

SOCIOLOGY 479A: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Winter 2015/2016 – Term 2 (3 Credits)
Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 3-4PM, MATH 204
University of British Columbia

Prerequisite: SOCI 100 (or equivalent) or permission of instructor

Instructor: Andrea Polonijo, M.P.H., PhD(c)

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Office: ANSO 0016

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30pm and by appointment

Course Description: What makes people healthy or unhealthy? The health of individuals is not only shaped by lifestyle choices or medical treatments, but also – in large part – by social conditions. This three-credit, fourth-year seminar course offers an introduction to the social determinants of health: the social advantages and disadvantages that people experience – based on their social position and social circumstances – that influence their health and well-being. This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to and appreciation of theoretical perspectives and empirical research on social determinants of health, including the:

- roles that various social determinants play in shaping health outcomes;
- distinctions and relationships between individuals and populations;
- multiple pathways and mechanisms that underlie health inequalities; and
- conceptual and methodological challenges involved in conducting research on the social determinants of health.

In addition, this course is intended to develop your critical thinking, writing, public presentation, and intellectual debating skills.

Course Format & Expectations: This seminar-based course consists of a combination of key readings, small group activities, films, and interactive instructor- and student-led ‘mini-lectures’ and discussions. Given the level and format of the course, you are expected to have completed the required readings BEFORE each class and be prepared to actively participate in class activities and discussion.

Required Course Readings: Course readings consist primarily of academic articles published in leading international sociology, public health, and medical journals. Readings are available online via the UBC Library, and I have posted direct links to the readings under the “Library Course Reserves” tab on UBC Connect.

UBC Connect: You will have access to the SOCI 479A UBC Connect site (login at: <http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect>), where I will post course materials, readings, supplementary materials, announcements, and assignment grades. If you encounter issues using UBC connect, please contact Arts ISIT support staff in Buchanan A105, at arts.helpdesk@ubc.ca, or 604-827-2787.

Please Note the Following Important Dates:

January 18, 2016: Last day to withdraw without a W on your transcript

February 12, 2016: Last day to withdraw with a W instead of an F on your transcript

Class Schedule & Required Readings

Please note: Readings marked with asterisks (**) are to be used for the group seminar facilitation assignment; however, all students are still required to do these readings.

Week 1: Jan 4-8. Introduction to The Social Determinants of Health

Review the course syllabus.

Week 2: Jan 11-15. Thinking about Disease, Health, and Social Conditions

Required Readings:

1. Bezrushka, S. (2001). Societal hierarchy and the health Olympics. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 164(12), 1701-1703.
2. Evans, R. G., & Stoddart, G. L. (1990). Producing health, consuming health care. *Social Science & Medicine*, 31, 1347-1363.
3. Link, B. G. (2008). Epidemiological sociology and the social shaping of population health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 49(4), 367-384.
4. Kawachi, I., Subramanian, S. V., and Almeida-Filho N. (2002). A glossary for health inequalities. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 56, 647-652.

Reminders:

1. Week 2 critical commentaries due on Monday Jan 11
2. As group seminar facilitation begins next week, I will reserve a portion of Friday's class for you to connect with your facilitation groups

Week 3: Jan 18-22. Socioeconomic Inequalities, Resources, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Adler, N. A., & Ostrove, J. O. (1999). Socioeconomic status and health: What we know and what we don't. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 896, 3-15.
2. Phelan, J. C., Link, B. G., & Tehranifar, P. (2010). Social conditions as fundamental causes of health inequalities: Theory, evidence, and policy implications. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 51(S), S28-S40.
3. ** Lutfey, K., & Freese, J. (2005). Toward some fundamentals of fundamental causality: Socioeconomic status and health in the routine clinic visit for diabetes. *American Journal of Sociology*, 110, 1326-1372.
4. ** Polonijo, A. N., & Carpiano, R. M. (2013). Social inequalities in adolescent human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination: A test of fundamental cause theory. *Social Science & Medicine*, 82, 115-125.

In Class DVD: Unnatural Causes – In Sickness and in Wealth (56 min)

Reminders:

1. Week 3 critical commentaries due on Monday Jan 18
2. Group 1 seminar facilitation on Friday Jan 22

Week 4: Jan 25-29. Social Class, Lifestyles, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Cockerham, W. C. (2005). Health lifestyle theory and the convergence of agency and structure. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 46, 51-67.
2. Frohlich, K. L., & Potvin, L. (1999). Collective lifestyles as the target for health promotion. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 90, S11-S14.
3. ** Lynch, J. W., Kaplan, G. A., & Salonen, J. T. (1997). Why do poor people behave poorly? Variation in adult health behaviours and psychosocial characteristics by stages of the socioeconomic lifecourse. *Social Science & Medicine*, 44, 809-819.
4. ** Wills, W., Backett-Milburn, K., Gregory, S., & Lawron, J. (2005). The influence of the secondary school setting on the food practices of teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds in Scotland. *Health Education Research*, 20(4), 458-465.

Reminders:

1. Week 4 critical commentaries due on Monday Jan 25
2. Group 2 seminar presentation on Friday Jan 29

Week 5: Feb 1-5. Race, Racism, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Gravlee, C. C. (2009). How race becomes biology: Embodiment of social inequality. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139, 47-57.
2. Williams, D. R., & Mohammed, S. A. (2013). Racism and health I: Pathways and scientific evidence. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57, 1152-1173.
3. ** Veenstra, G. (2011). Mismatched racial identities, colourism, and health in Toronto and Vancouver. *Social Science & Medicine* 73, 1152-1162.
4. ** Wagner, J. A., Osborn, C. Y., Mendenhall, E. A., Budris, L. M., Belay, S., & Tennen, H. A. (2011). Beliefs about racism and health among African American women with diabetes: A qualitative study. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 103(3), 224–232.

In Class DVD: Unnatural Causes – When the Bough Breaks (29 mins)

Reminders:

1. Week 5 critical commentaries due Monday Feb 1
2. Group 3 seminar presentation, Friday Feb 5

Week 6: Feb 10-12. Sexual Orientation, Stigma, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Link, B.G. & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 363-385.
2. Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence". *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 674-697.
3. ** Polonijo, A. N., & Hollister, B. A. (2011). Normalcy, boundaries, and heterosexism: An exploration of online lesbian health queries. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 23, 165-187
4. ** Green, A. I. (2008). Health and sexual status in an urban gay enclave: An application of the stress process model. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 49(4), 436-451.

Reminders:

1. No class on Monday Feb 8 (Family Day)
2. Week 6 critical commentaries due on Wednesday Feb 10
3. Group 4 seminar presentation on Friday Feb 12

*****Midterm Break. (Feb 15-19)*****

Week 7: Feb 22-26. Sex, Gender, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Davidson, K. W., Trudeau, K. J., Van Roosmalen, E., Stewart, M., & Kirkland, S. (2006). Gender as a health determinant and implications for health education. *Health Education & Behavior*, 33, 731-743.
2. 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.
3. ** Shoveller, J., Knight, R., Johnson, J., Oliffe, J., & Goldenberg, S. (2010). 'Not the swab!' Young men's experiences with STI Testing. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 32(1), 57-73.
4. ** Denton, M., Prus, S., & Walters, V. (2004). Gender differences in health: A Canadian study of the psychosocial, structural and behavioural determinants of health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 58, 2585-2600.

Reminders:

1. Week 7 critical commentaries due on Monday Feb 22
2. Group 5 seminar presentation on Wednesday Feb 24

Week 8: Feb 29-Mar 4. Ethnicity, Migration, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Richmond, C. A. M., & Ross, N. A. (2009). The determinants of First Nation and Inuit health: A critical population health approach. *Health & Place*, 15, 403-411.
2. 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), 1-20.
3. ** Dean, J. A., & Wilson, K. (2010). "My health has improved because I always have everything I need here...": A qualitative exploration of health improvement and decline among immigrants. *Social Science & Medicine*, 70(8), 1219-1228.
4. ** Wilson, K., & Cardwell, N. (2012). Urban Aboriginal health: Examining inequalities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada. *The Canadian Geographer*, 56(1), 98-116.

In Class DVD: Unnatural Causes – Becoming American (29 mins)

Reminders:

1. Week 8 critical commentaries due Monday Feb 29
2. Group 6 seminar presentation, Wednesday Mar 4

Week 9: Mar 7-11. Intersectionality and Health

Required Readings:

1. Hankivsky, O., & Christoffersen, A. (2008). Intersectionality and the determinants of health: A Canadian perspective. *Critical Public Health*, 18(3), 271-283.
2. 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.

3. ** Veenstra, G. (2011). Race, gender, class, and sexual orientation: Intersecting axes of inequality and self-rated health in Canada. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 10(3).
4. ** Collins, P.Y., von Unger, H., & Armbrister, A. (2008). Church ladies, good girls, and locas: Stigma and the intersection of gender, ethnicity, mental illness, and sexuality in relation to HIV risk. *Social Science & Medicine*, 67, 389-397.

Reminders:

1. Week 9 critical commentaries due Monday Mar 7
2. Group 7 seminar presentation, Wednesday Mar 9

Week 10: Mar 14-18. Place and Health

Required Readings:

1. Robert, S. A. (1999). Socioeconomic position and health: The independent contribution of community socioeconomic context. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25, 489-516.
2. Duff, C. (2011). Networks, resources and agencies: On the character and production of enabling places. *Health & Place*, 17(1), 149-156.
3. ** Frohlich, K. L., Potvin, L., Chabot, P., & Corin, E. (2002). A theoretical and empirical analysis of context: neighbourhoods, smoking and youth. *Social Science & Medicine*, 54, 1401-1417.
4. ** Fast, D., Shoveller, J., Shannon, K., & Kerr, T. (2010). Safety and danger in downtown Vancouver: Understandings of place among young people entrenched in an urban drug scene. *Health & Place*, 16(1), 51-60.

In Class DVD: Unnatural Causes – Place Matters (29 mins)

Reminders:

1. Week 10 critical commentaries due Wednesday Mar 16
2. Group 8 seminar presentation, Friday Mar 18

Week 11: Mar 21-23. Social Ties, Social Networks, and Health

Required Readings:

1. Umberson, D., & Montez, J. K. (2010). Social relationships and health: A flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 51(S), S54-S66.
2. Carpiano, R. M. (2006). Toward a neighbourhood resource-based theory of social capital for health: Can Bourdieu and sociology help? *Social Science and Medicine*, 62,165-175.
3. ** Hawkins, R. L., & Maurer, K. (2010). Bonding, bridging, and linking: How social capital operated in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40(6): 1777-1793.
4. ** Hruschka, D. J., Brewis, A. A., Wutich, A., & Morin, B. (2011). Shared norms and their explanation for the social clustering of obesity. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(S1), S295-S300.

Reminders:

1. Week 11 critical commentaries due Monday Mar 21
2. Group 9 seminar presentation, Wednesday Mar 23
3. No class on Friday Mar 25 (Good Friday)

Week 12: Mar 30-Apr 1. Political Economy and Health Policy

Required Readings:

1. Beckfield, J., & Krieger, N. (2009). Epi + demos + cracy: Linking political systems and priorities to the magnitude of health inequities—Evidence, gaps, and a research agenda. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 31(1), 152-177.
2. Raphael, D., & Bryant, T. (2006). The state's role in promoting population health: Public health concerns in Canada, USA, UK, and Sweden. *Health Policy*, 78, 39-55.
3. ** Hatzenbuehler, M. L., McLaughlin, K. A., Keyes, K. M., & Hasin, D. S. (2010). The impact of institutional discrimination on psychiatric disorders in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: A prospective study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(3), 452-459.
4. ** Karanikolos, M., Mladovsky, P., Cylus, J., Thomson, S., Basu, S., Stuckler, D., Mackenbach, J.P., & McKee, M. (2013). Financial crisis, austerity, and health in Europe. *The Lancet*, 381(9874), 1323-1331.

Reminders:

1. No class Monday Mar 28 (Easter Monday)
2. Week 12 critical commentaries due Wednesday Mar 30
3. Group 10 seminar presentation, Friday Apr 1

Week 13: Apr 4-8. Catch Up, Wrap Up, and Evaluation

No readings this week.

Reminders:

1. You will have an opportunity to earn 1% extra credit by bringing a laptop or tablet to class on Monday Apr 4 and completing the online course evaluation.
2. Final papers are due in class on Wednesday Apr 6 at 3pm. Late papers will not be accepted.

Evaluation

Participation	15%	Ongoing
6 Critical Commentaries	30%	Weeks 2-12 (see schedule for due dates)
Group Seminar Facilitation	20%	Weeks 3-12 (see schedule for due dates)
Final Essay	35%	April 6

Participation (15%): Much of our time together will be spent discussing key topics and critically engaging with the course readings. This grade will reflect your regular participation in class activities, the quality of your contributions to class discussions and debates, and the degree to which you engage with the subject matter over the course of the term. You are welcome and encouraged to share interesting anecdotes, case studies, and other relevant materials that you feel will complement the class discussion. I reserve the right to hold random quizzes and incorporate them into the participation grade evaluation if I feel that a significant proportion of students are not reading the assigned material.

Please note that participation marks will not be awarded for attendance, as UBC expects students to attend all of their classes. However, as it is required that you attend class in order to participate, you will receive an automatic 0 for participation if you are inexcusably absent (i.e. without a letter of academic concession from Arts Advising) from more than 5 classes.

Critical Commentaries (6 x 5%): You will select any six weeks between weeks 2 and 12 to prepare commentaries – two pages each (maximum) – that critically appraise the required readings for that particular week. These commentaries are not meant to be summaries: you can assume the reader is familiar with the readings. Rather, they should provide an indication of what you found particularly compelling or troublesome in the readings, and may include (but are not limited to):

- Critical reflections on the concepts covered by the readings, and how they relate to other concepts we have discussed throughout the course;
- Critical analyses of the methodological design used in empirical research articles and/or the degree to which these empirical articles reflect the theoretical ideas that inform them;
- Case examples or studies that you believe either support or challenge the conceptual ideas and/or empirical findings of the assigned readings;
- Critical questions that are raised by the readings and/or the identification of areas for future research;
- Anything else you think is interesting and relevant for discussion on this topic.

You must submit your critical commentary to me, in person, at the beginning of class on the Monday of your chosen week (exception: Wednesday in Weeks 6, 10, and 12). If you miss a critical commentary deadline you will need to choose an alternate week to submit.

During the class period, you will be expected to raise the critical ideas and questions contained in your commentaries and contribute to class discussions that result from the assignment, so bring a second copy of your commentary to class for your own reference.

Critical commentaries will be graded on the depth of the reflection and quality of the prose (e.g., spelling and grammatical errors).

While you will not receive detailed feedback on your commentaries, you are encouraged to discuss your commentaries with me in office hours if you are concerned about your progress. Do not worry if this critical reflection process is new or unfamiliar to you. I am here to help you, so please do not hesitate to talk with me about ways to develop this important skill.

All commentaries must follow the formatting requirements specified in the ‘course policies’ section at the end of this syllabus.

Group Seminar Facilitation (20%): Early in the term, we will create small groups of 2-4 (final group size will depend on class enrollment – we require 10 groups in total). Each group will be responsible for (1) delivering a presentation on two of the weekly required readings for the course, and (2) facilitating a discussion and debate of issues that relate to those readings. The expectation is that the group will have critically evaluated the readings and will have selected one or several themes to highlight and focus on in order to generate meaningful class discussion and participation.

Your group will have a full 50-minute class to facilitate the seminar. Groups should allocate the time so that at least 25 minutes is devoted to facilitating active discussion among your peers.

Your group is encouraged to bring in supplementary materials including newspaper articles, video clips, policy documents, or health communication materials as a way to expand on the weekly readings, encourage class discussion, and consider the broader implications of the readings.

Group seminar facilitation will occur on Wednesdays in weeks 7, 8, 9, and 11, and on Fridays in weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 and 12.

Group seminar facilitation will be assessed based on the quality of the presentation and discussion, including: content, organization/style, critical engagement, creativity, presentation, and preparedness. A detailed grading rubric will be posted to UBC connect.

Final Essay (35%): I will post multiple potential essay questions on UBC connect on February 22, after the midterm break. You will be required to choose one question and write a 12-page essay. The questions will require you to (1) demonstrate your understanding of some of the key “big picture” concepts discussed throughout the course, (2) exercise your critical thinking skills, and (3) seek out and apply evidence from empirical research (peer-reviewed journal articles) to support your own original arguments.

The final essay is due in class at 3pm on April 6.

The essay should adhere to the assignment formatting guidelines that are outlined in the ‘course policies’ section at the end of the syllabus. A detailed grading rubric will be posted on UBC Connect.

Course Policies

Absences: UBC accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with Access and Diversity as well as students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know 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.

Please note that I do not post lecture materials or class notes online. If you are absent for any reason, you will need to get the class notes from your peers. Use this space to write down the names and email addresses of 3 students that you can contact for notes:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Academic Concession: If you encounter medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance and academic performance in this course, please contact the Faculty of Arts Academic Advising Office (Buchanan D111, Phone 604-822-4028) to request an academic concession. I will not incorporate leniency for late assignments without a letter from the Arts Advising Office. For more details about academic concession see:

<http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising/academic-performance/help-academic-concession/>

Early Alert: I will do my best to reach out and offer support if I am concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing during the term. I also encourage you to speak with me if you need assistance. In addition, I may identify my concerns using Early Alert. This program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. Early alert requests are treated confidentially. For more information, please visit www.earlyalert.ubc.ca.

Assignment Formatting: All written assignments must follow these guidelines:

- Typed using Times New Roman 12 point font
- Double-spaced
- 1.0 inch margins on all sides
- Stapled (no paperclips or folded corners)
- Have a header on the top of each page containing:
 - your name AND student ID
 - the course number (SOC1 479A) AND date
 - the page number AND total number of pages
- You do not need to print a separate title page, but you should include a title on the first page of each assignment (e.g. "Critical Commentary: Race, Racism & Health")
- Properly cite all references using the American Psychological Association (APA) format
- Do not exceed the page limits allowed for the assignment.

Points will be deducted if any of these requirements are not followed.

Quality of Written Work: All written work will be evaluated and scored for grammar, style, and clarity so it is crucial that you proofread your assignments. Offensive (e.g., racist, sexist, homophobic) language is not acceptable. The UBC Writing Centre is an excellent resource for students who wish to improve their writing and proofreading skills:

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/improve-your-writing/>.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is a serious matter and will not be tolerated in this course. Please review the UBC Calendar "Academic Regulations" for University policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. I recommend that you read the following UBC on-line resource "Plagiarism Avoided" in order to ensure that you avoid plagiarism in your work: <http://legacy.arts.ubc.ca/arts-students/plagiarism-avoided.html>

Grading: Your grades in this course will be based solely upon your work in this course and not what you have achieved in any prior courses. As this is a 400-level course, the requirements and expectations are greater than in lower level courses. If you receive a grade on an assignment that is lower than what you are striving for, please (1) wait at least 48 hours until after I have returned your assignment to you and (2) see me during office hours so that we can discuss strategies for improvement on future assignments. Please note that I will not discuss grades via email.

UBC courses are graded on a percentage basis. Corresponding letter grades are assigned automatically by the Registrar's Office. Please note the Faculty of Arts grading guidelines:

- 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.”

Late Assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class (3pm) on the assignment due date. Failure to submit an assignment by the due date will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment. All written assignments not handed to me personally must be date and time stamped and submitted via the assignment drop box outside the Main Office in the ANSO Building. Assignments slipped under my office door or emailed to me will not be accepted under any circumstances. Extensions will only be granted with documentation from the Arts Advising Office.

Returned Assignments: Please retain all marked assignments returned to you, as well as all rough drafts and notes. You may be requested to submit these materials in case of any controversy.

Email: I check email during regular working hours, Monday–Friday from 8:30am-4:30pm, and aim to respond within one working day. When sending me an email please include “SOC1 479A” in the subject line. If you have a question about readings, assignments, or course policies, please check the syllabus for the answer before sending your email. If you have a question that requires substantial explanation (e.g. more than a quick one or two sentence reply), please come see me in my office hours or speak to me after class, rather than sending me an email.

Technology Usage: Please turn off your cell phone before entering class. Photographing lecture slides and audio/video recording in class are not permitted. You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in class, provided you are using it for note-taking and course-related activities. Please refrain from using technology for non-course related activities (e.g. instant messaging, checking e-mail, reading the news, social networking), as these are distractions to yourself and your peers. Be aware that there may be times during the semester when I ask you to close your laptops so that we can have a more engaged discussion.

Feedback: I aim to make this class interactive and informative. In addition to a course evaluation at the end of term, you will be given the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback and suggestions for me to improve the class after the first few weeks of the course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional suggestions for improvement at any other point during the term.