



Sociology
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

SOC6022H – Sociology of Health

Fall 2024

Instructor: Nicholas D Spence

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Office hours/location: Wednesday, 7PM-8PM; TBA

Seminar time/location: Wednesday, 5:00PM-7PM; Room #17146

Website: q.utoronto.ca

Course Description

This course is an overview of the sociology of health. Using a seminar format, we will critically explore key theoretical, methodological, and empirical work in the area across a variety of topics, including socioeconomic status, gender, social context/environment, stress, mental health, medicalization and illness, race/ethnicity, including Indigenous Peoples, healthy behaviors, and genetics. After successful completion of this course, you will be able to identify the central themes in the sociology of health, explain the importance of this area of focus, critically appraise a cross-section of related research, and apply knowledge to frame and understand historical and current health issues, using a sociological lens, with an appreciation for the contributions of other related fields.

Course Requirements

Component	Weight	Due date
Lead seminar	20%	Signup first week of class
Readings assessment checklist/brief questionnaire	15%	Weekly
Participation	15%	Weekly
Major paper proposal	5%	October 16
Major paper	45%	December 9

Guidelines for each component will be posted on the class website and discussed in class.

Late Policies

Late work will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day, unless you have a legitimate, documented reason beyond your control.

Course Extensions – Extenuating Circumstances

Students are expected to submit course work on time. Occasionally, students may not be able to make agreed upon deadlines due to extenuating circumstances. Students are required to make arrangements with their instructors about how to submit late course work. The graduate office highly recommends that course work extensions remain within the term dates in which the course was taught.

Note: submitting work beyond the term end date (not the last day of instruction but the actual end of term, e.g., the last day of a winter term class may be April 3, but the term ends April 30) requires a discussion with the instructor and the graduate office, as well as completion of an SGS request for an extension of course work form. These forms will be considered by the graduate office and are not automatically approved.

Academic Integrity Clause

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course work 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://teaching.utoronto.ca/resources/plagiarism-detection/>

Use of Generative AI for Class

You may use generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude) to complement your knowledge and understanding of core concepts in this course; however, these tools may NOT be used for completing assignments in this course unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor. This course policy is designed to promote your learning, intellectual development, as well as help you reach the course learning outcomes. If you have any questions about the use of AI applications in this class, please speak with the instructor.

Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you.

Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

Equity and Diversity

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.

Copyright Statement

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the *Copyright Act*, RSC 1985, c C-42. Course materials such as PowerPoint slides and lecture recordings are made available to you for your own study purposes. These materials cannot be shared outside of the class or "published" in any way. Posting recordings or slides to other websites without the express permission of the instructor will constitute copyright infringement.

Course Schedule and Reading List

*The reading list is tentative

**Supplementary/suggested (not required) readings will be posted online

Week 1 (September 11): Introduction to Sociology of Health

Introductions and overview of the course.

Week 2 (September 18): The sociological approach to health

Cockerham, William. 2013. "Sociological Theory in Medical Sociology in the Early Twenty-First Century." *Social Theory and Health* 11:241-55.

Link, Bruce G. (2003). "The Production of Understanding." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44(4):457-469.

Link, Bruce G. (2008). "Epidemiological Sociology and the Social Shaping of Population Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 49:367-384.

Timmermans, Stefan and Steven Haas. (2008). "Towards a Sociology of Disease." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 30(5):659-676.

Week 3 (September 25): Socioeconomic status

Adler, Nancy E. et al. 1994. "Socioeconomic Status and Health: The Challenge of the Gradient." *American Psychologist* 49:15-24.

Deaton, Angus. 2013. Chapter 4: Health in the Modern World pp 126-164 *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*: Princeton University Press.

Mackenbach, Johan P. 2012. "The Persistence of Health Inequalities in Modern Welfare States: The Explanation of a Paradox." *Social Science and Medicine* 75:761-769.

Pickett, Kate E. and Richard G Wilkinson. 2015. "Income Inequality and Health: A Causal Review." *Social Science & Medicine*:316-26. (11)

Week 4 (October 2): Gender

Bird, Chloe E. & Patricia P. Rieker. (1999). "Gender matters: An integrated model for understanding men's and women's health." *Social Science and Medicine* 48(6):745-755.

Courtenay, Will H. (2000). "Constructions of Masculinity and their Influence on Men's Well-being: A Theory of Gender and Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 50(10):1385- 1401.

Rieker, P. P., & Bird, C. E. (2005). "Rethinking gender differences in health: Why we need to integrate social and biological perspectives." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*. 60B. 40-47.

Rosenfield, Sarah and David Mouzon. 2013. "Gender and Mental Health." Pp. 277-296 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 2nd Edition, edited by C. S. Aneshensel, J. C. Phelan, and Alex Bierman. New York: Springer.

Week 5 (October 9): Neighborhoods and social contexts

Aneshensel, Carol. 2009. "Neighborhood as a Social Context of the Stress Process." Pp. 35-50 in William R. Avison, Carol S. Aneshensel, Scott Schieman, and Blair Wheaton (eds.), *Advances in the Conceptualization of the Stress Process*. New York: Springer.

Macintyre, Sally and Anne Ellaway. (2003). "Neighborhoods and Health: An Overview." Pp. 20– 42 in *Neighborhoods and Health*, edited by Ichiro Kawachi and Lisa F. Berkman. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Spence, Nicholas D. "Does Social Context Matter? Income Inequality, Racialized Identity, and Health Among Canada's Aboriginal Peoples Using a Multilevel Approach." (2016). *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* Mar;3(1):21-34.

Week 6 (October 16): Stress

Aneshensel, Carol S., Carolyn M. Rutter, and Peter A. Lachenbruch. (1991). "Social Structure, Stress, and Mental Health: Competing Conceptual and Analytic Models." *American Sociological Review* 56:166-78.

Meyer, Ilan H. (1995). "Minority Stress and Mental Health in Gay Men." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*.36(1). Pp 38-56.

Pearlin, Leonard I. 1989. "The Sociological Study of Stress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30:241-56.

Pearlin, Leonard I. and Marilyn M. Skaff. 1996. "Stress and the Life Course: A Paradigmatic Alliance." *The Gerontologist* 36:239-247.

Thoits, Peggy. (2010). "Stress and Health: Major Findings and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 51. Pp 41-54

Week 7 (October 23): Mental Health

Brown, Tony N., Katharine M. Donato, Mary Therese Laske, and Ebony M. Duncan. 2013. "Race, Nativity, Ethnicity, and Cultural Influences in the Sociology of Mental Health." Pp. 255-276 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 2nd Edition, edited by C. S. Aneshensel, J. C. Phelan, and Alex Bierman. New York: Springer.

Horwitz, Allan V. 2013. "The Sociology Study of Mental Illness: A Critique and Synthesis of Four Perspectives." Pp. 95-114 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 2nd Edition, edited by C. S. Aneshensel, J. C. Phelan, and Alex Bierman. New York: Springer.

Wheaton, Blair. (2001). "The role of sociology in the study of mental health...and the role of mental health in the study of sociology". *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 42(3):221-234.

October 30: Reading week, no class

Week 8 (November 6): Race, ethnicity, immigration

De Maio, Fernando. 2010. "Immigration as Pathogenic: A Systematic Review of the Health of Immigrants to Canada." *International Journal for Equity in Health* 9(27):1-20.

Public Health Agency of Canada. 2020. "Social Determinants and Inequities in Health for Black Canadians: A Snapshot." Pp.1-14. Catalogue No. Hp35-139/2020E-PDF. Government of Canada.

Homan, P., Brown, T. H., & King, B. 2021. "Structural Intersectionality as a New Direction for Health Disparities Research." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 62:350-70.

Williams, David R & Michelle Sternthal. (2010). "Understanding Racial-ethnic Disparities in Health: Sociological Contributions." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. Vol. 51 Pp 15-28.

Week 9 (November 13): Indigenous Health

Gracey, Michael & Malcolm King. 2009. "Indigenous Health Part 1: Determinants and Disease Patterns." *Lancet* 374:65-75.

Hyett, Sarah, Stacey Marjerrison, and Chelsea Gabel. 2018. "Improving Health Research Among Indigenous Peoples in Canada." *CMAJ* May 22;190:E616-21. Doi:10.1503/cmaj.171538

Jull, Janet, Alexandra King, Malcolm King, Ian D. Graham, Melody E. Morton Ninomiya, Kristen Jacklin, Penny Moody-Corbett, Julia E. Moore. 2020. "Promoting Engagement Inspired by the CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People (2007-2010)." *International Indigenous Policy Journal* 11(2). doi:<https://doi.org/10.18584/iipj.2020.11.2.10635>

King, Malcolm, Alexandra Smith, and Michael Gracey. 2009. "Indigenous Health Part 2: The Underlying Causes of the Health Gap." *Lancet* 374:76-85.

Spence, Nicholas D, Vivian Chau, Maryam S. Farvid, Jerry P. White, Paranthaman Rasalingam, Lawrence Loh. 2020. "The COVID-19 Pandemic: Informing Policy Decision-Making for a Vulnerable Population." *International Indigenous Policy Journal* 11(3). doi:<https://10.18584/iipj.year.volume.issue/paper#10859>

Week 10 (November 20): Medicalization and Illness

Brown, Phil. (1995). "Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*: 34-52.

Conrad, Peter. (2005). "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:3-14.

Halfmann, Drew. 2019. "Political Institutions and the Comparative Medicalization of Abortion." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 60:138-52.

Molloy, Harvey and Latika Vasil. 2002. "The Social Construction of Asperger Syndrome: The Pathologising of Difference?" *Disability and Society* 6:659-669.

Monaghan, Lee F. (2005). "A Critical Take on the Obesity Debate." *Social Theory & Health*. 3:302–314

Week 11 (November 27): Healthy behaviors

Boardman, Jason D., Jarron M. Saint Onge, Richard G. Rogers, and Justin T. Denney. (2005). "Race differentials in Obesity: The Impact of Place." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 46(3):229-43.

Cockerham, William C. (2005). "Health lifestyle theory: the convergence of agency and structure." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 46:51-67.

Noriea, Ashley H., Feenalie N. Patel., Debra A. Werner, Monica E. Peek. 2018. "A Narrative Review of Physician Perspectives Regarding the Social and Environmental Determinants of Obesity." *Current Diabetes Reports* 18(24):1-12.

Katainen, A. 2010. "Social Class Differences in the Accounts of Smoking – Striving for Distinction?" *Sociology of Health and Illness* 32:1087-1101.

Week 12 (December 4): Sociology and genetics

Landecker, Hannah & Aaron Panofsky. 2013 "From Social Structure to Gene Regulation, and Back: A Critical Introduction to Environmental Epigenetics for Sociology" *Annual Review of Sociology* 39:333–57

Mills, Melinda & Felix C. Troup. 2020. "Sociology, Genetics, and the Coming of Age of Sociogenomics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 46:533-81.

Perry, Brea L. 2015. "The Sociology of, in, and with Genetics: The Role of Medical Sociology in the Era of "-Omics"." *Genetics, Health and Society* 16:xi-xxiii