

**SOCY 3032: SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY**  
**SPRING 2016**  
**Tu/Th 2:00-3:15--DUAN G125**

**Instructor:** Jason D. Boardman  
**Office:** KTCH 312  
**Email:** boardman@colorado.edu  
**Office Hours:** Tu 3:30-5:00

**Teaching Assistant:** Joshua Goode  
**Office:** TBA  
**Email:** Joshua.Goode@colorado.edu  
**Office Hours:** TBA

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**Text:** *Berkman, LF, Kawachi, I, Glymour, MM. 2014. Social Epidemiology. New York: Oxford University Press. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.*

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### **Course Description**

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution of and determinants of states of health in the population. Epidemiologic research has long focused on aspects of the built and social environment that increase the risk of exposure of particular diseases and affect the duration and severity of exposure. However, the explicit emphasis on the proximate determinants of disease inadvertently overlooks the fundamental role played by the broad social patterning of health, health behaviors, access to health care, and exposure to health risks. Some refer to these ‘upstream’ risks as ‘fundamental causes’ of health and illness in populations. The social epidemiologic perspective has several key tenets: (1) epidemiology is best studied from a population rather than individual perspective; (2) risks are clustered within discrete social places such as neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces; (3) a lifecourse perspective is critical to the understanding of the pathology of a particular disease; and (4) sensitivity and resilience are characteristics of individuals but also characteristics of social places. Readings are primarily drawn from *Social Epidemiology* but we will supplement with current social epidemiological research papers. The course will also have an applied component in which we will apply the theories that we discuss in class to current empirical data. This does not require any background in statistics, computer programming, or mathematics beyond basic algebra.

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### **Course Requirements**

**Applied social epidemiology assignments (15%):** We will have three assignments (one for each section of the course) in which you will summarize evidence from existing data sources. These assignments are due at the end of each section and will be turned in with your examination. We will perform elementary analysis of existing data using the statistical computer program R. This will not require any understanding of statistics or computer programming.

**In class group work (10%):** Throughout the semester we will have small, in-class, and group based tasks in which you will be asked to evaluate specific research questions using empirical data.

**Examinations (75%):** There are three in-class examinations (see schedule below). You are required to bring a bluebook to each of the three examinations. Each examination is cumulative and is worth 20% of your overall grade. Any missed examination will result in a score of 0 and make-up examinations will be given only in the case of a documented emergency. The third examination will be held during the final examination slot but is still designed to be a 75 minute test. All examinations are the same format. A list ten identifications (definitional terms) and essay questions will be posted prior to the exam. Your examination will be a random selection of three identifications (one paragraph description) and one essay (a standard essay of five to seven paragraphs).

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## **Section 1: Class, Race, and Health**

Week 1 (Aug 23-Aug 25): Social Epidemiology Background

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 1
2. Wray, Matt, Cynthia Colen, and Bernice Pescosolido. "The sociology of suicide." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011): 505-528.
3. Kushner, Howard I., and Claire E. Sterk. "The limits of social capital: Durkheim, suicide, and social cohesion." *American Journal of Public Health* 95.7 (2005): 1139-1143.

Week 2 (Aug 30-Sept 1): SES and Health (Read: Chapter 2)

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 2
2. Link, Bruce G., and Jo Phelan. "Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease." *Journal of health and social behavior* (1995): 80-94.

Week 3 (Sept 6-Sept 8): Discrimination and Health

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 3
2. Boardman, Jason D. 2004. Health pessimism among black and white adults: the role of interpersonal and institutional maltreatment. *Social Science & Medicine*, 59: 2523-2533.

Week 4 (Sept 13-Sept 15): Income Inequality

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 4
2. Kawachi, I., Kennedy, B. P., Lochner, K., & Prothrow-Stith, D. (1997). Social capital, income inequality, and mortality. *American journal of public health*, 87(9), 1491-1498.

Week 5 (Sept 20-Sept 22): Social epidemiology fundamentals review

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

### **Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> Examination # 1 and Assignment #1**

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## **Section 2: Work, Stress, Social Resources**

Week 6 (Sept 27-Sept 29): Working Conditions and Health

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 5
2. 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.

Week 7 (Oct 4-Oct 6): Labor Markets, Employment Policies, and Health

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 6
2. Boardman, Jason D., Liam Downey, James S. Jackson, J. Bryce Merrill, Jarron M. Saint Onge, and David R. Williams. 2008. "Proximate industrial activity and psychological distress." *Population & Environment* 30:3-25.

Week 8 (Oct 11-Oct 13): Social Network Epidemiology

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 7
2. Christakis, Nicholas A., and James H. Fowler. "The spread of obesity in a large social network over 32 years." *New England journal of medicine* 357.4 (2007): 370-379.

Week 9 (Oct 18-Oct 20): Social Capital and Health (Read: Chapter 8)

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 8
2. Ichida, Y., Hirai, H., Kondo, K., Kawachi, I., Takeda, T., & Endo, H. (2013). Does social participation improve self-rated health in the older population? A quasi-experimental intervention study. *Social science & medicine*, 94, 83-90.

Week 10 (Oct 25-Oct 27): Social connections and resources review

1. Kawachi, Ichiro, Bruce P. Kennedy, and Roberta Glass. "Social capital and self-rated health: a contextual analysis." *American journal of public health* 89.8 (1999): 1187-1193.

**Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup> Examination #2 and Assignment #2**

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**Section 3: Stress, behaviors, biology, and policy**

Week 11 (Nov 1- Nov 3): Stress and Health

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 9
2. Mezu, Briana, Jane A. Rafferty, Kiarri N. Kershaw, Darrell Hudson, Cleopatra M. Abdou, Hedwig Lee, William W. Eaton, and James S. Jackson. "Reconsidering the role of social disadvantage in physical and mental health: stressful life events, health behaviors, race, and depression." *American journal of epidemiology* 172, no. 11 (2010): 1238-1249.

Week 12 (Nov 8- Nov 10): Changing Health Behaviors in a social context

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 10
2. Karasek D, Ahern J, Galea S. Social norms, collective efficacy, and smoking cessation in urban neighborhoods. *American Journal of Public Health* 2012;102(2):343-51.

Week 13 (Nov 15- Nov 17): Policies and Social Epidemiology

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 12

2. Sturm, R., Powell, L. M., Chiqui, J. F., & Chaloupka, F. J. (2010). Soda taxes, soft drink consumption, and children's body mass index. *Health Affairs*, 10-1377.

Week 14 (Nov 29 – Dec 1): Biological Pathways

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 14
2. Boardman, Jason D., Jonathan Daw, and Jeremy Freese. "Defining the environment in gene–environment research: Lessons from social epidemiology." *American journal of public health* 103, no. S1 (2013): S64-S72.

Week 15 (Dec 6 – Dec 8): Social determinants of health review

1. Berkman, Kawachi, and Glymour: Chapter 15
2. Marmot, M., Friel, S., Bell, R., Houweling, T. A., Taylor, S., & Commission on Social Determinants of Health. (2008). Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. *The Lancet*, 372(9650), 1661-1669.

**Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> (1:30-4:00 pm) Examination #3 and Assignment #3**

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**Communications:** Email is an official form of communication. You are responsible for checking your University of Colorado official email address on a regular basis. **To send me an email, you must use SOCY3022 as the subject of your email (NO SPACE).** This can be followed by whatever subject you'd like (e.g. SOCY2061: homework #3) but your message must start with SOCY3022. I will read and respond to email sent to me from this class only during my office hours. I will not respond to email without this heading. Lectures and other handouts will be made available on D2L.

**Policies for Students with Special Needs**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services (DS) early in the semester so that your needs may be addressed. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, [www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices))

**Religious Holidays**

Please contact the instructor regarding any conflicts between religious observance dates and course requirements.

**Classroom Behavior and Honor Code Policies**

As a result of extensive discussions with and recommendations from faculty and students, a new classroom behavior policy procedures and honor code system have been adopted by the University. Please see (<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/index.html>) and (<http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>) for more information, respectively.