REQUIRED TEXTS:


All other course readings will be posted on blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the sociological study of health disparities. The purpose of the course is to examine the link between social position and health patterns in the US population. Two central questions will be addressed: (1) Which groups in society are more or less advantaged in terms of health? (2) Why are certain groups in society more or less advantaged in terms of health? To answer these questions, we will explore relevant theories and key health-related concepts and methodologies. The bulk of the semester will be devoted to understanding how social position (and socially patterned conditions) might contribute to health and longevity patterns. Specific topics include socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, aging, family, and religious involvement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

(1) Describe how sociology contributes to the study of health
(2) Define how health is conceptualized
(3) Explain how health distributed in society
(4) Detail how social factors shape health outcomes

CLASS POLICIES: Use of phones is not permitted during class. **No texting!** Students may use a laptop to take notes during class, however, if a student is found to be using their computer for other purposes, they will no longer be allowed to use a computer during class.

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: This course will consist of limited overview lectures and will rely heavily on class discussion. Students are expected to attend class and participate knowledgeably in class discussions. Please make an effort to attend every class. Excused absences require prior notification or, if notification is impossible, written explanation after the fact. If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to approach me or other classmates to find out about what you have missed. In addition to general participation, **each student will be required to co-lead one class discussion** during the course of the semester.

QUIZZES: There will be a short quiz on the readings each week. Quizzes may focus on one or more of the readings. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class. Those who are late to class will **not** be given additional time to complete the quiz. Grades on the quizzes will range from 0-3. Students may receive partial credit for answers. Quizzes cannot be made up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: All students are expected to submit a discussion question via blackboard by 5pm the day prior to the class meeting. Discussion questions will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. A student will **not** receive credit for his or her discussion question if he or she does not attend class, unless the absence is excused.
RESPONSE PAPERS: During the course of the semester, students will be required to submit four response papers. Response papers will be submitted via blackboard prior to the class meeting. Once the class has met, you will not be allowed to turn in a response paper for the readings covered during that class meeting! You may only turn in one response paper per class meeting. Response papers should be 2 ½ - 3 ½ pages, 12 pt. font, double spaced, and should answer at least some of the following questions about at least one of the readings for the date they are due:

- What is (are) the author's thesis/main argument? (should be summarized in 1-2 sentences).
- What evidence does/do the author(s) present to support their thesis? (summarize in 2-3 sentences)
- Do you find the author's arguments persuasive (do you “buy” it)? Why or why not?
- Can you think of any arguments that would contradict/weaken the author's main argument? In other words, what is missing?
- How does this article related to other articles we have discussed in class?
- Are there any questions that arose while reading this article?
- How does the reading connect with broader social issues or social institutions?
- What are the policy implications related to the social issue raised in the reading?

Response papers will be graded on a standard grading scale (0-100). A satisfactory response paper goes beyond offering a summary of the findings, but critically engages the material. An “A” response paper should present alternative explanations, point out shortcomings in the study, raise new questions, and relate the current material to other ideas discussed in class. Do not devote more than one page to answering the first two questions. I am much more interested in the remaining questions. If a student is unhappy with his or her grade on a response paper, he or she may submit an additional response paper on another topic. I will then drop the lowest response paper grade at the end of the semester.

FINAL EXAM: The final exam will cover information from the assigned readings as well as in-class discussions. This exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.

COURSE GRAADING:

Class Participation 20%
Discussion Questions 10%
Quizzes 20%
Response Papers 20%
Final Exam 30%

GRADING SCALE:

Grading will be according to a standard scale, and plus/minus grading will be used for final grades. FSU does not allow a final grade of “A+.” The specific ranges are below.

A =93-100   A- =90-92   B+ =87-89   B =83-86   B- =80-82   C+ = 77-79
C=73-76   C- =70-72   D+=67-69   D=63-66   D- =60-62   F=<59

UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.
**ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY:**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “… be honest and truthful and … [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at [http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy](http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy).)

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

1. register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
2. bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
[http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/](http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/)

**FREE TUTORING FROM FSU:**

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services’ comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see [http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring](http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring) or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30-Aug</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
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| 6-Sept | What is Social Epidemiology?               | SC (pg.3-7)  
Berkman & Kawachi 2014 (pg. 1-16)  
Freud 2003 (pg.10-23)  
Link 2010 |
| 13-Sept| Mind, Body, and Society                    | Pearlin 1989 (pg. 241-249)  
Freud 2003 (pg. 80-97)  
McEwen 2006  
Wily 2009 |
| 20-Sept| Key Concepts and Methodologies             | SC (pg. 23-71)  
Crimmins & Seeman 2001  
Idler & Benyamini 1997  
McGill 2016 |
| 27-Sept| Socioeconomic Status and Health (Part 1)   | SC (pg. 77-84)  
Paltrow & Flavin 2013  
Krueger & Burgard 2011  
Mirowsky & Ross 2015 |
| 4-Oct  | Socioeconomic Status and Health (Part 2)   | Hummer & Larisy 2011  
Ferraro, Schafer, & Wilkinson. 2015  
Zajacova, Rogers, & Johnson-Lawrence 2012  
Lutfey & Freese 2005 |
| 11-Oct | Race, Ethnicity, and Health (Part 1)       | Guo et al. 2014  
Goodnough 2016, NYT  
Williams 2010  
Hummer 1996  
Williams 2003 |
| 18-Oct | Race, Ethnicity, and Health (Part 2)       | Kolata NYT 2015  
Warner & Swisher 2015  
Franzini, Ribble, and Keddie 2001  
Bound et al. 2015  
Montez 2016 |
| 25-Oct | Gender and Health (Part 1)                 | SC (pg. 95–112)  
Springer & Mouzon 2011  
Courtenay 2000  
Carpenter 2010 |
| 1-Nov  | Gender and Health (Part 2)                 | Romm Atlantic 2014  
Montez et al. 2016  
Fassler 2015, Atlantic  
Hill & Needham 2013  
Rosenfield & Smith 2010 |
| 8-Nov  | Family and Health                          | SC (pg. 84–95)  
Simon 2002  
Williams & Umberson 2004  
Evenson & Simon 2005  
Ross et al. 2016 |
| 15-Nov | Religion and Health                        | Lahey 2013, The Atlantic  
Hill 2010  
Magyar-Russell & Pargament 2006  
Burdette et al. 2015 |
| 22-Nov | THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)            |                                                                                          |
| 29-Nov | Health Policy                              | Marmot & Allen 2014  
Okechukwu, Davison, & Emmons 2014  
Sommers et al. 2016  
Carroll 2016, NYT |
| 14-Dec | FINAL EXAM                                 |                                                                                          |

*Note: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. SC = Social Causes of Psychological Distress*
REQUIRED READINGS:


Carroll, Aaron E. “Did Infamous Tuskegee Study Cause Lasting Mistrust of Doctors Among Blacks” NYT Published: June 17, 2016.


Fassler, Joe. “How Doctors Take Women’s Pain Less Seriously” *Atlantic* Published: October 15, 2015


Goodnough, Abby. “Finding Good Pain Treatment is Hard. If You’re Not White it is Even Harder” NYT Published: August 9, 2016.

Guo, Guang, Yilan Fu, Hedwig Lee, Tianji Cai, Kathleen Mullan Harris, and Yi Li. 2014 "Genetic bio-ancestry and social construction of racial classification in social surveys in the contemporary United States." *Demography* 51, no. 1: 141-172.


Kolata, Gina. “Death Rates Rising for Middle Aged White Americans, Study Finds” NYT Published: November 2, 2015.


McGill, Andrew. “How to Tell What is Going to Kill You" Atlantic Published: January 10, 2016.


Romm, Cari. “Poor Women are Fatter than Poor Men” Atlantic Published: September 18, 2014.


Sommers, Benjamin D., Robert J. Blendon, E. John Orav, and Arnold M. Epstein. 2016 "Changes in utilization and health among low-income adults after Medicaid expansion or expanded private insurance." JAMA Internal Medicine


