

**SOCY 360 – Sociology of Medicine & Health**  
**Spring 2024 – Sloan 105    Class Time: 14:20-15:35**

**Professor:** jimi adams ([jimi.adams@sc.edu](mailto:jimi.adams@sc.edu))  
**Office:** Sloan 216  
**Office Hours:** M/W 1-2pm (“drop in” or by appointment - <https://calendly.com/jimiadams>)  
NOTE: Drop in hours will be in person only. Appointments can be virtual (a link will be auto-generated) or in person.

**Teaching Assistant:** Kayode Ibraheem ([KAYODE@email.sc.edu](mailto:KAYODE@email.sc.edu))  
**Office:** Sloan 221  
**Office Hours:** M/W 10-11 am

### Course Description

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In this course, we will move outside the individual and biomedical approaches to explaining health. This will entail examining several of the social and structural contexts that shape health, well-being, and disease—ranging to include things like housing, work, health care, social relationships, and others. To accomplish this, we will: (1) define health and illness; (2) address why these are best understood as *distributions* (rather than individual-level outcomes), examining the inequalities therein—both within the United States and cross-nationally; (3) explore the social determinants of health (SDOH) that drive those unequal distributions—including factors at multiple levels, e.g., psychological, social, behavioral, economic, political, cultural, environmental, organizational; and (4) describe how the SDOH contribute to a range of health outcomes (e.g., disease, illness, well-being), as well as more intermediate processes and mechanisms that contribute to those (e.g., health care access, stress, behaviors, etc.).

### Objectives

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By the end of the semester, participants will be able to:

- Describe what is meant by **health**, how it is **distributed** across populations in the US and globally, and the nature of **inequalities** in those distributions.
- Apply a range of social **theoretical** perspectives to explain how the social **determinants** of health shape those distributions and inequalities.
- Enhance their skills in: **conceptualizing** complex and abstract ideas; **synthesizing** existing knowledge about population health; **evaluating** and **applying** course concepts to current events; and **communicating** each of those in clear, concise, and accurate written and oral formats.

### Assigned Readings

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All required readings and supplemental materials will be available via Blackboard.

### Course Structure & Requirements

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Class sessions will entail a mix of lecture, discussion, and active learning approaches. Any one class session may include one or more of these elements. Some of these elements will be graded (e.g., for the participation element of your grade), while others will more indirectly influence your success in the course (e.g., by working out your understandings of complex ideas, setting scaffolding for later course elements, etc.). As such, you should come to *each* class prepared (i.e., having completed the assigned readings) and ready to actively contribute to these sessions.

## **Requirements**

### I – Weekly Engagement Elements (36% of grade total)

- A. Reading Reactions (25 points each)** For any 6 class *modules* (your choice), you are responsible to submit a brief engagement with the assigned reading marked with an asterisk. More details are provided in a separate handout for the aims/structure of these reactions.
- B. Participation Elements (maximum of 50 points total)**  
The participation element of your grade will stem from active engagement with periodic in-class activities. These will typically only be graded for completion (i.e., not for “correctness”) and provide opportunities for you to critically engage with course content – likely in group discussions or in written form.

### II – Required Elements (27% of grade total)

- C. Exam 1 (100 points)** - All material covered up to the class period preceding the mid-term is fair game for this exam. It will consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Exam 1 will be conducted in class, see schedule for details.
- D. Mini Literature Review (50 points)** – You will compile scholarly literature on a selected dimension of health inequalities (approximately 10 sources), synthesize the state of existing research on this topic as represented in that literature, and conclude with proposing a single hypothesized expectation about some health outcome of your own interest that is not addressed in the set of readings. More details about this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.

### III – Self-Selected Elements (36% of grade total; 100 points each – ***pick any two***)

- E. Life History Interview Paper** – In this assignment, you will conduct an interview with a person who is at least 60 years old about select elements of their life and health. The assignment will entail submitting for evaluation your rough interview guide, a compiled transcript from the interview, and a resulting paper that applies course concepts to your analysis of that interview. More details about this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.
- F. Systematic Social Observation Paper (completed with a partner)** – For this assignment, you will draw on the Literature Review you completed for Element D above, to focus the collection of a set of observations about a neighborhood of your choosing to consider how what you see is likely to shape residents’ health. The assignment evaluation will entail your complete SSO data, and a resulting paper that draws on those observations to “test” the hypothesis you posed. More details about this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.
- G. Creative Project** – This assignment gives you the opportunity to draw on creative talents to produce a creative project – the medium is up to you – that somehow conveys concepts from the course. The assignment evaluation will be based on your submission of the product, and an “artist’s statement” that accompanies your project. More details about this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.
- H. Podcast (completed with a partner)** – For this assignment option, you will produce a podcast or video of 8-10 minutes, which (1) describes a primary dimension of health inequality, (2) provides an account of the causes and consequences of that inequality, and (3) explores potential intervention efforts to improve its effects. Your assessment for this assignment will be based on how accurately you convey course elements, in a manner that is accessible and engaging for a general audience. More details about this assignment will be provided in a separate handout.
- I. Exam 2** – A second exam in this course is your final option. It will not be comprehensive per se (i.e., will only be directly focused on content covered after the midterm exam); however much of the material in the second half of the course will entail applications and extensions of (especially theoretical) ideas introduced for Exam 1. The format will mirror Exam 1, but will be administered on Blackboard.

## Grading

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### Grading Expectations:

Participation, presentation, and paper grades you earn will reflect how thoroughly your work demonstrates the particular assignment requirements *and* overall course aims, which will correspond to the following sets of expectations:

- A Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also **consistently** reflects **engagement** with other material from the course where appropriate & in ways that **exceed course objectives** will earn grades in the A range.
- B Work that, **in addition to** meeting an assignment's **minimum requirements**, also **occasionally** reflects **engagement** with other material from the course where appropriate, in ways that **meet course objectives** will earn grades in the B range.
- C Work that **addresses only** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the C range.
- D Work that **incompletely addresses** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the D range.
- F Work that **fails to address** an assignment's **minimum requirements** will earn grades in the F range.

Please note now that there are NO extra credit opportunities in this course. For this course to be successful and for you to be successful in this course, we need everyone keeping up with requirements throughout the semester.

### Final Grade Computation:

Your final grade will be determined by summing the number of points earned from each of the above categories. Letter grades will be determined from your point total as follows:

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Range</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Range</u>
A	509+	B	454-481	C	399-425
A-	495-508	B-	440-453	C-	385-398
B+	482-494	C+	426-439	D	330-384

Any student accumulating 329 or fewer points will receive an F for the course.

## Course Expectations

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### What I expect from you:

**1 – Make a concerted effort to bring the best you can to the course.** This means doing readings each week, completing required assignments on time, putting forth effort into the evaluated elements of the course. It also means taking ownership over the grades you earn.

**2 – Treat others in the class with respect.** This includes simple norms of regular interaction in an online forum and thoughtfully considering the contributions of others. At times we'll potentially cover material of a sensitive nature; being able to respect other's expressed opinions makes critical discourse possible.

Personal Computers Use: Personal electronics may be used only for legitimate classroom purposes, such as taking notes, downloading class information, or working on an in-class exercise.

### What you can expect from me:

**1 – Make a concerted effort to bring the best I can to the course.** This means leading a class appropriate to its level, selecting "up to date" material that helps illustrate the course's key aims (though I'll aim to

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keep covid from over-taking our course, even despite its direct relevance), regularly being available for interaction via Blackboard & office hours, and adapting as is appropriate for the needs of the class.

**2 – Treat others in the class with respect.** This includes being prepared for class, returning graded materials in a timely manner with useful feedback, seeking to be impartial in the assessment of student work, while holding it to the standards of the course and college. It also means fostering an environment where diverse perspectives can comfortably be shared in class.

### **What we all can expect from each other:**

*Behave in a manner reflecting common courtesies.* Show up to office hours or other appointments as scheduled. Maintain professionalism in all electronic communication (e.g., email/Blackboard messages). Put forth our best efforts to maintain a productive and welcoming course.

### **Due Dates & Late Assignments:**

- Reading Reactions are due to Blackboard by **2:19pm on their respective due dates**. Given that there are multiple opportunities to complete these throughout the semester, no late summaries will be accepted.
- Literature Review and Selected Project Elements are due to Blackboard by **11:59pm, on their specified due dates**. If late, they will be deducted 25% if they are 5 minutes to 24 hours late, 50% if 24-48 hours late, and will not be accepted if more than 48 hours late.
- Exams are administered at their assigned times. Unexcused absences will result in a zero on the missed exam.

### **Course Communication:**

- The Syllabus has answers to the most common questions pertaining to the course. Be sure check the syllabus first, before asking me about due-dates, assignment requirements, etc.
- Office Hours are available to add to your experience in this course. **Please make use of them.** These are meant to supplement required course work and in-class elements. As such, while I am happy to discuss course materials or other aspects of public health/academia in general with you during this time, they should not be viewed as an opportunity to ask, “What did I miss in class?” (You should find peers in the class with whom you can share notes for that purpose.)
- Blackboard will be used for the majority of communication in this course. You can find a copy of the syllabus, additional assigned readings, and all assignments there. I will also post any lecture notes after each class. To make your experience in this course successful, you should expect to make this resource a *regular* part of your preparation for this course.
- E-mail should be used for quick communications (things that can be responded to in no more than a few sentences); use office hours for anything requiring more depth. You should only use your USC email account for communication related to this course; I will not read/reply to emails from your personal accounts (e.g., Yahoo!, Hotmail, etc; honestly they very regularly get filtered from my inbox). Please consider e-mail as subject to the same standards of communication as you would all other forms written material in this course (i.e., you should use complete sentences, proper punctuation, etc.). I will typically respond to email within **48 hours**.

### **University, CAS, and other Important Administrative Policies**

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**Academic Integrity.** You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment (i.e., receiving a zero) and will result in additional disciplinary measures. This includes improper citation of sources, using another student's work and any other form of academic misrepresentation.

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**Plagiarism.** Using the words or ideas of another as if they were one's own is a serious form of academic dishonesty. If another person's complete sentence, syntax, key words, or the specific or unique ideas and information are used, one must give that person credit through proper citation.

Please remember that avoiding plagiarism is only a minimal threshold for maintaining academic integrity. Additionally, the first tenet of the Carolinian Creed is, "I will practice personal and academic integrity." There are useful resources on what this entails available for you at:

- [Carolinian Creed](http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed) (<http://www.sa.sc.edu/creed>)
- [Academic Responsibility](http://www.sc.edu/policies/staf625.pdf) (<http://www.sc.edu/policies/staf625.pdf>)
- [Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/) (<https://www.sa.sc.edu/academicintegrity/>)

If you remain unsure what this means for your successful participation in and completion of assignments in this course, ask, don't assume.

**Class Recording.** *The recording of class lectures, discussions, or any other teaching activity associated with this course is prohibited.* "Recording" refers to any analog or digital sound or image reproduction. Exceptions may be granted with disability documentation and/or the written permission of your professor. In such cases, the accommodation letter must be presented to the instructor in advance of any recording being done and all students in the course will be notified whenever recording.

**Grades of Incomplete:** The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course. Students have up to one year (three semesters) to complete course requirements. Dr. Adams is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished within the time allowed or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

### Course Schedule Overview

**NOTE: this schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on Blackboard.**

Jan 8 – Defining Health

Required Readings:

- NA

Jan 10 – Describing Health Disparities

Required Readings:

- Chetty, Raj ; Stepner, Michael ; Abraham, Sarah ; Lin, Shelby ; Scuderi, Benjamin ; Turner, Nicholas ; Bergeron, Augustin ; Cutler, David. 2016. "The Association between Income and Life Expectancy in the United States, 2001-2014." *JAMA* 315(16): 1750-1766. doi:10.1001/jama.2016.4226
- Braveman, Paula; Gottlieb, Laura. 2014. "The Social Determinants of Health: It's Time to Consider the Causes of the Causes." *Public Health Reports* 129(1\_suppl2):19-31. doi: 10.1177/00333549141291S206

Jan 15 – No Class Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan 17 – Measuring Health

Required Readings:

- \* Dowd, Jennifer B.; Zajacova, Anna. 2007. "Does the predictive power of self-rated health for subsequent mortality risk vary by socioeconomic status in the US?" *International Journal of Epidemiology* 36(6): 1214-1221. doi: 10.1093/ije/dym214

- Murray, Christopher J. L. 2013. "The State of US Health, 1990-2010: Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors." *JAMA* 310(6):591-608. doi: 10.1001/jama.2013.13805

#### Jan 22 – SES & Health

##### Required Readings:

- Walsemann, Katrina M. 2016. "Education and health: Complexities, challenges, and priorities." Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Available from: <https://healthequity.globalpolicysolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/EducationandHealth.pdf>. Accessed 2024-01-08.
- \* Archana Patel, B. et al. 2022. "The Global Network Socioeconomic Status Index as a Predictor of Stillbirths, Perinatal Mortality, and Neonatal Mortality in Rural Communities in Low and Lower Middle Income Country Sites of the Global Network for Women's and Children's Health Research." *PLOS ONE* 17(8):e0272712. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0272712

#### Jan 24 – Race & Gender

##### Required Readings:

- \* Williams, David R.; Priest, Naomi; Anderson, Norman B. 2016. "Understanding associations among race, socioeconomic status, and health: Patterns and prospects." *Health Psychology* 35(4):407-411. doi: 10.1037/hea0000242
- \* Homan, Patricia. 2019. "Structural Sexism and Health in the United States: A New Perspective on Health Inequality and the Gender System." *American Sociological Review*, 84(3): 486–516.

#### Jan 29 – Global Health Inequalities

##### Required Readings:

- Barkan, Steven E. 2023. "Global Disparities in Health and Disease." Chapter 6 in *Health, Illness, and Society*. Rowman & Littlefield.

#### Jan 31 – Mental Health Inequalities

##### Required Readings:

- \* Allen, Jessica; Balfour, Reuben ; Bell, Ruth ; Marmot, Michael. 2014. "Social determinants of mental health." *International Review of Psychiatry*. 26(4): 392-407.

#### Feb 5 – Fundamental Cause Theory

##### Required Readings:

- \* Link, Bruce G., and Jo Phelan. 1995. "Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. (SI): 80-94.
- McKinlay John, B. "A Case for Refocusing Upstream: The Political Economy of Illness." In *Applying Behavioral Science to Cardiovascular Risk: Proceedings of a Conference*. Seattle, WA: American Heart Association, pp. 7-17. 1975. Available from: <https://iaphs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IAPHS-McKinlay-Article.pdf> Accessed on 2024-01-08.

#### Feb 7 – Social Ecological Model(s)

##### Required Readings:

- \* Krieger, Nancy. 2001. "Theories for social epidemiology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." *International Journal of Epidemiology* 30: 668-677.
- Roux, A V Diez. 2008. "Next Steps in Understanding the Multilevel Determinants of Health." *Epidemiology and Community Health* 62: 957–959.

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## Feb 12 – Working with Theories

## Required Readings:

- Kawachi, Ichiro ; Subramanian, S.V. 2018. "Social Epidemiology for the 21st Century." *Social Science & Medicine* 196:240–45. doi: [10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.10.034](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.10.034).

## Feb 14 – Neighborhoods

## Required Readings:

- \* Hutch, Daniel J ; Bouye, Karen E ; Skillen, Elizabeth ; Lee, Charles ; Whitehead, Latoria ; Rashid, Jamila R. 2011. "Potential Strategies to Eliminate Built Environment Disparities for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Communities." *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(4): 587-595.
- \* Cohen, Deborah A., et al. 2007. "Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity." *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(3): 509-514.

## Feb 19 – Life Course Perspectives

## Required Readings:

- Berkman, Lisa F. 2009 "Social epidemiology: Social Determinants of Health in the United States: Are We Losing Ground?" *Annual Review of Public Health* 30:27-41. (focus on pp. 27, 34-38)
- \* Haas, Steven. 2008. "Trajectories of Functional Health: The 'Long Arm' of Childhood Health and Socioeconomic Factors." *Social Science & Medicine* 66(4):849-61.

## Feb 21 – Discrimination &amp; Stigma

## Required Readings:

- \* Williams, David R.; Mohammed, Selina A. 2009. "Discrimination and Racial Disparities in Health: Evidence and Needed Research." *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 2009; 32:20-47.
- Link, Bruce G ; Phelan, Jo C. "Stigma and its public health implications." *The Lancet* 2006; 367: 528-529.
- Keusch, Gerald T ; Wilentz, Joan ; Kleinman, Arthur. 2006. "Stigma and global health: developing a research agenda." *The Lancet* 2006; 367(9509):525-527.

## Feb 26 – Conducting Literature Reviews

## Required Readings:

- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *Political Science & Politics* 1:127-132.

## Feb 28 – Exam 1

## Mar 4-8 – Spring Break

## Mar 11 – Medicalization

## Required Readings:

- \* Conrad, Peter. 2013. "Medicalization: Changing Contours, Characteristics, and Contexts." Pp. 195–214 in *Medical Sociology on the Move*, edited by W. C. Cockerham. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

## Mar 13 – Medical Authority

## Required Readings:

- \* Starr, Paul. 1978. "Medicine and the Waning of Professional Sovereignty." *Daedalus* 107(1): 175-193.

Assignment Due: Life History Interview (Selected Elements Option E)

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## Mar 18 – Clinical Interactions

## Required Readings:

- \* Pilnick, Alison ; Dingwall, Robert. 2011. "On the Remarkable Persistence of Asymmetry in Doctor/Patient Interaction: A Critical Review." *Social Science & Medicine* 72(8):1374–82. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.02.033
- \* Lutfey, K. E ; Wishner, W. J. 1999. "Beyond 'Compliance' Is 'Adherence'. Improving the Prospect of Diabetes Care." *Diabetes Care* 22(4):635–39. doi: 10.2337/diacare.22.4.635

## Mar 20 – Medical Professionalization

## Required Readings:

- \* Jenkins, Tania M. 2018. "Dual Autonomies, Divergent Approaches: How Stratification in Medical Education Shapes Approaches to Patient Care." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(2):268–82. doi: 10.1177/0022146518765174

Assignment Due: Mini Literature Review (Required Assignment D)

## Mar 25 – Health Care Access, part 1

## Required Readings (pick one):

- \* O'Brien, Rourke L.; Robertson, Cassandra L. 2018. "Early-Life Medicaid Coverage and Intergenerational Economic Mobility." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(2):300–315. doi: 10.1177/0022146518771910.
- \* Osborn, Robin ; Squires, David ; Doty, Michelle M ; Sarnak, Dana O ; Schneider, Eric C. 2016. "In new survey of eleven countries, US adults still struggle with access to and affordability of health care." *Health Affairs*, 35(12), 2327-2336.

## Mar 27 – Health Care Access, part 2

## Required Readings (pick one):

- \* Zheng, Hui ; George, Linda K. 2018. "Does Medical Expansion Improve Population Health?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(1):113–32. doi: 10.1177/0022146518754534.

Assignment Due: Creative Project (Selected Assignments, Option G)

## Apr 1 – Immigration (Status)

## Required Readings (pick one):

- \* Cervantes, Andrea G. ; Menjívar, Cecilia. 2020. "Legal Violence, Health, and Access to Care: Latina Immigrants in Rural and Urban." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 61(3):307-23. doi: 10.1177/0022146520945048.
- \* Asad, Asad L.; Clair, Matthew. (2018) "Racialized Legal Status as a Social Determinant of Health." *Social Science & Medicine*, 199:19-28.

## Apr 3 – Policy

## Required Reading:

- \* McFarland, Michael J., Terrence Hill D., and Montez, Jennifer K. 2023. "Income Inequality and Population Health: Examining the Role of Social Policy." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 64(1):2–20. doi: 10.1177/00221465221109202

Assignment Due: Systematic Social Observation Paper (Selected Assignments, Option F)

## Apr 8 – Diagnostic Change &amp; Experience

## Required Readings (pick one):

- \* Liu, Ka-Yuet ; King, Marissa ; Bearman, Peter S. 2010. "Social Influence and the Autism Epidemic." *American Journal of Sociology* 115(5):1387–1434. doi: 10.1086/651448.

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- \* Armstrong, Elizabeth M. 1998 "Diagnosing moral disorder: the discovery and evolution of fetal alcohol syndrome." *Social Science & Medicine* 47.12 (1982): 2025-2042.

Apr 10 – Social Networks

Required Readings:

- Zhang, Jingwen ; Centola, Damon. 2019. "Social Networks and Health: New Developments in Diffusion, Online and Offline." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45(1):91–109. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-073117-041421

Apr 15 – Stress

Required Readings:

- \* McEwen, Bruce S. 2012. "Brain on Stress: How the Social Environment Gets under the Skin." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(supplement\_2):17180–85. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1121254109.

Assignment Due: Podcast (Selected Assignments, Option H)

Apr 17 – Work

Required Readings (pick one):

- \* Theorell, T. 2000. "Working Conditions and Health." pp 95-105 in Berkman, L. and Kawachi, I. (eds.), *Social Epidemiology*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Apr 22 – Global Political Economy

Required Readings (pick one):

- \* Moore, Spencer; Teixeira, Ana C.; Shiell, Alan. 2006. "The Health of Nations in a Global Context: Trade, Global Stratification, and Infant Mortality Rates." *Social Science & Medicine* 63(1):165–78. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.12.009.

**Second Exam (Selected Assignments Option I)- Monday, April 29 - 12:30 p.m.**