

SOC 4486G-001: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF POPULATION HEALTH**Class meets Wednesdays 9:30-12:30 in SSC 5430****Instructor: Dr. Anna Zajacova**Email: anna.zajacova@uwo.ca

Office: SSC 5330

Office hours: Tuesday 11:30-12:30 and Wednesday 12:30-2:30 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The social environment has a central role in shaping patterns of health and longevity within and across populations. This seminar will explore key social determinants of health including socioeconomic status, demographic characteristics, social relationships, and the broader social context. We will discuss the complex processes, such as stress and access to resources, through which these social factors “get under the skin” and impact health across the life course. At the completion of this class, students will have a solid foundation of theoretical and methodological approaches to population health and an appreciation of the current state of research related to the population health disparities.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To understand how social factors influence health and shape health inequalities in populations.
- To consider the complex social responses to health and illness issues
- To strengthen the ability to read complex theoretical and empirical papers and incorporate their arguments into a unified understanding of discussed topics.
- To improve writing skills through systematic writing exercises and final research paper.
- To develop critical thinking and evaluation skills to analyze complex social arrangements related to health and medicine.
- To gain expert knowledge in one (student-selected) topic of interest, and the ability to transmit this knowledge to educated audience.

COURSE STRUCTURE:

This senior-level seminar requires attendance during all class sessions. The classes will be mostly discussion-based; therefore, students are expected to complete all required reading prior to class in order to fully participate. Students will be asked to summarize papers, integrate their arguments with discussed materials, and pose questions from the readings. The instructor will provide brief lectures to supplement reading materials.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

- Fadiman, Anne. (2012). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Mikkonen, Juha, and Dennis Raphael. (2010). *Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts*. York University School of Health Policy and Management. Available for download at http://thecanadianfacts.org/The_Canadian_Facts.pdf.

GRADING:

- **Regular (about weekly) “prep” writing (15%).** To help you read new material and prepare for the class discussion, I will email you some questions about the readings to answer during the week before class. These will be relatively straightforward questions and their point will not be to demonstrate mastery of the material but rather to begin thinking about it and incorporate the new material to older topics.
- **Class participation (20%).** Attendance during all class sessions is an important part of this seminar. All students are expected to actively participate in discussions. Additionally, I may pose questions to be answered in writing during the class to encourage active listening and processing. That means you will have had to do all reading beforehand so you can pose questions, actively talk through difficult issues, etc.
- **Regular (about weekly) “reaction” writing (25%).** After class, I will assign more complex questions for you to discuss. These will be about one-two page reaction pieces. Their aim is to solidify your understanding of the material we’ve discussed in class, as well as to practice writing skills.
- **Independent research project, presentation, and paper (40%).** At the end of the semester, each student will become an expert on one topic of their choice. Students will select a topic (with my help and approval), collect readings, learn the current state of knowledge, and write a paper 14-17 pages long. We will begin working on the around mid-semester. Everything will be done in steps and I will provide regular feedback throughout the process.
 - Step 1 is worth 3% of the final grade: a timely selection of a topic, graded pass/fail.
 - Step 2 is worth 8% of the final grade: a 3-page outline/draft plus bibliography with at least 15 sources, due on **March 21**.
 - Step 3 is worth 9% of the final grade: 5-minute presentation in class on **April 4**.
 - Step 4 is worth 20% of the final grade: this is the final version of your paper, due at 5 pm on **April 11**.

For the recurring three grading categories (prep, participation, reaction writing), I will drop the lowest score. No other academic accommodation will be available, such as late submissions or extended absences during the semester. For the final paper, late submissions will be penalized by 10% per day after a 2-day grace period. Academic accommodation will only be considered for the final draft, not the stages prior.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Please note: the schedule and readings are subject to change.

WEEK 1 (January 10). INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

1. (Dynarski 2017) – A New York Times piece about note-taking
2. (Marmot 2005)
3. WHO Social Determinants of Health website:
http://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en/. Browse the site, read more about specific determinants you find most interesting
4. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010). Chapter 1: Introduction
5. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 1: Birth.

WEEK 2 (January 17). THEORIES, FRAMEWORKS, MODELS. MEASURING HEALTH.**Measuring population health**

1. (Parrish 2010)
2. (Mirowsky and Ross 2003). Skim, pay attention to health measures used.

On theory

3. (Carpiano and Daley 2006)
4. (Abend 2008) -- Skim, pay attention to the different definitions of theories
5. (Mills 1959) – Review. You likely read this in other classes already.
6. (Bezruchka 2001)
7. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 2: Fish Soup.

WEEK 3 (January 24). POPULATION HEALTH IN BROAD HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS**Epidemiological transition – historical context**

1. (Clark 2010). Chapter 1 Introduction: Our Debt to Disease.
2. (Omran 1971). Pay special attention to Propositions 2, 3, and 4.

Political considerations in population health

3. (McKinlay 1979).
4. (Lalonde 1974). From Preface to page 13 (first page of Chapter 2).
5. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010). Chapter 11: Social Safety Net.
6. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 3: The Spirit Catches You

WEEK 4 (January 31). SOCIAL STATUS AND HEALTH**Fundamental Cause Theory**

1. (Link and Phelan 1995)
2. (Lutfey and Freese 2005)

Socioeconomic Inequalities in Health

3. (Kawachi and Subramanian 2002)
4. (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009b) – Chapter 2: Income or Income Inequality?
5. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010). Chapter 3: Income and Income Distribution
6. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 4: Do Doctors Eat Brains?

WEEK 5 (Feb 7). STRESS & COPING; HOW SOCIAL FACTORS GET UNDER THE SKIN**Stress and its effects on health**

1. (Folkman 2013) – a brief encyclopedia entry
2. (Kiecolt-Glaser et al. 2005) – skip over technical details – read for take-home message only

Social factors and stress

3. (Umberson and Montez 2010)
4. (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009a)
5. (Turner, Wheaton and Lloyd 1995) – skim for basic understanding as example of important sociological work on social factors in stressors and stress.

The Canadian Context

6. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010): Chapter 2 Stress

Optional

7. (Sapolsky 1998) – Chapters 1 and 15
- No Fadiman chapter assigned this week but feel free to read ahead.

WEEK 6 (February 14). RACE AND RACISM AS FACTORS IN POPULATION HEALTH**Race**

1. (Williams and Mohammed 2013)
2. <https://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why>. Skim and/or listen to the 12-minute segment

The Canadian Context

3. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010): Chapters 13 and 15
4. (Veenstra 2011)
7. (Fadiman 2012). Chapters 5 and 6

FEBRUARY 21: NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK**WEEK 7 (February 28). GENDER AS A FACTOR IN POPULATION HEALTH****Gender**

1. (Rieker and Bird 2005)
2. (Courtenay 2000)

The Canadian Context

3. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010): Chapter 14 Gender, pages 45-47.
4. (Denton, Prus and Walters 2004)
5. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 5: Take as Directed

WEEK 8 (March 7). MIGRATION AND HEALTH**Immigrant Health Models**

1. (Riosmena, Wong and Palloni 2013)

The Canadian Context

2. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010): Chapter 10 Social Exclusion
3. (McDonald and Kennedy 2004)
4. (Dean and Wilson 2010)
5. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 6 High-Velocity Transcortical Lead Therapy

WEEK 9 (March 14). EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND HEALTH**The Canadian Context**

1. (Mikkonen and Raphael 2010): Chapter 4, 5 and 6 on Education and Employment

Education

2. (Zajacova, Rogers and Johnson-Lawrence 2012)
3. (Zajacova, Hummer and Rogers 2012)

Employment

4. (Burgard, Brand and House 2009)
5. (Kleiner and Pavalko 2014) – Peruse only, focus on introduction through Plan of Analysis, and then Summary and Conclusions sections.
6. (Fadiman 2012). Chapter 7 – Government Property

WEEK 10 (March 21). SOCIAL FACTORS IN POPULATION MENTAL HEALTH**Broad Conceptual Issues**

1. (Avison 2010)
2. (Miech et al. 1999)

Mental Health in College Students

3. (Blanco et al. 2008)

The Canadian Context

4. (Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo 2003)
5. (Fadiman 2012). Chapters 8 and 9

WEEK 11 (March 28). RELIGION AS A SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH**Broad Conceptual Issues**

1. (Ellison and Levin 1998)
2. (George, Ellison and Larson 2002)

Recent Findings in the Canadian Context

3. (Dilmaghani 2018)

An Aside: A Brief Meditation on Meditation

4. (Koch 2013)
5. (Fadiman 2012). Chapters 10 and 11

Discussion of Fadiman's book Chapters 1-11**WEEK 12 (April 4). STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

Each student presents the main findings from their research in a 5-minute PowerPoint-supported presentation.

WEEK 13 (April 11). WRITING WORKSHOP

An optional class (no participation grade) where we will work on revising and finalizing the research paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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SOC 4486 POLICIES

What if I have questions about the class?

First, check the syllabus. Most students find that the syllabus provides answers to many questions.

Second, contact your instructor via email. I strongly encourage you to email me as soon as questions or issues arise so we can work together to get your question answered or issue resolved. You can generally expect replies within 24 hours during regular work days or 48 on weekends. I will aim to answer faster than that.

- Please write **“SOC 4486” in the subject line** – otherwise it’s easy for your email to get lost in the slew of incoming messages. Seeing SOC 4486 in the subject line makes your email a priority for me.

What should I pay attention to when writing emails?

You rightfully expect that your instructors treat you with respect and in a professional manner.

We expect the same from you. Please make sure your email communication is professional and tend toward a bit formal. Emails to your instructors are NOT like texting your friends. Please be professional and use proper salutation and correct spelling and grammar. For instance, your college instructors should be addressed “Professor XYZ” or “Dr. XYZ,” not “Hey there” or “Hi Jane” or “Dear Mrs. Green.”

What if I miss a class?

If you are absent from a class, two rules apply:

- 1) **Do not** email me. Unfortunately there is little I can do with the information explaining your absence. However, if there is something going on in your life that could affect your class performance in a significant way, please let me know we can work together.
- 2) **Do** get notes and all information from your classmates. You are responsible to keep up with the class. I will post key information on OWL but make sure you talk to your colleagues in advance (or afterwards) and ask them to take notes for you (or share their notes).

Do I need to attend classes?

Regular class attendance is essential to learning at the university level, especially in a course like this where substantial learning occurs in the process of class discussions. Attending classes AND doing all assigned readings is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for earning a high grade in this class.

You are responsible for all announcements, lecture notes, and activities we cover in class even if you have a valid reason to miss a class. **If you miss a class, please contact your classmates to get all information about what we did.**

What's expected of me in class?

Appropriate professional and respectful behavior is expected of all students, in order to facilitate a supportive learning environment. Any activities not related to the class material must be conducted outside of the classroom, including any social media or in-person communication. Cell phones must be on silent and no conversation or texting is acceptable. **If your behavior does not abide by these basic rules, you may be asked to leave the class.** Please understand I do not wish to use this policy but it is disruptive to other students if someone near them is online or texting.

What is the policy on electronics in class?

Laptops are permitted in class for note-taking although I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand. However, texting, browsing the web, or social networking on Instagram or Twitter or any of the myriad other apps is tremendously disruptive. Even if you feel you can follow the class while networking/browsing/texting, such behavior makes it difficult to those around you to pay attention. Students may be reprimanded, asked to shut off the device, or possibly even asked to leave the class.

Please make sure that your cell phones are silent or turned off at the beginning of class; beeping and ringing distracts your colleagues and is disruptive in a classroom setting.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES**Note Regarding Plagiarism**

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:
www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:
www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health @Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Please note: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester.

ADDDITIONAL TOPICS

- Health Care Systems – in Canada and around the world
- Medical care and population health
- Doctor-patient relationship
- Medicalization
- Mental health
- Neighborhood impact on health
- Social networks and health/health behaviors (effects on smoking, obesity)
- Urbanization and health
- The Latino health paradox
- Mental health (inequalities, social construction of, stigma of, etc.)
- Social control in medicine
- Evidence-based medicine
- Adherence (compliance, causes/consequences, doctor-patient relationship)
- Socialization of physicians (medical education)
- The hospital as a social institution
- Other medical professions, power, autonomy (nursing, allied health professions)
- Alternative and complementary medicine
- Experience of health and illness
- Management of chronic illness
- Addiction
- Obesity (epidemic, social construction of, stigma, politics, doctor-patient)
- Caregiving (gender, health effects of)
- Disability studies
- Death, dying, and bereavement
- Mind-body connection
- Religion, spirituality, and health
- Health social movements (AIDS activism, 'race for the cure')
- Ethics
- Bioethics
- Gene-environment interaction and health

ADDITIONAL BOOKS YOU MAY CONSIDER

- Ghost Map
- Heat Wave
- Emperor of All Maladies
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks.
- The Cigarette Century (Allan Brandt)
- Beyond Obamacare by James House
- The Status Syndrome (Marmot)
- The starting gate (Conley, Bennett, Strully)
- Wilkinson and Pickett's Spirit Level
- Mountains Beyond Mountains
- Being Mortal (Gawande)
- The Social Transformation of American Medicine (Starr)