

SOCI 479 – Social Determinants of Health

Location	M/W/F 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. BUCH B141
Format	Lectures, presentations, discussions and films
Instructor	Dr. Gerry Veenstra
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Course Description

We will examine key social determinants of health in Canada, namely, socioeconomic status, gender, race, ethnicity, immigration, capitals and sexual orientation. The course requirements are comprised of annotations of readings, group presentations, class participation and a final exam.

Prerequisite

SOCI 100 (or its equivalent) or permission from the instructor

Textbooks

Courseware Package (available in the UBC Bookstore)

Assessment

Annotations (20% of final grade)

You will prepare seven annotations—each approximately two to three pages in length, double-spaced, Times Roman 12-point font—of the required course readings for topics 2 (socioeconomic status), 3 (gender), 4 (race I), 5 (race II), 6 (ethnicity and immigration), 7 (capitals) and 8 (intersectionality). Each annotation is due in person in the first class for the topic in question. Each annotation should provide an indication of what was particularly compelling or troublesome about the readings in your opinion. That is to say, reflect thoughtfully on the contents of the readings and tell the instructor what you think of them! Although comments won't be provided by the instructor, each annotation will be graded 3 (smart, thoughtful and enthusiastic), 2 (solid if unspectacular), 1 (sloppy and unspectacular) or 0 (not completed).

Group Presentations of Required Readings (20% of final grade)

Early in the term we will create groups of approximately 5-6 persons each (we require six groups in total). Each group will be responsible for delivering two presentations on required readings for the course. The purpose of the presentation is to present the class with information on and critical insights into the reading in question and to facilitate discussion and debate of issues that pertain to the reading. On the day of the presentation, please provide the instructor with a copy of the text of your presentation and a printout of any overheads or PowerPoint slides that you used.

Class Participation (10% of final grade)

From the UBC Calendar: "Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.). Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes." Class participation in

this course will be assessed by attendance and participation in class discussions. **Students who miss more than five classes will not be permitted to write the final exam.**

Final Exam (50% of final grade)

The final exam will be comprised of short essay questions and held during the exam period (time and date TBD).

Topics

1. Introduction (3 classes)

Readings:

- Segall, A. & C. Fries. (2011). Chapter 3. Measuring the Dimensions of Health. In Segall, Alexander and Christopher J. Fries (Eds.) *Pursuing Health and Wellness: Healthy Societies, Healthy People*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. Pp. 57-90.
- Korp, P. (2010). Problems of the healthy lifestyle discourse. *Sociology Compass* 4:800-810.

2. Socioeconomic status and health (5 classes)

Readings:

- Adler, N.A. & J.O. Ostrove. (2006). Socioeconomic status and health: What we know and what we don't. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 896: 3-15.
- Godley, J. & L. McLaren. (2010). Socioeconomic status and body mass index in Canada: Exploring measures and mechanisms. *Canadian Review of Sociology* 47:381-403.
- Prus, S. (2011). Comparing social determinants of self-rated health across the United States and Canada. *Social Science & Medicine* 73: 50-59.

Film:

- "In Sickness and in Wealth" from *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? A seven-part documentary series exploring racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health*. Vital Pictures, Inc. and California Newsreel, 56 minutes.

Group presentations:

- Godley & McLaren (2010)
- Prus (2011)

3. Gender and health (4 classes)

Readings:

- Davidson et al. (2006). Gender as a health determinant and implications for health education. *Health Education & Behavior* 33: 731-743.
- Courtenay, W. (2000). Constructions of masculinity and their influence on men's well-being: A theory of gender and health. *Social Science & Medicine* 50, 1385-1401.
- Denton, M., S. Prus & V. Walters. (2004). Gender differences in health: A Canadian study of the psychosocial, structural and behavioural determinants of health. *Social Science & Medicine* 58:2585-2600.

Group presentation:

- Denton et al. (2004)

4. Race and health I (4 classes)

Readings:

- Gravlee, C.C. (2009). How race becomes biology: Embodiment of social inequality. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139:47-57.
- Janssen, P.A. et al. (2007). Standards for the measurement of birth weight, length and head circumference at term in neonates of European, Chinese and South Asian ancestry. *Open Medicine* 1:E74-E88.
- Veenstra, G. (2011). Mismatched racial identities, colourism, and health in Toronto and Vancouver. *Social Science & Medicine* 73:1152-1162.

Film:

- "When the Bough Breaks" from *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? A seven-part documentary series exploring racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health*. Vital Pictures, Inc. and California Newsreel, 29 minutes.

Group presentations:

- Janssen et al. (2007)
- Veenstra (2011)

5. Race and health II (4 classes)

Readings:

- Williams, D.R. & S.A. Mohammed. (2013). Racism and health I: Pathways and scientific evidence. *American Behavioral Scientist* 57:1152-1173.
- Veenstra, G. (2009). Racialized identity and health in Canada: Results from a nationally representative survey. *Social Science & Medicine* 69:538-542.
- Beagan, B.L. & G.E. Chapman. (2012). Meanings of food, eating and health among African Nova Scotians: 'certain things aren't meant for Black folk.' *Ethnicity & Health* 17:513-529.

Group presentations:

- Veenstra (2009)
- Beagan & Chapman (2012)

6. Ethnicity, immigration and health (5 classes)

Readings:

- Richmond, C.A.M. & N.A. Ross. (2009). The determinants of First Nation and Inuit health: A critical population health approach. *Health & Place* 15:403-411.
- De Maio, F.G. (2010). Immigration as pathogenic: A systematic review of the health of immigrants to Canada. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 9:27.
- Edge, S. & B. Newbold. (2013). Discrimination and the health of immigrants and refugees: Exploring Canada's evidence base and directions for future research in newcomer receiving countries. *Journal of Immigrant & Minority Health* 15:141-148.

Film:

- "Becoming American" from *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? A seven-part documentary series exploring racial and socioeconomic inequalities in health*. Vital Pictures, Inc. and California Newsreel, 29 minutes.

Group presentations:

- Richmond & Ross (2009)
- De Maio (2010)

7. Capitals and health (4 classes)

- Abel, T. (2008). Cultural capital and social inequality in health. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 62: e13-e17.
- Pinxten, W. and Lievens, J. (2014). The importance of economic, social and cultural capital in understanding health inequalities: Using a Bourdieu-based approach in research on physical and mental health perceptions. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 36:1095-1110.
- Veenstra, G. (2007). Social space, social class and Bourdieu: Health inequalities in British Columbia, Canada. *Health & Place* 13:14-31.

Group presentations:

- Pinxten & Lievens (2014)
- Veenstra (2007)

8. Intersectionality and health (4 classes)

Readings:

- Bowleg, L. (2012). The problem with the phrase *Women and Minorities*: Intersectionality—an important theoretical framework for public health. *American Journal of Public Health* 102:1267-1273.
- Hammarstrom, A. et al. (2014). Central gender theoretical concepts in health research: The state of the art. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 68:185-190.
- Veenstra, G. (2013). Race, gender, class, sexuality (RGCS) and hypertension. *Social Science & Medicine* 89:16-24.

Group presentations:

- Veenstra (2013)

9. Conclusion (2 classes)

Final Points

1. This course will be conducted in a culture of respect for one another.
2. During your time in this course, if you encounter medical, emotional or personal problems that affect your attendance or academic performance, contact the Faculty of Arts Academic Advising Office in Buchanan D111. Please refer to the UBC Calendar for a more thorough discussion of academic concession.
3. Statement from the Faculty of Arts: The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. A list of religious holidays involving fasting, abstention from work or study, or participation in all-day or fixed-time activities is available at on the UBC website. Please let me know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations or other similar commitments cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with me before the drop date.
4. From the Faculty of Arts guidelines document: An 'A' for a final grade in a course (80 - 100 percent) indicates '*exceptional performance*: strong evidence of original thinking, good organization, capacity to analyse and synthesise, superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations, evidence of extensive knowledge base.' A 'B' for a final grade (68 - 79 percent) indicates '*competent performance*: evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability, reasonable understanding of relevant issues, evidence of familiarity with the literature'. A 'C' (55 - 67 percent) or 'D' (50 - 54 percent) represents '*adequate performance*: understanding of the subject matter, ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material, acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking in style and vigour.' An 'F' (0 - 49 percent) represents '*inadequate performance*: little or no evidence of the subject matter, weakness in critical and analytic skills, limited or irrelevant use of the literature.' 'Results from an average class of reasonable size will normally fall somewhere within the following broad limits: Grade 'A' between 5% and 25% of the class, Grades 'A'/'B' combined not over 75% of the class and Grade 'F' not over 20% of the class.
5. You should keep a complete file of notes for, and rough drafts of, your annotations and presentations. Also, please retain your graded annotations. In the case of controversy you may wish to or be requested to submit such a file.