



SYLLABUS: Health Inequalities Spring 2019
SOCL 4503 Section 201
Spring SEMESTER 2019 CRN = 20133
Days: T and R; Time: 9:30am to 10:50am
Building and room: Dillard 345

Contact information

Instructor information

Isaac Christiansen, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Office location

Prothro-Yeager Hall, Room O-134

Office Hours

MW 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. TR
8:00-9:00 a.m. and 1:30-2:30 p.m.

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Course Overview and Objectives:

This is an in-depth course introducing students to the scholarly literature concerning health inequalities. Emphasis is on the relation between social, political and economic factors and inequalities in health inputs, accessibility and outcomes, both internationally and nationally. Topics include racial health inequalities, mortality determinants, poverty and health, economic inequality and health and healthcare financing. We will examine health inequality in the United States and in many countries around the world. This course places special emphasis on the social determinants of health. These include phenomena that are both exogenous and endogenous to healthcare systems.

This is a senior level course and requires a good amount of reading and writing. I have been careful to select readings that are within your reach and are not excessive in length. Your decision to take the course is an implicit agreement that you will do your part to keep up with the readings.

Instructional Objectives

1. Think critically about the connection between healthcare organization, and the social determinants of health. Be able to coherently link economic, social and political inequalities to inequalities in health.
2. Gain an appreciation for global dimensions of health inequalities. Be able to firmly grasp how unequal social, economic development has led to extreme global health inequalities. Understand the impact of structural adjustment programs and neo-liberal policy on developing countries on the health of poorer and disadvantaged populations.

3. Explore alternative models of healthcare organization and understand that different theories that argue for these alternatives. Exploration of case studies is critical here.

Required Books:

Farmer, Paul. 2011. *Haiti after the Earthquake*. Public Affairs. New York.

Panitch Leo and Colin Leys. 2009. *Socialist Register 2010. Morbid Symptoms: Health Under Capitalism*. London. Merlin Press and Monthly Review.

Whiteford, Linda M., and Laurence G. Branch. 2008. *Primary Health Care in Cuba: The Other Revolution*. Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Inc.

Required Readings on D2L:

Beaucamp, Dan E. 2013. "Public Health as Social Justice" Pp 11-19 in *Public Health and Social Justice: A Jossey-Bass Reader*. Edited by Martin T. Donohoe. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.

Christiansen, Isaac. 2017. "Commodification of Health Care and Its Consequences". *World Review of Political Economy*. 8(1):82-103

Davis, Karen, Kristof Stremikis, David Squires and Cathy Schoen. 2014. "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: How the Performance of the U.S. Health Care System Compares Internationally" The Commonwealth Fund.

Hart, Julian Tudor. 1971. "The Inverse Care Law" *The Lancet* 405-412

Jones, David. 2013. "The Persistence of American Indian Health Disparities" Pp 99-121 in *Public Health and Social Justice: A Jossey-Bass Reader*. Edited by Martin T. Donohoe. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.

Kentikelenis, Alexander, Marina Karanikolos, Aaron Reeves, Martin McKee, and David Stuckler. 2014. "Greece's Health Crisis: From Austerity to Denialism." *The Lancet* 383:748-753.

Kim, Jim Yong, Aaron Shakow, Jaime Bayona, Joe Rhatigan and Emma L. Rubin de Celis. 2000. "Sickness amidst Recovery: Public Debt and Private Suffering in Peru" Pp 127-153 in *Dying for Growth: Global Inequality and the Health of the Poor*. Edited by Jim Yong Kim, Joyce V. Millen, Alec Irwin and John Gershman. Common Courage Press. Monroe, Maine

Koreishi, Safina and Martin Donohoe. 2013. "Historical and Contemporary Factors Contributing to the Plight of Migrant Farmworkers in the United States" Pp. 85-98 in *Public Health and Social Justice: A Jossey-Bass Reader*. Edited by Martin T. Donohoe. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.

Lamrani, Salim. 2013. "The Impact of the Economic Sanctions on Health Care" Pp.46-59 in *The Economic War Against Cuba: A Historical and Legal Perspective on the U.S. Blockade*. Monthly Review Press. New York.

- Pandolfelli, Shandra and Tyagi. 2014. "The International Monetary Fund, Structural Adjustment and Women's Health: A Cross-National Analysis of Maternal Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa" *The Sociological Quarterly*. 55: 119-142.
- Rajan, Keertichandra, Jonathan Kennedy, and Lawrence King. 2013. "Is Wealthier Always Healthier in Poor Countries: The Health Implications of Income, Inequality, Poverty and Literacy in India." *Social Science and Medicine* 88: 98-107.
- Thomas, Stephen B. 2013. "The Color Line: Race Matters in the Elimination of Health Disparities" Pp 35 to 40 in *Race, Ethnicity and Health*. Edited by Thomas A. LaVeist and Lydia A. Isaac. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.
- Waitzkin, Howard and Ida Hellander. 2016. "Obamacare: The Neoliberal Model Comes Home to Roost in the United States- If We Let It" *Monthly Review* 68(1):1-18.
- Wilkinson, Richard G., and Kate E. Pickett. 2006. "Income Inequality and Population Health: A Review and Explanation of the Evidence." *Social Science and Medicine*. 61: 1768-1784.
- Williams, David R. and Chiquita Collins. 2013. "U.S. Socioeconomic Differences in Health: Patterns and Explanations" Pp 375-418 in *Race, Ethnicity and Health*. Edited by Thomas A. LaVeist and Lydia A. Isaac. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.
- World Health Organization. 1978. "The Declaration of Alma Ata." *International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, USSR, 6-12 September 1978*
- Zhang, Wei. 2014. "The Other Side of the Chinese Economic Miracle" Pp 454-472 in *The Financial and Economic Crises and their Impact on Health and Social Well-Being*. Edited by Vicente Navarro and Carles Muntaner. Baywood Publishing Company. New York

Basic skills necessary for the assimilation of sociological knowledge and success in this course:

1. Self-discipline: You will need to be sufficiently dedicated and take the time necessary to not only read through all of the assigned material, but to truly learn and absorb it. You will need to ask yourself questions as you read to ensure that you can identify and recall the main points. After reading you should be able to answer questions related to the material and see its personal and/or social/economic/political implications.

You are responsible for knowing the material in the text and other readings according to the syllabus schedule as well as the material covered in class lecture. Chapters should be read by the time the material is covered in class. In this way you will gain more from the lecture, be prepared for quizzes, and reduce the need to cram for exams. To test your own knowledge, you should be able to answer the questions at the end of each chapter correctly.

2. Attend every class. Come prepared and pay attention in class, take appropriate notes according to your best learning style and method.

3. A willingness to challenge dominant beliefs and perceptions. The sociologist must not fear information, data, and iconoclastic perspectives, which may clash with their preconceptions. The sociologist must not shy away from information, data or truths that may be distasteful to powers that be- or to their own preconceptions.

Course Schedule	Topics	Readings	Due dates
Week 1 1/15	Course Introduction		
1/17	Thinking about Health Inequalities	Beauchamp 2013 Deppe 2009 (pp29-38 in Morbid Symptoms)	
Week 2 1/22	Commodity or Right?	Christiansen 2017 Davis et al. 2014	
1/24		Leys 2009 (pp 1-28 in Morbid Symptoms)	Summary 1 due
Week 3 1/29	Inequality and Health	Hart 1971 Wilkinson and Pickett 2006	
1/31		Coburn (pp 39-58 in Morbid Symptoms)	Summary 2 due
Week 4 2/5	Racial Inequalities in Health	Thomas 2013 Williams and Collins 2013 Koreishi and Donohoe 2013	Summary 3 due
2/7		Jones 2013	Reflection Paper Due 2/10
Week 5 2/12	First Exam		
2/14	Social Determinants of Health	Rajan et al. 2013	
Week 6 2/19	Social Determinants of Health	Pandolfeli et al. 2014 Tibandebage and Mackintosh 2009 (Pp168-183 in Morbid Symptoms)	Summary 4
2/21		Christiansen 2018	
Week 7 2/26	Neo-liberalism, SAPs and health	Rao (pp 262-278 in Morbid Symptoms) Kim et al 2000	
2/28		Ketinkelenis et al. 2014	Summary 5

Course Schedule	Topics	Readings	Due dates
Week 8 3/5- 3/7	Healthcare reforms	Gottaschalk 2009 (Pp 103-124 in Morbid Syntoms) Waitzkin and Hellinder 2016	
		Herman (Pp 125-144 in Morbid Symptoms)	Summary6
Week 9 3/12	Health reforms in China	Wang (Pp 240-261 in Morbid Symptoms) Zhang (2014)	Reaction Paper Due Sunday, 3/10
3/14	Exam II		
SPRING Break 3/19-3-21	SPRING BREAK		
Week 10 3/26	Primary Health Care: Cuba	Whiteford and Branch chapters 1 and 2	
3/28		WHO: Alma Ata Declaration; Whiteford and Branch Chapter 3	Summary 7
Week 11 4/2	Cuban PHC: From disease of poverty to chronic disease	Whiteford and Branch: Chapters 4-6	
4/4		Whiteford and Branch 7 and 8	Summary 8
Week 12 4/9	Cuban Internationalism	Lamrani 2013. Feinsilver	
4/11	Disaster and broken infrastructure: Haiti	Farmer: Chapter 1	Reaction Paper Due 4/14
Week 13 4/16	Haiti Earthquake	Farmer Chapters 2 - 3	Summary 9
4/18	Holiday Break		
Week 14 4/23	Haiti- Addressing historical and chronic health challenges	Farmer Chapters 4-6	Reaction Paper due
4/25		Farmer Chapter 7	Summary 10
Week 15 4/30	Rwanda and Haiti	Farmer Chapters 8 and Epilogue	

Course Schedule	Topics	Readings	Due dates
5/2	Global health policy formation	Koivusalo (Pp279-294 in Morbid Symptoms)	Final Paper Due 5/3
Week 16	Exam III (Final) Tuesday 8:00 am		

Grading Criteria:

Assignment weights

10 Reading Summaries $10 * 10 = 100$
 Reaction Papers $3 * 30 = 90$
 Attendance =20
 Final Paper 100 points
 1st Exam 100 points
 2nd Exam 100 points
 3rd Exam 100 Points
 TOTAL = 610

Grading Scale

90% to 100% A
 80% to 89% B
 70%-79% C
 60%-69% D
 59% or below F

Reading Summaries: Briefly summarize in one or two paragraphs the main ideas and central supporting points of one (or two) of the readings for that week. Please include the citation of the reading above the summary. The summary should reflect that you understand the main ideas in the reading. **Summaries must be printed out and handed in by the day indicated in the course calendar.** There will be a total of 10 submissions. Bring a hard copy to facilitate class discussion at the beginning of class and hand them in at the end of the respective class period. I recommend joining all of your summaries in a single document called an ‘annotated bibliography’. *This will help you when it comes time to study and it can serve to a large degree as a study guide.* Thus, it is in your interest to go beyond the minimum required here. Summaries will be graded according to how well they capture the central arguments and the degree to which they reflect serious thought about said material. The purpose of requiring summaries is three-fold. 1. This assignment encourages you to keep up with the readings. 2. Writing summaries will enhance the classroom experience and promote healthy discussion. 3. Writing the summaries (and keeping them in a document- such as an annotated bibliography) will facilitate writing papers and help you create a document with which you can review.

Reaction papers

Reaction papers are a central component of this course. The purpose of these papers are for you to reflect and interact with the articles and their ideas. Reaction papers should reflect over a group of readings of a particular topic as organized in the syllabus. While they are due the week before the exam of the larger groupings of subsections, they do not have to be over the readings for the past week. So, for example, the first reaction paper can be over the “Commodity or Right readings (Christiansen 2017, Davis et al. 2014 and Leys 2009) the “Inequality and health readings” or the “Racial Inequality and Health” readings as listed in the course calendar in the syllabus. In the reaction papers you should:

- Identify what you think are the central ideas of the reading(s) of that week. Your reaction paper can interact more with one reading than other, but insights from all 3 or 4 readings should be included. Your reaction paper should reflect serious thought and reflection.
- Discuss what was most salient about the readings. Also discuss the implications of the phenomena examined in the articles.
- All reaction papers should use correct spelling and grammar. All reaction papers should provide in-text citations of readings cited. Please be sure NOT to plagiarize. In text citations should be used for the readings when referencing their ideas. All in-text citations must include the author’s last name and date published, such as (Whiteford and Branch 2008). When you quote from an author be sure to use quotation marks (if you don’t that is plagiarism) and to include the page numbers in addition to the author’s last name and year published.
- Towards your conclusions, you may include emotional reactions and reflections relating to the content of the reviewed readings, this is the place to explain them and any other reflections you wish to add.

Write two to three pages, in twelve-point Times New Roman or Arial font, double-spaced.

Final Paper

You must write a 7 to 10 page, double-spaced paper that examines an area of health inequality covered in this course. One recommended approach is to begin the paper by identifying a particular problem selected and using existing theory and research explain what are the cause or causes of the problem. Then it is useful to explore alternatives. This is best achieved by referencing case studies (and or other research) that shows how the disparities examined could best be reduced. Think about the following: Why does the particular form of health inequality that you have decided to zoom in on persist? What must occur for this problem to be remedied? Who are the stakeholders, i.e., who benefits from the current arrangement (if anyone), and who is most affected? What barriers exist to remedying this problem? These barriers may be political, economic, social or even cultural. These are just to help you think through possible ways to approach your paper’s construction.

It is wise to plan ahead in this course and to start thinking about the major paper early. I will happily meet with you during the semester to go over some ideas with you and see if you are

on track with the paper and provide you with a reasonable level of guidance. You will have considerable freedom to develop your paper but there are certain rules by which your paper must abide:

1. Your paper must make a coherent argument that addresses some aspect of health inequalities covered in the course. The paper should seek out in-depth solutions and reflect that you have put serious thought.

2. You must include at least 5 bibliographic references. These must be appropriately cited at the end of the paper. I expect you to incorporate (and therefore cite) multiple course readings. I also expect that you will build upon the course readings by bringing in other outside scholarly sources to strengthen the paper. The MSU library is a great place to begin your search for those sources. You should be looking at scholarly journals to build on your paper. Some of the best journals to look at in this area are *International Journal of Health Services* edited by Vicente Navarro and *Social Science and Medicine*. Also, the World Health Organization publishes important annual reports concerning world health and can be a great place to get data. All references must include the authors' or author's last and first name(s), the year published, the title of the article or book, the name of the journal or publisher, and where it was published.

3. To count towards the minimum bibliographic reference requirement, the references must be scholarly. This means they must come from either books of scholars or must be articles published in scholarly journals. If you have questions on this please see me.

4. Your work must include in-text citations. All references must be cited in the text and all work cited in the text must be fully referenced in your bibliography or works cited section at the end of the paper. All quotations of authors must be in quotation marks and the in text citation for quotations must include the page number. All in text citations must include the author's last name and the year the work was published in parenthesis. For example, (Blum 2004) or (Blum 2004: 328) when quoting.

5. In no circumstances will plagiarism be tolerated. A zero will result in this case. This means that you must not copy the works of either your classmates (this is not a group project) or other scholars and pass it off as your own. Honesty and integrity must be upheld in academic work.

Course Policies

Class Participation and attendance:

The attendance and participation of students is vital for a positive and rewarding learning experience for everyone. Your presence is expected and students will be evaluated on their sharing of thoughts and class contribution. You will miss vital information if you are not present and alert in class. In the end it is your grade and your responsibility to know the information in the exams and to incorporate the information from class in your assignments. Individuals that miss class and/or are not engaged during class, tend to hand in poorer work, and do more poorly in exams. Thus, by attending class not only do you ensure gaining these twenty attendance

points, but also you increase the likelihood that you will perform better in the other aspects of the course.

You are allowed two absences after which your grade will suffer a 4-point deduction for each day absent. There are a total of 20 attendance points possible. Only under extreme circumstances or university activities that conflict with class will this penalty be waved.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will have 5 points deducted per day late.

Missed exam policy: No missed exams will allowed to be retaken without instructor approval based on *evidence* (doctor's note, university letter) that indicates the person missed the test due to a legitimate emergency, illness and/or school function. **All missed exams must be made up within one week.** The exam *may* also be different than the exam given to the rest of the class, and no bonus question will appear on the make-up exam. No exam may be made up after the week prior to final exams.

Learning Environment Please keep in mind that everyone has a different learning style and we need to collectively keep distractions to a minimum. ***PLEASE STAY OFF YOUR CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS.*** I will respect you and I also expect you do give your fellow classmates and me that same respect. If you are disruptive in class you will first be given a warning, the second time it occurs, you will be asked to leave.

Show up on time and do not leave early. An early exit will hurt your attendance.

Cell phones and electronic devices: Not permitted during class time. Turn off or silence your cellular telephones before coming to class. Sending text messages is distracting and is strictly prohibited. Laptop use is generally prohibited during class time. No use of iPods or other listening devices will be tolerated. Please focus on the task at hand.

Syllabus modifications: The professor reserves the right to make adjustments or improvements to the syllabus during the semester. You will be notified of all changes.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty:

At no time will any form of cheating or plagiarism of any kind be allowed. Students are attending the university to learn and cannot do so if they do not complete their own work. Academic dishonesty is a serious ethical violation and will not be tolerated. I expect that these standards will be met, and I will hold students to them.

Plagiarism is according to the New Oxford Dictionary is “the practice of taking someone else’s work and passing it off as your own”. This means in academic practice copying someone else’s work and ideas, without quoting and citing as appropriate.

Potential consequences of plagiarism or academic dishonesty include failing the article review, assignment, exam and/or quiz at a minimum. Other consequences include failing the entire course and the filing of the Academic Misconduct Form that will remain on your college records.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

If a student has an established disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAAA) and would like to request accommodation, that student should please contact me as soon as possible. Any student requesting accommodations should first contact Disability Support Services at 940-397-4140 in room 168 Clark Student Center to document and coordinate reasonable accommodations if they have not already done so.

Campus Concealed Carry

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <https://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>.