three grades taken. For example, if you get a “B” on the oral presentation, but an “A” on the mid-term and final, your final grade would be $(78+92.5+92.5)/3=87.667$, which would be a final grade of A-.

A+ = 95 and over	B+ = 80-84.9999	C+ = 67-71.9999	D+ = 54-58.9999
A = 90-94.9999	B = 76-79.9999	C = 63-66.9999	D = 50-53.9999
A- = 85-89.9999	B- = 72-75.9999	C- = 59-62.9999	D- = 49.9999 and lower

You will not be able to negotiate a different final grade based on alternative criteria. It is unlikely that extra credit will be given. In the unlikely event that an opportunity for extra credit arises, this opportunity will be given to the class as a whole. Individual opportunities for extra credit or to make up points lost due to errors on an exam or presentation will not be allowed.

Course Format

The course setup consists of two 1 hour and 15 minute class lectures per week. After the first two weeks, each week will be focused on a different social determinant of health. Each week will be divided into two parts. The first, on Tuesday, will be a lecture by your instructor that presents an overview of the determinant examined in that week. The second part, on Thursday, will be based on presentations by members of the class. Presenters will describe a collection of key empirical studies on the social determinant of interest for the given week.

Lectures and Required Readings

The first two weeks of class will be based on lectures by the instructor that set up foundation for the class. After this, the instructor will lecture on Tuesdays, describing the core issues regarding the social determinant under study for the week. Each lecture will be accompanied by several “target readings” that describe core issues for the social determinant being examined. The instructor may or may not address the target readings during the lecture, but students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of these readings for the mid-term and final.

All target articles will be available through the library, and almost all through the library website. The instructor assumes that students in a 400-level class are familiar with the library website, but feel free to see him if you need an orientation to downloading papers.

Please note that your instructor will most likely not have Powerpoint slides for his lectures, and his lecture notes are likely to be relatively uninformative for students. Students missing class are therefore advised to obtain notes from another student in the class.

Class Presentations

Class presentations will be critical for both the individual student and the class as a whole. Each student will present 4-6 key empirical studies to the class. These presentations will be important for the class because students will need to present demonstrate knowledge of these studies in the mid-term and final. Students should be aware that, in creating their own presentation, they will likely need to familiarize themselves with material in addition to the papers they are presenting. It is strongly suggested that each student meet with the instructor at a minimum of two weeks before their presentations to discuss the readings and additional material that may be informative. It would be most productive if students read the papers they are presenting before meeting with the instructor.

Class presentations should take this format: (1) The overall theme of the papers being presented, (2), central research questions, methodology, and findings of each paper, (3) what the papers overall tell us about the social determinant of focus, as well as lingering questions or weaknesses that the papers do not address (or do not address adequately), (4) questions from the class and instructor. Students should generally expect to spend approximately 25-30 minutes per presentation in total.

Midterm and Final

Both the midterm and final will be take-home. Students may complete the midterm and final with a maximum of one partner. If students complete a midterm and/or final with a partner, partners must turn in one paper with both names on it. Partners will receive the same grade, regardless of the amount of work put into the assignment by each partner. Students working with a partner should not discuss their exam with anyone else in the class. Anything more than passing resemblance to anyone else's/group's midterm or final will be taken as evidence of cheating and both assignments will receive a score of zero for the entire exam.

If a student does not wish to complete a mid-term or final with a partner, students may mutually agree to declare a “discussant partner.” In other words, you can discuss the exam with one other person (as long as you are the only person with whom that individual discusses the exam), but wish to work individually on the actual exam, and individually earn grades. In this case, you should each turn in a midterm or final, but indicate the name of your discussant partner on the front of the exam.

In the midterm and final, students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of readings, lectures, and presentations from across weeks of the class. Students who focus on the papers they presented will receive a substantially lower grade.

Missing Exams and Presentations

Exams that are turned in late without being deferred will receive a 25% penalty for each day that the exam is late. The first day the exam is considered late will begin one minute after the exam is due.

Because presentations are important for not only the person presenting them, but also the rest of the class, a student missing an assigned day of presentation will be considered quite stringently. Deferrals will be granted on the same basis as exams. Every class that is missed without deferral will result in a 25% penalty. Students who arrive late to class the day they are presenting will be considered to have missed the class.

If at all possible, you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to turn in an exam on time or give a presentation on the assigned day. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the course outline are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Two Notes on Class Behavior

To facilitate cordial discussion, if you have a question when your instructor is lecturing or would like to respond to another student's comment, please raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking. This policy is not a commentary on you, or any other student at the University of Calgary, but is based on your instructor's own experiences as a student. He has found that classes in which people are encouraged to consider their words before speaking, and do not simply blurt things out, often achieve a more sophisticated level of discussion. Again, though, I want to encourage discussion in this class. Please feel free to raise your hand at any time when I am lecturing. I am happy to stop any lecture to discuss an interesting or confusing point. The class is also encouraged to ask student presenters questions. However, because class presentations can often be an anxiety-provoking experience, the class (and, usually, the instructor) should wait until the question and answer period to ask student presenters questions.

Because of the pressure that students often feel when presenting, it is strongly encouraged that members of the class do not come to class late when students are presenting. It can often break the flow of a presentation or a presenter's train of thought when someone comes into class late. Everyone in this class will be required to give a presentation, and you will appreciate this consideration when you present.

Laptops and Computer Use

Laptops should be used for taking notes and other class work only. If a student is observed using a laptop during class for instant messaging, e-mailing, work for other classes, or surfing the internet more than once, he or she will lose the right to use a laptop during class.

Academic Dishonesty

Instances of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment or exam in which the cheating occurs. Using work which is not your own is academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty of this type includes: Having someone else do work and claiming the work as your own, or copying other students' work. Other types of academic dishonesty include gaining access to materials before they are given. This is not an exhaustive list of activities which may fall under the category of academic dishonesty. If you are not sure whether an action would be academic dishonesty, please ask before you take this action.

How are Grade Disputes Handled?

Students are encouraged to resolve grade disputes by discussing the situation with the instructor. Please do so in person. At this meeting, the student's arguments will be carefully considered and, hopefully, a resolution attained that meets with mutual satisfaction. A student seeking reappraisal of graded exams must discuss this work with the instructor within two weeks of the date the exam is handed back. However, please note that, consistent with Faculty of Arts regulations, the entire exam will be remarked and the mark may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

Emergency evacuations:

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Social Science Food Court.

Deferrals:

If at all possible you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

Deferred Final Exam Form:

Please note that requests to defer a Registrar-scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar’s Office. Further information about deadlines, and where paperwork should be taken, is available on the form, which can be found at:

http://ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form:

Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It’s available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor’s office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation: Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.

Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.

Course Schedule

Tu 1/10 **READ THE COURSE OUTLINE.**
Overview of the course: Why study health? A sociological interest.

Th 1/12 **Measurement and methods in the sociological study of health.**

Target readings:

- Mirowsky, John and Catherine Ross. 2002. "Measurement for a Human Science." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43:152-170.
- Kessler, Ronald C. 2002. "The Categorical versus Dimensional Assessment Controversy in the Sociology of Mental Illness." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43:171-188.
- Horwitz, Allan V. 2007. "Distinguishing Distress from Disorder as Psychological Outcomes of Stressful Social Arrangements." *Health* 11:273-289.
- Schwartz, Sharon. 2007. "Distinguishing Distress from Disorder as Psychological Outcomes of Stressful Social Arrangements: Can We and Should We?" *Health* 11:291-299.

Tu 1/17 **A stress process perspective—benefits and drawbacks.**

Target readings:

- Pearlin, Leonard I., Morton A. Lieberman, Elizabeth G. Menaghan, and Joseph T. Mullan. 1981. "The Stress Process." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 22:337-56.
- Pearlin, Leonard I. 1989. "The Sociological Study of Stress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30:241-56.
- Turner, R. Jay, Blair Wheaton, and Donald A. Lloyd. 1995. "The Epidemiology of Social Stress." *American Sociological Review* 60:104-25
- Turner, R. Jay and Donald Lloyd. 1999. "The Stress Process and the Social Distribution of Depression." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40:374-404.

Th 1/19 **A life course perspective: What is its relevance for research on health?**

Target readings:

- Elder, Glen H. 1998. "The Life Course as Developmental Theory." *Child Development* 69:1-12.
- Pearlin, Leonard I. and Marilyn Skaff. 1996. "Stress and the Life Course: A Paradigmatic Alliance." *The Gerontologist* 36:239-247.
- Pearlin, Leonard I., Scott Schieman, Elena M. Fazio, and Stephen C. Meersman. 2005. "Stress, Health, and the Life Course: Some Conceptual Perspectives." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:207-211.

1/31-2/2 **SES and Health**

Target readings:

- Braverman et al. 2010. "Socioeconomic Disparities in Health in the United States: What the Patterns Tell Us." *American Journal of Public Health* 100:S186-S196.
- Elo, Irma T. 2009. "Social Class Differentials in Health and Mortality: Patterns and Explanations in Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:553-572.

Phelan, Jo C.. 2010. "Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S28-S40. (If you have trouble finding this paper because it is a special issue, I suggest you search based on the title on google or Ebsco.)

1/24-26 **Age, Aging, and Health**

Target readings:

- House, James S., Paula M. Lantz, and Pamela Herd. 2005. "Continuity and Change in the Social Stratification of Aging and Health Over the Life Course: Evidence From a Nationally Representative Longitudinal Study From 1986 to 2001/2002 (Americans' Changing Lives Study)." *Journals of Gerontology* 60B (Special Issue II):15-26.
- Verbrugge, Lois M. and Alan M. Jette. 1994. "The Disablement Process." *Social Science and Medicine* 38:1-14.
- Rowe, John W. and Robert L. Kahn. 1997. "Successful Aging." *The Gerontologist* 37:433-440.
- McLaughlin et al. 2010. "Successful Aging in the United States: Prevalence Estimates From a National Sample of Older Adults." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 65B:216-226.

2/7-9 **Gender and Health**

Target readings:

- Read, Jen'nan Ghazal and Bridget K. Gorman. 2010. "Gender and Health Inequality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:371-386.
- Bird, Chloe E. and Patricia P. Rieker. 1999. "Gender Matters: An Integrated Model for Understanding Men's and Women's Health." *Social Science and Medicine* 48:745-755.
- Courtenay, Will H. 2000. "Constructions of Masculinity and their Influence on Men's Well-Being: A Theory of Gender and Health." *Social Science and Medicine* 50:1385-1401.
- Rosenfield, Sarah, Julie Phillips, and Helene White. 2006. "Gender, Race, and the Self in Mental Health and Crime." *Social Problems* 53:161-185.

2/14-16 **Race, Nativity, Ethnicity, and Health.**
Midterm posted to class BlackBoard.

Target readings:

- Williams, David R. and Michelle Sternthal. 2010. "Understanding Racial-ethnic Disparities in Health : Sociological Contributions." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51:S15-S27.
- Hyman, Ilene. 2001. Immigration and Health.
<http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/H13-5-01-5E.pdf>
- Reading, Charlotte Loppie and Wien, Fred. 2009. Health Inequalities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples' Health.
http://nccah-ccnsa.ca/docs/social%20determinates/NCCAH-Loppie-Wien_Report.pdf

Tu 2/21 **Reading week, no class**

Th 2/23 **Reading week, no class**

Tu 2/28 **No class; work on midterms.**

Th 3/1 **Midterms due on paper in my office by 12:15.**

3/6-8

Social Support, Social Integration, and Health

Target readings:

- Umberson, Debra and Jennifer Karas Monetz. 2010. "Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health Policy." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51:S54-S66.
- Umberson, Debra, Robert Crosnoe, and Corinne Reczek. 2010. "Social Relationships and Health Behavior Across the Life Course." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:139-157.
- Thoits, Peggy A. 2011. "Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52:145-161.
- Song, Lijun. 2011. "Social Capital and Psychological Distress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52:478-492.

3/13-15

Psychological Resources and Health

Target readings:

- Lachman, Margie E., and Suzanne L. Weaver. 1998. "The Sense of Control as a Moderator of Social Class Differences in Health and Well-Being." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74:763-773.
- Mirowsky, John and Catherine E. Ross. 1991. Eliminating Defense and Agreement Bias from Measures of the Sense of Control: A 2 X 2 Index. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 54:127-145.
- Swann, William B., Christine Chang-Schneider, and Katie Larsen McClarty. 2007. "Do People's Self-Views Matter? Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Everyday Life." *American Psychologist* 62:84-94.

Tu 3/20-22

Religion and Health

Target readings:

- Schieman, Scott, Alex Bierman, and Christopher G. Ellison. 2012. "Religion and Mental Health." In *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, edited by Carol S. Aneshensel, Jo C. Phelan, and Alex Bierman. New York: Springer Press.
- Sloan, R. P., E Bagiella, and T. Powell. 1999. "Religion, Spirituality, and Medicine." *The Lancet* 353:664-667.

3/27-29

Family and Health

Target readings:

- Simon, Robin W. 2002. "Revisiting the Relationships Among Gender, Marital Status, and Mental Health." *American Journal of Sociology* 107:1065-1096.
- Evenson, Ranae J. and Robin W. Simon. 2005. Clarifying the Relationship between Parenthood and Depression. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:341-358.
- Booth, Alan and Paul R. Amato. Parental Predivorce Relations and Offspring Postdivorce Well-Being. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 63:197-212.
- Williams, Kristi and Alexandra Dunne-Bryant. 2006. "Divorce and Adult Psychological Well-Being: Clarifying the Role of Gender and Child Age." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 68:1178-1196.

4/3-5

Neighborhoods, Context, and Health

Target readings:

- Robert, Stephanie A. 1999. "Socioeconomic Position and Health: The Independent Contribution of Community Socioeconomic Context." *Annual Review of Sociology* 25:489-516.
- Leventhal, Tama and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. 2000. "The Neighborhoods They Live in: The Effects of Neighborhood Residence on Child and Adolescent Outcomes." *Psychological Bulletin*: 309-337.
- Leventhal, Tama and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. 2003. "Moving to Opportunity: An Experimental Study of Neighborhood Effects on Mental Health." *American Journal of Public Health* 93:1576-1582.

4/10-12

Work and Health.

Final posted to class BlackBoard.

Target readings:

- Van der Doef, Margot and Stan Maes. 1999. "The Job Demand-Control(-Support) Model and Psychological Well-Being : A Review of 20 Years of Empirical Research." *Work and Stress* 13:87-114.
- Hausser, Jan Alexander, Andreas Mojzisch, Miriam Niesel, and Stefan Schulz-Hardt. 2010. "Ten Years On: A Review of Recent Research on the Job Demand-Control (-Support) Model and Psychological Well-Being." *Work & Stress*, 24:1-35.
- Stansfeld, Stephen and Bridget Candy. 2006. "Psychosocial Work Environment and Mental Health—A Meta-Analytic Review." *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* 32:443-462.
- Klumb, Petra and Thomas Lampert. 2004. "Women, Work, and Well-Being 1950–2000: A Review and Methodological Critique." *Social Science and Medicine* 58:1007-1024.

Th 4/19

Finals due on paper in my office by 12:15.