

**SOCY 4052: Social Inequalities in Health**  
**Summer 2020: Online**  
**A Term: June 1-July 2, 2020**

**Instructor:** Andrea Tilstra

**Email:** [Andrea.tilstra@colorado.edu](mailto:Andrea.tilstra@colorado.edu)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 2-3 PM,  
or by appointment

**Office:** Zoom link:

<https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/95850968823>;  
password: 4052

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## **OVERVIEW**

Health outcomes are not determined exclusively by biological and genetic predictors, they are also determined by social predictors. This course explores those social phenomena, the inequalities in them, and their relationship with health. We will analyze social statuses including but not limited to socioeconomic status, gender, race/ethnicity, and migration status. We will also explore the role of institutions, such as neighborhoods and the healthcare system. My goal is to provide you with the tools necessary to critically analyze health outcomes and the social statuses and systems that inform their existence. My hope is that you will learn to be constructive consumers of health-related news. The course will culminate with the opportunity to apply sociological concepts, terms, and theories to better understand a health outcome of your choosing.

Examples of questions we will explore include:

- Why do women get sicker, but men die quicker?
- How do unconscious racial stereotypes play out in doctor-patient interactions?
- What is the relationship between climate change and health?
- What social inequalities exist during pandemics? For example, how do inequalities in healthcare determine who receives ventilators during the coronavirus pandemic?

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

The course is broken into eight units, and each unit will cover a three-workday time period. Each unit will include several readings, unit lectures (including, guest lectures), multimedia items, and a Canvas discussion. Readings come from the required textbook, academic articles, select book chapters, and news articles. Multimedia items include podcasts and documentaries, and there will be one per unit. I recommend you read the assigned readings and consume the multimedia item prior to watching the unit lectures, but you may complete the activities at any point during the allotted three-day period. However, all unit quizzes will take place on the last day of the unit.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### *Communication*

For emails, use “4052” somewhere in the subject line. Professional language is necessary (e.g., no cursing), and failure to observe this will result in no response from me. I will respond to emails within 24-hours (weekends excluded).

### *Office Hours*

Office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:00-3:00 PM or by appointment. However, no appointment is necessary to come to the scheduled office hours. Please note that these will occur virtually. To access these, you will click on the Zoom link listed at the top of the syllabus. You’ll need to provide the password (4052) when you access the virtual room. I have instituted a “waiting room” function, so if you log in to Office Hours and don’t immediately see me, it is likely because I am meeting with another student. As soon as I am done meeting with them, I will admit you to the room.

### *Late work*

As a general policy, late work is not accepted. But I also understand that we are living through a pandemic and also that life happens (e.g., serious illness or hospitalization, family death, jury duty). If you do need an extension, it is imperative that you communicate with me before any due date.

### *Grades*

I do not retroactively change grades unless an error was made. Additionally, I will not round final grades and will not consider grade adjustments. There are several extra credit opportunities (listed below), I highly recommend you make use of them. I will use the following grade scale when assigning final grades:

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F 59 and below
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	

## **REQUIRED BOOK**

Cockerham, Social Causes of Health and Disease. 2013 (2nd edition), paperback. Publisher: Polity/Wiley. ISBN: 9780745661209.

- Available for purchase online: GooglePlay ([link](#)); AppleBooks ([link](#)); Kindle ([link](#))

All other required readings will be posted to the class Canvas page.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments	Total Points (500)
Quizzes (20 pts x 7)	140
Discussion Posts (10 pts x 7)	70
Creative Project Check-in	50
Creative Project	200
Review of Creative Projects (20 pts x 2)	40

### *Quizzes (20 pts each; 140 pts total)*

Each unit will have a quiz, for a total of 8 quizzes. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Each quiz will consist of 11 questions: 1 short answer and 10 multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or true/false questions. Material from readings, lectures (and guest lectures), and multimedia items are all fair game. Each quiz will be available for 24 hours on the *last day of each unit*. You'll have 30 minutes to take the quiz. It's up to you what time of day you take it, but if you want the full 30 minutes, you need to start the quiz before 11:30 PM. To reiterate, only 7 out of 8 quiz grades will count towards your final grade.

#### **Quiz Dates:**

- (1) June 3
- (2) June 8
- (3) June 11
- (4) June 16
- (5) June 19
- (6) June 24
- (7) June 29
- (8) July 2

### *Discussion Posts (10 pts each; 70 pts total)*

Each unit will have discussion posts, for a total of 8 discussion posts. Your lowest discussion post grade will be dropped. You'll be randomly sorted into discussion groups. For each unit, you must post 1 original post and 2 replies. The prompt will be posted to Canvas for each unit. To reiterate, only 7 out of 8 discussion post grades will count towards your final grade. The grading scale for posts is as follows:

- 0: No original post, no replies
- 6: Incomplete discussion post (e.g., only one reply)
- 8: Average quality original post and two replies
- 10: High quality original post and two replies

#### **Discussion Post Due Dates:**

- (1) June 3
- (2) June 8
- (3) June 11

- (4) June 16
- (5) June 19
- (6) June 24
- (7) June 29
- (8) July 2

*Creative Project Check-in (50 pts)*

The course will culminate with a Creative Project (see below for details). At the end of Week 2, you'll be required to have a conversation with me about what you're planning to do for your creative project. You'll sign-up for a 10-minute time slot to Zoom chat with me about your plan for the project. **Due Friday, June 12.**

Available Time Slots (sign-up sheet will be electronically circulated later):

- Wednesday June 10; 9:00-Noon
- Thursday June 11; Noon-2:00 PM
- Friday June 12; 10:00-Noon

*Creative Project + Annotated Bibliography (200 pts)*

This project is designed to be an application of what you have learned throughout the course. You will choose a health outcome that interests you, read research on disparities and inequalities in that health outcome, and then present what you find in a creative, concise manner. The main objective of this assignment is to practice communicating social inequalities in health in a manner that is approachable and easy-to-digest. In addition to submitting the project to be reviewed by me and your peers, you will submit an annotated bibliography of 8-10 sources, citing where you found the information you use in the project. Specific guidelines and a rubric will be posted to Canvas. The project is **due June 26 @ 5:00 PM.**

You may choose one of the following for your creative project:

- (1) Record a mini-podcast (8-10 minutes)
- (2) Create a meme or a cartoon, with a 2-page double-spaced write-up to accompany it
- (3) Create a 1-page policy brief, including at least one graph
- (4) Propose a different idea to me in your creative project check-in!

*Review of Creative Projects (20 pts each; 40 pts total)*

Your final assignment will be to review 2 of your classmate's creative project. Each review must be ~250 words or 2 paragraphs; for a total of ~500 words or 4 paragraphs. You should highlight what you learned in your classmate's project and offer a critique of each. **Due Thursday July 2 @ 5:00 PM.**

### *Extra Credit*

There are several opportunities for extra credit throughout the class. They are as follows:

- (1) Introduction Zoom Meeting (5 pts)
  - Sign-up for a 5-minute Zoom meeting slot to introduce yourself to me.
  - Take place **June 3, 10 AM – 1 PM**
- (2) Follow News Sources on Instagram or Twitter (up to 5 pts)
  - Choose news sources to follow on Instagram or Twitter (1 pt per news source, up to 5 pts)
  - Email me with a screenshot. **Due: June 15 @ 5 PM.**
  - Example sources: @Voxdotcom, @NYTimes, @BBCNews
- (3) Question submission for Q&A sessions (5 pts each session; up to 10 pts total)
  - We have two guest Q&A sessions: Dr. Odessa Hamidi and Jenn Bertocchi. Email me a question (or several questions, if you have them) that you'd like to hear them address. Due dates will be announced later.
- (4) Book Report (up to 40 pts)
  - Read a book of your choosing (*with approval from me*) that discusses social inequalities in health
  - Write a 3-5 page review of the book, applying terms, theories, and concepts that you've learned in class
  - **Due: June 29 @ 5 PM.**
  - Book Suggestions:
    1. Well by Sandro Galea
    2. The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman
    3. Being Mortal by Atul Gawande
    4. Cut it Out by Theresa Morris
    5. Calling the Shots by Jennifer Reich
    6. Killing the Black Body by Dorothy Roberts

### UNIVERSITY POLICIES

#### **Accommodation for Disabilities**

This course is intended for all CU-Boulder students, including those with mental, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illness, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that may negatively affect one's equal access to education. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to me in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website ([www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students)). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or

injury, see Temporary Medical Conditions under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with me.

### **Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

### **Religious Observances**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, talk with me at least one week before any religious event if it might conflict with class activities. You need to talk with me during the first week of class if you have any potential conflict with the final. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

### **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

### **Basic Needs**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students (303-492-8478; Center for Community, S430; [deanofstudents@colorado.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@colorado.edu)). Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so, as I am happy to provide or find the resources necessary to help.

### **COVID-19 Concerns**

There are additional university resources if you are experiencing hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those needing emergency financial assistance should explore offerings through the Student Emergency Fund (<https://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/student-emergency-fund>).

Those experiencing food insecurity are urged to contact the CU Boulder Food Assistance Committee ([food@colorado.edu](mailto:food@colorado.edu)) and explore their website for more information (<https://www.colorado.edu/volunteer/food-assistance/campus-resources>).

Those struggling with stress, anxiety, and uncertainty of any kind are strongly encouraged to reach out to Counseling and Psychiatric Services (303-492-2277). More information on the resources related to mental health can be found here: <https://www.colorado.edu/counseling/>.

Students with no means of accessing internet should contact the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement ([mignon.macias@colorado.edu](mailto:mignon.macias@colorado.edu)) for information on how to acquire an Internet hotspot. Additionally, if you do not have a computer at home, please do not hesitate to contact me and I am happy to connect you with the university channels to request one.

## DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE

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### Unit #1: Foundations

- Dates: 6/1, 6/2, 6/3
- Lectures:
  - Class Introduction
  - Main Lecture
- Multimedia Item:
  - John Oliver clip
    - <https://www.vox.com/2016/5/9/11638808/john-oliver-science-studies-last-week-tonight>
- Readings:
  - Cockerham Chapters 1 & 2 (pgs 1-54)
  - Marmot 2005 (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines:
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 3)
  - Quiz (available June 3, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)
  - EXTRA CREDIT: Zoom introduction meetings on June 3 (timeslots available 10 AM – 1 PM)

### Unit #2: Toolkit #1

- Dates: 6/4, 6/5, 6/8
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
  - Guest Lecture: Kim Truong-Vu
- Multimedia Item:
  - David Williams TedTalk “How Racism Makes Us Sick” video
    - [https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_r\\_williams\\_how\\_racism\\_makes\\_us\\_sick](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_williams_how_racism_makes_us_sick)
  - HIGHLY recommended (but not required): PBS By the Numbers “Surviving Year One”
    - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/america-by-the-numbers/episodes/episode-107/>
- Readings:
  - Cockerham Chapter 6 (pgs 138-163)
  - Rieker and Bird 2005 (PDF on Canvas)
  - “The Case for Reparations” – Ta Nehisi Coates (PDF on Canvas)
    - If you prefer audio version, it is here:  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 8)
  - Quiz (available June 8, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)



### **Unit #3: Toolkit #2**

- Dates: 6/9, 6/10, 6/11
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
  - Guest Lecture: Justin Vinneau
- Multimedia Item:
  - The Hidden Crisis in Rural America (The Atlantic)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Elkqx-sAHpw>
- Readings:
  - Cockerham Chapter 5 (pgs 114-137)
  - Pampel et al. 2010 (PDF on Canvas)
  - Abraido-Lanza et al. 1999 (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 11)
  - Quiz (available June 11, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)

### **Unit #4: Built Environment**

- Dates: 6/12, 6/15, 6/16
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
- Multimedia Item:
  - Chris Hayes “Why is This Happening?” podcast with Eric Klinenberg on his book about social infrastructure
    - <https://player.fm/series/why-is-this-happening-with-chris-hayes/social-infrastructure-week-with-eric-klinenberg>
    - Can also listen on any Podcast streaming app
- Readings:
  - Cockerham Chapter 7 (pgs 164-180)
  - Diez Roux and Mair 2010 (PDF on Canvas)
  - The Atlantic: “The Instagrams of Food Deserts” (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 16)
  - Quiz (available June 16, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)
  - Creative Project Check-In (due by June 12)
  - EXTRA CREDIT: Follow 5 New Sources (due by June 15 @ 5 PM)

### **Unit #5: Natural Environment**

- Dates: 6/17, 6/18, 6/19
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
  - Guest Lecture: Dan Simon
- Multimedia Item:

- How Climate Change Drives Migration to the United States (Trigger Warning: Difficult Content)
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xem9EvvkJSc>
- Readings:
  - Mojola 2011 (PDF on Canvas)
  - Burke et al. 2018 (PDF on Canvas)
  - NYT Article “Study Warns of Cascading Health Risks From the Changing Climate” (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 19)
  - Quiz (available June 19, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)

## Unit #6: Healthcare

- Dates: 6/22, 6/23, 6/24
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
  - Guest Q&A: Dr. Odessa Hamidi, MD
- Multimedia Item:
  - Dorothy Roberts TedTalk “The Problem with Race-based Medicine”
    - [https://www.ted.com/talks/dorothy\\_roberts\\_the\\_problem\\_with\\_race\\_based\\_medicine](https://www.ted.com/talks/dorothy_roberts_the_problem_with_race_based_medicine)
  - HIGHLY recommended (but not required): “Being Mortal” Frontline Documentary
    - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/being-mortal/>
- Readings:
  - Morris & Robinson 2017 (PDF on Canvas)
  - Dovidio & Fiske 2012 (PDF on Canvas)
  - “Dying to be Competent” from THICK by Tressie McMillan Cottom (PDF on Canvas)
  - The New Yorker: “Is Healthcare a Right” (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 24)
  - Quiz (available June 24, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)

## Unit #7: Health Policies

- Dates: 6/25, 6/26, 6/29
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
  - Guest Q&A: Jenn Bertocchi (from Prevention Point Philadelphia)
    - Some information on PPP here: <https://ppponline.org/about-us/frequently-asked-questions>
- Multimedia Item:

- Chris Hayes “Why is This Happening?” podcast with Jonathan Metzl on “Dying of Whiteness” (Trigger warning: Suicide)
  - <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/msnbc/why-is-this-happening/e/59634402>
  - Can also listen on any Podcast streaming app
- Readings
  - Sommers et al. 2012 (PDF on Canvas)
  - NYT: “Why a City at the Center of the Opioid Crisis Gave Up a Tool to Fight It” (PDF on Canvas)
  - Tiger 2017 (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on June 29)
  - Quiz (available June 29, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)
  - Creative Project Due June 26 @ 5:00 PM
  - EXTRA CREDIT: Book Report due June 29 @ 5 PM.

## **Unit #8: Inequalities in Crises**

- Dates: 6/30, 7/1, 7/2
- Lectures:
  - Main Lecture
- Multimedia Item:
  - PBS Frontline “Flint’s Deadly Water”
    - <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/flints-deadly-water/>
- Readings:
  - Chapter 2 from Heat Wave by Eric Kleinenberg (PDF on Canvas)
  - NYT: “The Way We Ration Ventilators Is Biased” (PDF on Canvas)
  - The New Yorker: “The Interwoven Threads of Inequality and Health” (PDF on Canvas)
- Assignments & Deadlines
  - Discussion Posts (due by 11:59 PM on July 2)
  - Quiz (available July 2, 12:01 AM – 11:59 PM)
  - Review of Creative Projects Due July 2 @ 5:00 PM