

SOCY 4052: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN HEALTH

Fall 2020 - Meets Online via Zoom

Mon/Wed/Fri - 11:30am-12:20pm

Instructor: Jake E. Carias

Email: jake.carias@colorado.edu

[Office Hours <-- click here to schedule \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

All Office hours will be conducted via [Zoom <-- Click here to downloadLinks to an external site.](#)

- 1.) Use the Office Hours scheduler in Google Calendar to schedule a time to meet with Jake
- 2.) When the appointment is confirmed, Jake will add a Zoom link to the Calendar event.

***Please note that this syllabus and Canvas Course will continue to be edited and revised throughout the semester but I wanted to present to you all exactly what will be expected of you throughout this course. Thanks for your patience. Pardon the dust.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

- Ratcliff, K.S., 2017. *The social determinants of health: Looking upstream*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Warwick-Booth, L. and Cross, R., 2018. *Global health studies: A social determinants perspective*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Barr, D.A., 2019. *Health Disparities in the United States: Social Class, Race, Ethnicity, and the Social Determinants of Health*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces upper-level undergraduates to the interdisciplinary field of social inequalities in health, with a particular focus on sociological contributions to the area. We will examine links between health outcomes and various social phenomena and social statuses such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, and ethnicity. We will discuss theoretical explanations for the relationships between these factors and various health outcomes, as well as possible policy solutions. This class focuses on multiple levels of sociological analysis, from physician-patient interactions to health care systems and social structures. We will discuss health inequalities in both the U.S. and various international contexts. Among the questions that we will consider in this course are these:

- Why do “women get sicker, but men die quicker?”
- What strategies do families living in extreme poverty in developing countries engage in to ensure the health of their children?
- Why do people with low socioeconomic status have worse health than their high-status counterparts, even in countries that typically meet all citizens’ health needs?
- How do unconscious racial stereotypes play out in doctor-patient interactions?
- How do social networks influence people’s risky health behaviors such as smoking, overeating, and lack of exercise?

You are not required to be a sociology major to enroll in this course, but all students should enter the class with a willingness to engage in sociological analysis and critical thinking. We will start with the basic assumption that social factors, and not just biological ones, influence people’s health outcomes. This is an upper-division course, even though there are no sociological prerequisites. You will be expected to work hard and go beyond rote memorization to apply complex and critical thinking while engaging deeply with the course material.

Besides giving you a thorough grounding in the study of social disparities in health, this course focuses on building skills that will be useful to students in their future careers. These skills include critical thinking, clearly expressing ideas in writing, public speaking, and working cooperatively in small groups. Please be aware that some course requirements or assigned readings may change during the semester. However, I do not expect the overall workload to increase if changes are made.

COURSE GOALS:

1. To learn about population-level social disparities in health outcomes.
2. To critically assess theoretical explanations for these disparities and possible policy solutions at multiple levels of analysis.
3. To gain in-depth knowledge in specific topic areas within the broader subject of social disparities in health.
4. To identify the ways in which social class, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, and other social forces shape people's health.
5. To think critically about your own health and the ways in which your social context and personal biography have patterned your health behaviors and outcomes.

CLASS POLICIES:

Course Waitlist Department Policy: For the first week and a half we cannot roll folks off the waitlist, it is automated, and we have to let the system work itself out. The department can only administratively drop students at this point. You must attend class regularly to guarantee your place in a class during the first two weeks of the semester. If you fail to attend, you may be administratively dropped at the discretion of the department. Once the waitlist freezes, the department can enroll students off the waitlist at this point if the instructor is okay with over enrolling the course and if there is space in the classroom. However, the department can only enroll students in the sequence order in which they are on the waitlist. For example; the department cannot enroll #4 over #1 on the waitlist.

Communications: Communication is the key to success in any college class. An email is an official form of communication. You are responsible for checking your University of Colorado's official email address and Canvas page regularly for class updates. Lectures and other handouts will be made available on Canvas. According to University policies, I cannot discuss grades over email. If you would like to discuss your grade or grades on any assignments, please schedule to meet during office hours. If you are having difficulty keeping up with the class, become ill, or are for any reason unable to complete your work. No doctor's notes are required at any time. Please just email me or set up a meeting during office hours to make a plan with me to get you back on track in the course. I will do everything in my power to give you every opportunity to do well in this course.

Remote Lecture Attendance Policy: This course is a remote learning course. New Zoom links for each class will be provided via Canvas. These lectures are not required, nor are associated with any points towards your final grade. All lectures will be recorded and posted in the appropriate Canvas module for that week's material such that all students may access the discussion and lecture materials provided by the instructor. Students are responsible for all information provided in the lecture, regardless of attendance.

Late Assignments Policy: All class assignments have flexible due dates with expected completion times to ensure that students are keeping up with the class material. As such, any and all assignments may be turned in late but will be assessed a late penalty of 10%, allowing for a maximum score of 90% to be earned on any late assignments. After May 2nd, any late assignments turned in for credit will be assessed a 15% penalty, for a maximum grade of 85%. After May 7th, assuming extensions are warranted, any late assignments turned in for credit will be assessed a 20% penalty, for a maximum grade of 80%. To be clear, points may still be deducted further on assignments that do not meet the requirements or expectations of the assignment.

Incomplete Grade Policy: An "incomplete" grade, temporarily takes the place of an "F" for a final grade in cases where the student was unable to successfully complete the assigned coursework during the semester for reasons beyond their own personal control. To qualify for an incomplete, you must have completed a majority of the coursework by the end of the semester. For the purposes of this course, "a majority of coursework" is defined as receiving at least a 40% as your final grade by the end of the semester. The student must formally request an incomplete from the Instructor via email. If the Instructor agrees to assign an incomplete grade, the student will need to fill out the incomplete form for record-keeping complete with the justification for the incomplete and a full list of assignments to be completed no later than 5pm on the last day of final exams (as scheduled by the University).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Individual Office Hours Check-Ins (9 points): Each student must meet with the instructor during office hours (on Zoom) at least three times throughout the semester prior to established deadlines. *The first "Individual Check-In" meeting must occur within the first three (3) weeks of class to ensure that you are fully aware of the course requirements and are prepared to dive deeply into the class material.* Email the instructor if you have any issues setting up the office hours appointments.

Quizzes (? points): There will be a weekly quiz that will be opened on Sundays before classes. The quiz will be on the material that you are learning in that week, from both readings and lecture materials. The quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple-choice questions, and short answer questions. *Short Answer questions must be answers with a response of at least 50 words.* Quizzes will be updated on the Sunday prior to the start of each week. Total points awarded through quizzes will be determined at the end of the semester.

Note: Quizzes are a work in progress. I have decided to do a complete overhaul on the class materials, lectures, and assignments to ensure that you are receiving the most up-to-date information. I will be writing the quizzes on Sunday each week so questions may not be perfect, if you believe there is an error in the quiz, please email the instructor right away.

Online Writing Assignments (105 points): There will be weekly writing assignments due throughout the semester. In each essay, you will be expected to cite some combination of the textbook, in-class readings, lecture materials, and/or peer-reviewed academic sources. In some week's there will be online materials (youtube videos, websites, podcasts, etc.) for you to watch or listen to and use to respond to the prompt. *Each response should be approximately 1 page, single-spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins, and approximately 600 words long.* Use the online materials and the reading materials for the week to answer the prompt questions. You should cite at least one of the assigned readings in your writing. Late assignment submissions will be granted a maximum score of 90%. The lowest scored assignment from this category will be dropped from the grading structure automatically throughout the semester.

Literature Review Project (100 points): For this project, you will be required to research a health inequalities topic of your choosing, read multiple peer-reviewed scientific papers, and write a literature review on the topic of at least 10-pages, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1-inch margins. The Literature Review Project is broken out into three separate assignments: Outline & Annotated Bibliography, Draft, and the Final Literature Review submission. After you submit the Outline and Draft, you will be prompted to complete multiple "peer reviews" where you will provide comments and feedback on other students' papers. Instructions can be found in the "Literature Review" module in the Assignments tab of Canvas.

Note: You may choose to work in groups on this project. In fact, it is highly encouraged. Each student is still required to submit an individually written literature review but you may collaborate on the topic, the outlines, the annotated bibliography, and the presentation. This is a great opportunity to reduce the workload of this large project and learn more by collaborating with others.

Zoom Discussion Sections (55 points): Discussion sections will take the place of the normal attendance policies. You will sign up for designated times to meet with the instructor and classmates to review and discuss class material. You only need to attend one (1) discussion section (30 minutes long) per week. The discussion sections are like mini-recitations where you can discuss class material with the Instructor, ask questions, and debate prompts organized by the instructor. The attendance grades are given out individually. If you miss a discussion section, you may complete an extra credit assignment to earn the attendance points missed or attend another discussion section later in that same week. You are allowed to miss 1 scheduled discussion section without penalty during the semester.

Online Class Discussions (50 points): Posts in class discussions should be at least 250 words long and demonstrate knowledge of the reading material with an example from the textbook if possible. You may be asked to submit other information, such as a news article or other items with your writing. Some discussions may require that you respond to other students' posts providing critiques, alternative theories,

or additional information and these responses must be at least 100 words long. The lowest scored Discussion/Blog Post will be dropped from the grading structure automatically throughout the semester. Note: Discussion posts will be created on Sundays prior to that week's material. If the instructions or questions are unclear, please email the instructor so that they can be improved for the entire class.

Extra Credit (up to 30 points): You will be allowed to complete a maximum of 6 extra credit assignments (minimum 5 points per writing assignment) to boost your overall grade or make-up for an absence from class. Depending on the material being reviewed, you may earn more than 5 points per assignment. For example, if you watch a 30-minute episode of a docuseries, this can earn you 5 extra credit points when the writing assignment is turned in. Alternatively, if you participate in a 1-hour webinar or watch a 1-hour long documentary, this can earn you 10 extra credit points when the writing assignment is turned in. If there is an event, documentary, or other learning activity you believe could count for extra credit, email the Instructor to confirm the point value before completing the writing assignment.

Textbook Chapter Presentation (25 points): In the first three weeks of class, you will need to sign up for a textbook chapter presentation group. Groups will be assigned at random (to be fair) to different chapters and due dates starting on Week 4 of class. These presentations will be submitted via Canvas and shared with the class. The intention behind these presentations is to have your groups provide the class with an overview of the key terms, ideas, and concepts presented in that chapter. Presentations must include a slideshow, video/audio recording, and meet the guidelines written in the assignment instructions.

Literature Review Presentation (25 points): Using the information you learned from the Literature Review Project, submit a 12-minute recorded video presentation using PowerPoint and Zoom. This presentation will not be for the class, it is primarily a professional development tool. The presentations will only be viewed by the instructor for grading purposes.

Note: This is another great opportunity to work with a classmate. Group work is highly encouraged.

CLASS READING SCHEDULE

Note: Please get the textbook ASAP because we will be reading the whole thing and the terminology in the textbook will be heavily featured in your assignments.

Week 1 (Jan. 11th - 15th): Introduction to Social Inequalities in Health

Friday: 50-minute Introductory Lecture

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 1 - Introduction to the Social Roots of Health Disparities (12 pages)
- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 1 - Introduction (5 pages)
- Global Health Studies - Introduction (6 pages)

Week 2 (Jan. 18th - 22nd): What is Health?

Monday: *Martin Luther King Day - (No Class!)*

Wednesday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 2 - What is "Health"? How Should We Define It? How Should We Measure It? (25 pages)

Friday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 1 - Global Patterns of Disease (19 pages)

Week 3 (Jan. 25th - 29th): SES and Health

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 3 - The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Health, or, "They Call It 'Poor Health' for a Reason (24 pages)

Wednesday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 2 - The Social Determinants of Health (10 pages)

Friday:

- Link, Bruce G., and Jo Phelan. "Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease." *Journal of health and social behavior* (1995): 80-94. (11 pages)

Week 4 (Feb. 1st - 5th): Inequality and Health

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 4 - Understanding How Low Social Status Leads to Poor Health (38 pages)

Wednesday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 3 - Poverty and Health (11 pages)

Friday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 2 - Global Health: An Unequal World (16 pages)

Week 5 (Feb. 8th - 12th): Discrimination and Health

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 5 - Race, Ethnicity, and Health (27 pages)

Wednesday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 10 - When, if Ever, Is It Appropriate to Use a Patients Race/Ethnicity to Help Guide Medical Decisions (17 pages)

Friday:

- Phelan, J.C. and Link, B.G., 2015. Is racism a fundamental cause of inequalities in health?. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, pp.311-330. (14 pages)

Week 6 (Feb. 15th - 19th): Theories of Health Disparities

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 6 - Race/Ethnicity, SES, and Health: Which is More Important in Affecting Health Status (36 pages)

Wednesday: **Wellness Day - (No Class! Also, no homework assignments!)**

Friday:

- Krieger, Nancy. "Theories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: an ecosocial perspective." *International journal of epidemiology* 30.4 (2001): 668-677. (7 pages)

Week 7 (Feb. 22nd - 26th): Medical Racism, Part 1

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 8 - All Things Being Equal, Does Race/Ethnicity Affect How Physicians Treat Patients (33 pages)

Wednesday:

- Spencer, K.L. and Grace, M., 2016. Social foundations of health care inequality and treatment bias. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 42, pp.101-120. (13 pages)

Friday:

- Shim, Janet K. 2010. "Cultural Health Capital: A Theoretical Approach to Understanding Health Care Interactions and the Dynamics of Unequal Treatment." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(1):1-15. (12 pages)

Week 8 (March 1st - 5th): Medical Racism, Part 2

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 9 - Why Does Race/Ethnicity Affect How Physicians Treat Patients (30 pages)

Wednesday:

- Nuriddin, A., Mooney, G. and White, A.I., 2020. Reckoning with histories of medical racism and violence in the USA. *The Lancet*, 396(10256), pp.949-951. (3 pages)

Friday:

- Feagin, J. and Bennefield, Z., 2014. Systemic racism and US health care. *Social science & medicine*, 103, pp.7-14. (6 pages)

Week 9 (March 8th - 12th): Basic Needs & Critical Stages of Development

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 7 - Children's Health Disparities (27 pages)

Wednesday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 5 - Water and Health (23 pages)

Friday:

- Minh, A., Muhajarine, N., Janus, M., Brownell, M. and Guhn, M., 2017. A review of neighborhood effects and early child development: How, where, and for whom, do neighborhoods matter?. *Health & place*, 46, pp.155-174. (9 pages)

Week 10 (March 15th - 19th): Work and Health

Monday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 7 - Occupational Health (26 pages)

Wednesday:

- Kivimäki, Mika, Solja T. Nyberg, G. David Batty, Eleonor I. Fransson, Katriina Heikkilä, Lars Alfredsson, Jakob B. Bjorner et al. "Job strain as a risk factor for coronary heart disease: a collaborative meta-analysis of individual participant data." *The Lancet* 380, no. 9852 (2012): 1491-1497. (5 pages)

Friday:

- Amick, B.C., McLeod, C.B. and Bültmann, U., 2016. Labor markets and health: an integrated life course perspective. *Scandinavian journal of work, environment & health*, pp.346-353. (6 pages)

Week 11 (March 22nd - 26th): Social Capital and Health (Wellness Day: March 25th, Discussion Sections Cancelled and No weekly homework)

Monday:

- Moore, S. and Kawachi, I., 2017. Twenty years of social capital and health research: a glossary. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 71(5), pp.513-517. (3 pages)
- Rodgers, J., Valuev, A.V., Hsuen, Y. and Subramanian, S.V., 2019. Social capital and physical health: An updated review of the literature for 2007–2018. *Social Science & Medicine*, 236, p.112360. (8 pages)
- Christakis, N.A. and Fowler, J.H., 2007. The spread of obesity in a large social network over 32 years. *New England journal of medicine*, 357(4), pp.370-379. (7 pages)

Wednesday:

- Rico-Uribe, L.A., Caballero, F.F., Olaya, B., Tobiasz-Adamczyk, B., Koskinen, S., Leonardi, M., Haro, J.M., Chatterji, S., Ayuso-Mateos, J.L. and Miret, M., 2016. Loneliness, social networks, and health: a cross-sectional study in three countries. *PloS one*, 11(1), p.e0145264. (10 pages)

Friday:

- Ohmer, M.L., Teixeira, S., Booth, J., Zuberi, A. and Kolke, D., 2016. Preventing violence in disadvantaged communities: Strategies for building collective efficacy and improving community health. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 26(7-8), pp.608-621. (11 pages)
- Villalonga-Olives, E. and Kawachi, I., 2017. The dark side of social capital: A systematic review of the negative health effects of social capital. *Social Science & Medicine*, 194, pp.105-127. (3 pages)

Week 12 (March 29th - April 2nd): Neighborhoods and Health: Environmental Effects

Monday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 4 - Environment and Health (28 pages)

Wednesday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 6 - Automobiles and Health (22 pages)

Friday:

- Arcaya, M.C., Tucker-Seeley, R.D., Kim, R., Schnake-Mahl, A., So, M. and Subramanian, S.V., 2016. Research on neighborhood effects on health in the United States: a systematic review of study characteristics. *Social Science & Medicine*, 168, pp.16-29. (7 pages)

Week 13 (April 5th - 9th): Social Policies and Health

Monday:

- Health Disparities in the US, Barr - Chapter 11 - What Should We Do to Reduce Health Disparities? (30 pages)

Wednesday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 9 - Conclusion (14 pages)

Friday:

- Halfon, N., Long, P., Chang, D.I., Hester, J., Inkelas, M. and Rodgers, A., 2014. Applying a 3.0 transformation framework to guide large-scale health system reform. *Health Affairs*, 33(11), pp.2003-2011. (7 pages)

Week 14 (April 12th - 16th): Global Health Issues

Monday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 3 - The Wider Determinants of Global Health (19 pages)

Wednesday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 7 - Global Health Protests (18 pages)

Friday:

- Hosseinpoor, A.R., Bergen, N., Schlotheuber, A. and Grove, J., 2018. Measuring health inequalities in the context of sustainable development goals. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 96(9), p.654. (4 pages)

Week 15 (April 19th - 23rd): Global Health Systems and Governance

Monday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 4 - Global Health Systems (19 pages)

Wednesday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 5 - Global Health Governance (22 pages)

Friday:

- The Social Determinants of Health, Ratcliff - Chapter 8 - Food and Health (32 pages)

Week 16 (April 26th - 30th): Reducing Health Disparities with Policy and Science

Monday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 6 - Policies for Health (18 pages)

Wednesday:

- Global Health Studies - Chapter 8 - Contemporary Challenges in Global Health (17 pages)

Friday: **Reading Day - (No Class!)**

Finals Week (May 3rd - 7th): Course Wrap-up

No more official class meetings. Catch-up on any late work. All assignments must be completed by May 7th to earn late submission points. No assignments will be accepted after the 7th.

UNIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENTS:

(Dis)ability Services:

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner 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 websiteLinks to an external site.](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical ConditionsLinks to an external site.](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Religious Holidays:

Please contact the instructor regarding any conflicts between religious observance dates and course requirements. Please refer to the Attendance and Extra Credit Sections of this syllabus to ensure you can earn any points missed due to a Religious Holiday Observance.

Classroom Behavior and Honor Code Policies:

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behaviorLinks to an external site.](#) and the [Student Code of ConductLinks to an external site.](#).

Names and pronouns:

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their names and pronouns via the student portal; those names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code:

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office websiteLinks to an external site.](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation/Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC):

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environments. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and campus resources can be found on the OIEC website. Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment, and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.