

**SOC394H1S – NEW TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY:
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

Winter 2023

Classroom Location: SS 1070

Class Hours: Tuesday, 10:10am-12:00pm

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

Name: Professor Harvey L. Nicholson Jr.

Method of Communication: email - Harvey.nicholsonjr@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays - By appointment

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TEACHING ASSISTANT DETAILS

Name: TBA

Method of Communication: email – TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Office Location: TBA

COURSE OVERVIEW

With an emphasis on sociological perspectives, this course explores the social determinants of health (SDoH) and well-being, focusing on factors such as income, education, employment, marginalization, discrimination, neighborhood conditions, social relationships, political/cultural context, religiosity, and immigration.

PREREQUISITES

Before enrolling in this course, you are required to take 1.0 SOC at the 200 level or higher. Students discovered to have not met these requirements will be removed from the class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are responsible for reading peer-reviewed journal articles on a weekly basis. Students can expect to read a minimum of two research articles per week (maximum three). You must come to class ready to discuss the readings in a productive manner.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes people get sick in the first place? Is it because of our individual characteristics or personal behaviors? What about the lack of medical care? While individual traits, personal behaviors, and medical care are all extremely important determinants of health, social factors are often the leading determinants of whether someone is healthy or unhealthy. The social determinants of health (SDoH) refer to the social factors in which we are born, live, work, and age that affect our health and well-being. The important role of SDoH is supported by a large body of research accumulated around the world conducted by researchers in various fields such as sociology, public health, epidemiology, and more. With an emphasis on sociological perspectives, we will explore how SDoH affect individual and population health and well-being. Guided by leading perspectives and theories, this course will cover the ways in which key SDoH, such as income, wealth, education, neighborhood conditions, political/social context, discrimination, marginalization, nativity status, and social support influence health and well-being.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should have the ability to:

- Use the social determinants of health (SDoH) framework to examine and understand health and well-being.
- Identify the major SDoH.
- Articulate key sociological theories describing the role of social factors on health and well-being.
- Describe how different SDoH influence individual and population health outcomes.
- Discuss and critically assess how SDoH affect health and well-being across different groups and contexts.
- Critically evaluate academic scholarship on the SDoH.

READING MATERIALS

There is no textbook required for this course. You will be assigned various peer-reviewed articles to read each week. All readings for this course are available on Quercus via the Library Reading List.

How to approach the course readings

The readings for this course are taken from peer-reviewed academic sources. Therefore, you may find some of the readings to be a bit lengthy and/or dense. Although some of the readings may be more challenging than others, please do not be discouraged. You are being assigned these readings because they are some of the most important papers in the field; in fact, not assigning them would be doing you a great disservice. The purpose of assigning these readings is to expose you to some of the most impactful, cutting-edge research on the topics we will discuss in this course.

Each week, we will review the required readings during class. Professor Nicholson and the TA will be happy to offer any additional clarity you might need to improve your understanding of the articles. Lastly, while some, but not all, of the assigned readings contain quantitative analyses, it is recommended that students be able to interpret multiple regression tables. Even if you struggle to interpret quantitative research, it will still be possible to do well in this course. Nevertheless, if you have any concerns about this, please contact Professor Nicholson as soon as possible. Please do your best to keep up with the readings and come to class prepared with any questions you may have about specific areas of confusion.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

For questions about course grades, assignments, or other course-related concerns, please direct your questions to the TA. If the TA determines they are unable to respond to your inquiry, they will contact Professor Nicholson for further clarification. Please allow the Professor and TA a total of 24-48 hours during regular working hours (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday) to respond. If we do not respond to you by then, you may then send a follow-up email. *All emails must contain proper email etiquette and "SOC394H - Social Determinants of Health" in the subject line.*

ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Article Response

You are required to write a critical response (*8 page minimum–10-page maximum, double spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, ASA or APA format*) to one of the required or recommended articles for this course. A critical response is not meant to be a basic summary of the article nor is it meant to simply look for and discuss “what’s wrong” with the article. It is a critical analysis, requiring you to go beyond merely summarizing it. You must critically assess both the strengths and weaknesses of the article’s ideas and content. You must also draw connections to the course content and develop your own ideas related to the course material. Using a critical lens, this assignment will require you to:

- Thoroughly read and analyze the article (please note: this will require you to read the article word for word and take notes throughout the entire paper).
- Identify the major purpose of the article. What is the thesis or “so what” of the article? Why is what the author(s) is doing important? How does the article build on previous literature on the topic?
- Think about what the author(s) is trying to achieve. Did they succeed?
- Identify the strengths of the article. If there are identifiable weakness, what specific features of the paper made you feel this way?
- Decide which aspects of the article were compelling and why.
- Emphasize possible areas for improvement and state reasons why you feel certain parts of the article should be improved.
- Discuss how the article relates to other readings in the course.
- Discuss specific directions for future research. In what specific ways can future researchers add to the paper?

Please stay focused on discussing these aspects of the article in your response. You should not focus on irrelevant concerns such as presentation style, jargon used in the paper, etc. Your response should not contain direct quotations from the article—unless it is absolutely necessary to make a specific point. Moreover, your article response should be written in an academic format. Instructions on how this assignment will be graded will be provided in class.

Mid-Term Test

The first term test will consist of five short answer questions, but you will only be required to provide answers to four questions of your choice. You will respond to each question in no less than a full paragraph (between 5-8 complete sentences). The purpose of this term test is to evaluate your understanding of the concepts covered in the lectures and readings. The term test will take place in at the midpoint of the semester (see date below) and will emphasize concepts reviewed prior to the test. The mid-term will occur during class; you will be granted the entire class period to complete the test.

Final Term Test

The final term test will also consist of five short answer questions. Similar to the first term test, you will only be required to provide answers to four questions of your choice. You will respond to each question in no less than a full paragraph (between 5-8 complete sentences). The purpose of this term test is to evaluate your understanding of the concepts covered in the lectures and readings. The final term test is non-cumulative and will occur at the end of the semester. The final term test will occur during class; you will be granted the entire class period to complete the test.

Reflections

Starting the second week of the term, you must write reflections on the required readings. You can think of your reflections as a journal where you are keeping notes of what you are learning from the readings and themes of this course. For your reflections, you will need to:

- (1) read the required articles posted for a given week, taking detailed notes throughout.
- (2) write an analytical reflection on each of the readings.

Do not provide a summary of the readings in your reflections. In a cohesive and logical manner, you should discuss what you thought were the main takeaways of the articles; how they helped to improve your understanding of the SDoH; how the readings compliment (or inform) one other, as well as other related themes demonstrating your ability to engage in a reflective thought process. Your reflections should be no less than 250 words, but no more than 500 words; longer responses will not automatically result in a better score. You may be asked to share your reflections during class to generate discussion with your peers. Additional instructions on how to complete these assignments will be provided in class. Responses must be submitted to Quercus before coming to class by 10am/EST. All reflections will count toward your final course grade.

Your reflections will be graded based on a scale of 1-10 (1-4=no submission/clearly does not demonstrate effort/major flaws, 5-6=marginal, 7=good, 8=excellent, 9-10=outstanding).

Attendance

You are expected to attend class on a regular basis. You must answer one basic question about the lecture for that given day to receive credit for attendance. The answer to the question will be very straightforward and easy, as long as you were present in class and are actively paying attention. Your answer will either correct or incorrect; there will be no opportunities for partial credit. You will be able to gain access to the question you will need to answer after each class period and will have until 11:59pmEST (on the same day of class) to provide your response. The question will be posted on Querecs shortly after class is over. You will only be permitted two "absences" throughout the semester.

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Attendance (two absences permitted)	10%	
Reflections	20%	See below
Mid-Term Test	20%	February 14 th , 2023
Final Term Test	20%	April 4 th , 2023
Critical Article Response	30%	March 21 st , 2023

GRADE SCALE

A+ (Above 90)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (57-59)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (53-56)
A - (80-84)	B - (70-72)	C - (60-62)	D - (50-52)
			F: Below 49

GRADING POLICY

The grading policy for all assignments (e.g., written assignments, tests, discussion questions) for this course will adhere to the UofT grading policy outlined in the following link:

<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/general/grading-policy/>

ACCESSIBILITY

The University of Toronto has services available for students requiring additional accommodations. If you believe you will need accessibility services, please see the following link for additional information:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/accessibility-services/>

RE-GRADE POLICY

Only under extreme and rare circumstances will assignments receive a re-grade. If you believe your grade should be changed, please send a 1-page typed document to the TA describing specific reasons why you feel your grade is incorrect. If after the TA does not accept your request for a re-grade, you may send your typed request to Professor Nicholson. If you are ultimately granted a re-grade, your score may improve, remain the same, or even drop.

EXTRA CREDIT/ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Unless otherwise noted, there will be no extra credit offered in this course nor alternative assignments to replace an undesired assignment grade.

LATE /MAKE-UP WORK POLICY

Only under extreme and rare circumstances (see below) will late work be accepted for full consideration. Thus, any work submitted after the posted due date will receive an automatic zero. You will not be allowed to submit make-up work because of a missing or late assignment.

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for medical reasons, need to email the instructor (not the TA), and also declare their absence on the system (ACORN).

(NOTE: Because of Covid-19, students do NOT need to submit the usual documentation, i.e., medical notes or the Verification of Illness forms).

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIORAL POLICY

By staying in this class as a student, you are agreeing to adhere to the following classroom behavioral guidelines:

- Unless stated by Professor Nicholson, you must not engage in conversations with your peers while instruction is in progress.
- Phones must be silenced; other electronic devices must be turned off; laptops, iPad, and other notetaking devices are permitted.
- You must be respectful of and courteous toward Professor Nicholson and the TA. You can expect the same from us. We will not tolerate any form of disrespectful or condescending behaviors or comments.
- You must be respectful of and courteous toward your peers. Once again, we will not tolerate any form of disrespectful or condescending behaviors or comments.
- You must be respectful of the course content; even if you disagree with particular concepts, understand that you are here to learn new or different ideas.

- Unless stated by Professor Nicholson, you are not permitted to leave early; we will start and end on time.

****Students found in repeat violation of these rules may be asked to leave the classroom and/or face other appropriate sanctions****

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students must follow the University of Toronto's principles of academic integrity. Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated in this course.

<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>

<https://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/plagiarism-detection/>

“Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site: (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).”

Students not wishing their assignment to be submitted through Ouriginal will not be assessed unless a student instead provides, along with their work, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as> as soon as possible.

WRITING SUPPORT

If you require writing support, I encourage you to reach out to the writing center in your college: <https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING LIST (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Day	Topic	Required Readings	Due Assignments
Jan 10th	Introductions and Course Overview	<u>Recommended:</u> Hill et al. (2021) Thoits (2010).	
Jan 17th	Social Determinants of Health Framework	Cockerham et al. (2017). Link & Phelan. (1995). <u>Recommended:</u> Bryant et al. (2011). Braveman et al. (2011). Krieger. (2001). Short & Mollborn. (2015). Cockerham. (2005).	Reflection #1
Jan 24th	Income, Wealth, & Education	Phelan et al. (2010). Zajacova and Lawrence. (2018). <u>Recommended:</u> Pickett & Wilkinson. (2015). Pampel et al. (2010). Lawrence. (2017).	Reflection #2
Jan 31st	Employment & Working Conditions	Vanroelen et al. (2014). Burgard & Yin. (2013). <u>Recommended:</u> Marmot et al. (1991). Ross & Mirowsky. (1995). László et al. (2010).	Reflection #3
Feb 7th	Neighborhoods, Housing, & Place	Diez Roux & Mair. (2010). Walker et al. (2010). <u>Recommended:</u> Ross, C. E., & Mirowsky, J. (2001). Osypuk et al. (2009). Taylor. (2018).	Reflection #4
Feb 14th	First Term Test - in class	None	
Feb 20-24th	Reading Week	None	
Feb 28th	Identity, Marginalization, Racism, & Discrimination I	Samari. (2016). Meyer. (2003). Link & Phelan. (2001). <u>Recommended:</u> Read & Gorman. (2010). Bird & Rieker (1999). Grollman. (2014). Homan. (2019).	Reflection #5

March 7th	Identity, Marginalization, Racism, & Discrimination II	Gee & Ford. (2011). Williams & Mohammed. (2013). <u>Recommended:</u> Wu et al. (2021). Veenstra. (2011).	Reflection #6
March 14th	Immigration, Nativity, & Acculturation	De Maio. (2010). Vang et al. (2017). <u>Recommended:</u> McDonald & Kennedy. (2004). Schachter et al. (2012).	Reflection #7
March 21st	Social Relationships, Social Capital, & Religiosity	Umberson & Karas Montez. (2010). Hill et al. (2011). <u>Recommended:</u> Moore & Kawachi. (2017). Thoits. (2011). Mossakowski & Zhang. (2014).	Critical Article Response
March 28th	Political & Cultural Context	Cockerham. (1997). Huang & Grol-Prokopczyk. (2022) <u>Recommended:</u> Joly & Wheaton. (2020). Wilson. (2009).	
April 4th	Course Conclusion & Second Term Test - in class	None	

Reading List (articles in blue are required readings; other readings are strongly recommended)

Bird, C. E., & Rieker, P. P. (1999). Gender matters: an integrated model for understanding men's and women's health. *Social science & medicine*, 48(6), 745-755.

Braveman, P., Egerter, S., & Williams, D. R. (2011). The social determinants of health: coming of age. *Annual review of public health*, 32(1), 381-398.

Bryant, T., Raphael, D., Schrecker, T., & Labonte, R. (2011). Canada: A land of missed opportunity for addressing the social determinants of health. *Health Policy*, 101(1), 44-58.

Burgard, S. A., & Lin, K. Y. (2013). Bad jobs, bad health? How work and working conditions contribute to health disparities. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(8), 1105-1127.

Cockerham, W. C. (1997). The social determinants of the decline of life expectancy in Russia and Eastern Europe: a lifestyle explanation. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 117-130.

Cockerham, W. C., Hamby, B. W., & Oates, G. R. (2017). The social determinants of chronic disease. *American journal of preventive medicine*, 52(1), S5-S12.

Cockerham, W. C. (2005). Health lifestyle theory and the convergence of agency and structure. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 46(1), 51-67.

Diez Roux, A. V., & Mair, C. (2010). Neighborhoods and health. *Annals of the New York academy of sciences*, 1186(1), 125-145.

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(1), 1-20.

Gee, G. C., & Ford, C. L. (2011). Structural racism and health inequities: Old issues, New Directions1. *Du Bois review: social science research on race*, 8(1), 115-132.

Grollman, E. A. (2014). Multiple disadvantaged statuses and health: The role of multiple forms of discrimination. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 55(1), 3-19.

Hill, T. D., Cockerham, W. C., Mcleod, J. D., & Hafferty, F. W. (2021). *Medical Sociology and Its Changing Subfields. The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*, 1.

Hill, T. D., Burdette, A. M., & Idler, E. L. (2011). Religious involvement, health status, and mortality risk. In *Handbook of sociology of aging* (pp. 533-546). Springer, New York, NY.

Homan, P. (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.

Huang, R., & Grol-Prokopczyk, H. (2022). Health and health behaviors in China: Anomalies in the SES-health gradient?. *SSM-Population Health*, 17, 101069.

Joly, M. P., & Wheaton, B. (2020). Human rights in countries of origin and the mental health of migrants to Canada. *SSM-population health*, 11, 100571.

Krieger, N. (2001). A glossary for social epidemiology. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, 55(10), 693-700.

László, K. D., Pikhart, H., Kopp, M. S., Bobak, M., Pajak, A., Malyutina, S., ... & Marmot, M. (2010). Job insecurity and health: A study of 16 European countries. *Social science & medicine*, 70(6), 867-874.

Lawrence, E. M. (2017). Why do college graduates behave more healthfully than those who are less educated?. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 58(3), 291-306.

Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. (1995). Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 80-94.

Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual review of Sociology*, 363-385.

Marmot, M. G., Stansfeld, S., Patel, C., North, F., Head, J., White, I., ... & Smith, G. D. (1991). Health inequalities among British civil servants: the Whitehall II study. *The Lancet*, 337(8754), 1387-1393.

McDonald, J. T., & Kennedy, S. (2004). Insights into the 'healthy immigrant effect': health status and health service use of immigrants to Canada. *Social science & medicine*, 59(8), 1613-1627.

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological bulletin*, 129(5), 674.

- Moore, S., & Kawachi, I. (2017). Twenty years of social capital and health research: a glossary. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 71(5), 513-517.
- Osypuk, T. L., Roux, A. V. D., Hadley, C., & Kandula, N. R. (2009). Are immigrant enclaves healthy places to live? The Multi-ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis. *Social science & medicine*, 69(1), 110-120.
- Pampel, F. C., Krueger, P. M., & Denney, J. T. (2010). Socioeconomic disparities in health behaviors. *Annual review of sociology*, 36, 349.
- 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(1_suppl), S28-S40.
- Pickett, K. E., & Wilkinson, R. G. (2015). Income inequality and health: a causal review. *Social science & medicine*, 128, 316-326.
- Read, J. N. G., & Gorman, B. K. (2010). Gender and health inequality. *Annual review of sociology*, 36, 371-386.
- Ross, C. E., & Mirowsky, J. (1995). Does employment affect health?. *Journal of Health and social Behavior*, 230-243.
- Ross, C. E., & Mirowsky, J. (2001). Neighborhood disadvantage, disorder, and health. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 258-276.
- Samari, G. (2016). Islamophobia and public health in the United States. *American journal of public health*, 106(11), 1920-1925.
- Schachter, A., Kimbro, R. T., & Gorman, B. K. (2012). Language proficiency and health status: are bilingual immigrants healthier?. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 53(1), 124-145.
- Short, S. E., & Mollborn, S. (2015). Social determinants and health behaviors: conceptual frames and empirical advances. *Current opinion in psychology*, 5, 78-84.
- Taylor, L. (2018). Housing and health: an overview of the literature. *Health Affairs Health Policy Brief*, 10.
- Thoits, P. A. (2011). Mechanisms linking social ties and support to physical and mental health. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 52(2), 145-161.
- Thoits, P. A. (2010). Stress and health: Major findings and policy implications. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51(1_suppl), S41-S53.
- Umberson, D., & Karas Montez, J. (2010). Social relationships and health: A flashpoint for health policy. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51(1_suppl), S54-S66.
- Vang, Z. M., Sigouin, J., Flenon, A., & Gagnon, A. (2017). Are immigrants healthier than native-born Canadians? A systematic review of the healthy immigrant effect in Canada. *Ethnicity & health*, 22(3), 209-241.

Vanroelen, C., Tarafa, G., & Muntaner, C. (2014). Precarious Employment: Understanding an Emerging Social Determinant of Health. *Annu. Rev. Public Health*, 35, 229-53.

Veenstra, G. (2011). Mismatched racial identities, colourism, and health in Toronto and Vancouver. *Social Science & Medicine*, 73(8), 1152-1162.

Walker, R. E., Keane, C. R., & Burke, J. G. (2010). Disparities and access to healthy food in the United States: A review of food deserts literature. *Health & place*, 16(5), 876-884.

Williams, D. R., & Mohammed, S. A. (2013). Racism and health I: Pathways and scientific evidence. *American behavioral scientist*, 57(8), 1152-1173.

Willson, A. E. (2009). Fundamental causes' of health disparities: a comparative analysis of Canada and the United States. *International Sociology*, 24(1), 93-113.

Wu, C., Qian, Y., & Wilkes, R. (2021). Anti-Asian discrimination and the Asian-white mental health gap during COVID-19. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44(5), 819-835.

Zajacova, A., & Lawrence, E. M. (2018). The relationship between education and health: reducing disparities through a contextual approach. *Annual review of public health*.

*****The professor reserves the right to make changes to the course schedule/reading list*****