SYLLABUS

HOW INEQUALITY MAKES US SICK (SYA6933)

COURSE INFORMATION

- **Course Hours:** Wednesday 2:00-4:30 pm
- **Course Meeting Location:** Zoom
- **Instructor:** Dr. Patricia Homan
  - Email: phoman@fsu.edu
  - Office: 238 Pepper Center BLDG., 636 West Call Street
  - **Office hours:** TH 4-6 & by appt (VIRTUAL ONLY for Spring 2021)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine how macro-level social inequalities -- such as racism, sexism, and economic inequality -- impact population health. The course will provide (a) an overview of the major theoretical orientations that explain the links between macro-social factors and health, (b) discussion and examples of the primary methodological tools used to study social factors and health, and, most importantly, (c) exposure to cutting-edge research on the macro-social determinants of health.

COURSE FORMAT

This is a graduate-level seminar. There are assigned readings for each class session, most of which are available electronically. Occasionally a book chapter is assigned and this will be posted on Canvas. Class participants are expected to read the assigned articles before class and to participate in class discussions and critiques of those readings. Each student will serve as discussion leader for one class during the semester.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade will be based as follows: 50% term paper, 25% take-home mid-term exam, and 25% class participation (including weekly discussion question posts, your role as discussion leader, and your term paper presentation). The term paper will be on a topic of your choice.

Analysis of Weekly Reading Assignments

All students are responsible for the assigned readings each week, and they should be ready to discuss them. Each Tuesday you must post at least 2 questions/comments to discuss by noon. This will help ensure that you are prepared and help assist the discussion leader in directing our class discussion. It is recommended that you have some system of taking notes about or on the article while you read it to facilitate discussion (and citation) later. Notes/things to think about should include the main research question/s of the article, the theory and/or perspective and its fit to the question/s, the data and methodology and their appropriateness, the contribution to the literature, and the strengths and weaknesses of the research. Additionally, as you read ask yourself 3 questions: 1) What is missing? 2) How does this relate to other subfields of sociology besides health? 3) How does it related to other things I have read? 4) What ideas does this give me for my own work? [Think: Methods? Gap in Literature? New research Q’s? New data sources? Is this theory useful for explaining a different phenomenon?]

When you are the discussion leader in a given week, your goal is to engage the class in discussion of the topic of the assigned piece. You should prepare a BRIEF summary of the topic, theory, research question or hypotheses, data and methodology, findings, limitations, and contribution. You should also prepare discussion questions about the reading in the context of the other readings and the field in general. Things you should think about:

1. Which theory or perspective is the article/chapter based on and which other theories might also be used to situate the research?
2. What are the main concepts of the reading and how do you think they rank in importance to the overall field?
3. What are the data and methods used and are they appropriate for the question? Are there others that might do a better job?
4. What limitations have the authors discussed and which ones have they missed?
5. Are the findings compelling and what are some alternate explanations?
6. What is the largest contribution the article makes and what are future research areas on this topic?

Also, feel free to get creative with your week’s topic (and have fun with it!) by bringing in other relevant ideas, readings, activities, videos, popular media, etc. I’m happy to consult with you on your topic if you’d like.

Take-Home Miderm Exam

For the Midterm, I will give you a take-home exam to be completed within a week focusing on the topics and discussions covered in class. There will be two required questions (you will have a choice of at least two within each section) and each answer should be roughly 4 pages double spaced with a short bibliography. You should use readings from class but should also draw from other scholarly work. The exam is intended as preparation for your comprehensive exams.

Final Course Paper

Students are required to write a 15 to 20 page research paper on a topic relevant to the course and based on the readings or related readings. This assignment is due at Midnight on Tuesday April 20th and should be one of the types listed below.

Option 1: Research Proposal

The proposal should be composed of three parts:
I. Literature review: discussion of what is known on your topic, what is unknown, and how your proposed research would contribute to knowledge. This should comprise roughly 2/3 of the paper.
II. Identify a research question: the idea here is to locate a gap in the current knowledge and to address it in a testable way. This can include a theoretical debate or the introduction of a new theoretical perspective to a substantive topic, a challenge to an author’s findings and interpretations, or a substantive issue where there is little empirical evidence. Remember that the question must be testable either with existing or collected data. Remember that this is a proposal for research that you will hypothetically conduct.
III. Describing the Method: How will you go about answering your question? What data would
you need to do so and how would you go about finding the population of interest in either existing or collected data? What type of analytic plan would you use (quantitative/qualitative) and how would this lead to a contribution to the field? Remember, a proposal is all about finding an interesting gap in the literature and presenting a strategy to fill it.

Option 2: Empirical Analysis

The second option is to write a paper using original data analysis. The ultimate goal would be to present your findings at a conference and/or submit the paper to a journal. This option is appropriate for more advanced students with methodological training and a background in a substantive topic. The model for this paper is a journal article.

Notes about final papers: Papers should be submitted on Canvas by the specified time and date. Please save papers in Word format. If you use another OS besides Microsoft, please send a second version of the paper in pdf (in case there are formatting slips). All papers should be double spaced with 12 point font. Unless you have prior permission to turn in a paper late, late papers will be docked one letter grade (i.e. A to B) each day they are late.

Student Presentations

I have reserved the last two class periods for presentations of your final papers. You should prepare a 10 minute professional-style presentation of your paper. You may use, handouts, or Powerpoint, etc. After each presentation we will have a 2 minute question period. These presentations are intended to prepare you for presenting your work at conferences and defenses. They will also give you the chance to get feedback on your ideas before submitting your final paper.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1, January 6: Introduction to the Course

Read over the syllabus.
Week 2, January 13: Foundational Theoretical Perspectives in Health Disparities Research and the Recent Shift Toward Upstream Macro-Social Determinants [TRISH]


Week 3, January 20: Socioeconomic Status and Fundamental Cause Theory [Rachel]


**Week 4, January 27: Income Inequality and Health [Rebekah]**


Week 5, February 3: Discrimination and Health (Overview, Mechanisms, & Theory)
[Samantha]


Krieger Discrimination and health inequities .pdf


Optional:
Week 6, February 10: Structural Racism and Health Pt. 1 [Tatiana & Mariana]


Optional


Week 7, February 17: Structural Racism and Health Pt. 2 [Lovenie]


Optional:

****TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE ON CANVAS BY MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21****
Week 8, February 24: Immigration and Health [Rwiti]


Optional:

Week 9, March 3: Structural Sexism and Health [Johnna]


Optional:


Week 10, March 10: Structural Stigma and Discrimination Against LGBTQ+
Populations [Zuzel]


Optional:


Week 11, March 17: Health Care Systems, Inequality and Health [Elizabeth]


Optional:


Week 12, March 24: Politics, Welfare Regimes and Health [Kyle]


Optional:

Week 13, March 31: Social Policies and Health [Gregory]


Week 14, April 7: Student Presentations

Week 15, April 14: Student Presentations

****FINAL PAPER DUE by NOON on TUESDAY APRIL 20TH****
GRADING SCHEME

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>&lt; 93% to 90%</td>
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<td>&lt; 90% to 87%</td>
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<td>F</td>
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CANVAS SUPPORT

Need help with Canvas? Contact FSU Canvas Support:

Email: canvas@fsu.edu (mailto:canvas@fsu.edu)
Phone: (850) 644-8004
Website: sup_port.canvas.fsu.edu (http://support.canvas.fsu.edu)
Hours: 8am to 5pm, Monday - Friday
UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE POLICY

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Please note: Modifications to this policy have been made to accommodate the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, see this memo that has been distributed to all faculty and instructional staff (https://www.fda.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu636/files/Media/Files/Academic%20Policies/Important%20Policy%202021_revised_b.pdf) regarding the 2020-2021 academic year.

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (For more details see the FSU Academic Honor Policy and procedures for addressing alleged violations (http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy).)

PROCESS FOR RESOLVING ACADEMIC PROBLEMS OR GRIEVANCES

Please use this step-by-step guide to resolving academic problems (https://www.fda.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu636/files/Media/Files/General%20Academic%20Appeals/Acad...
Solving Flowchart Binder Oct-2020.pdf) to begin the process of communicating with your instructor to resolve any confusion or difficulty you may be having in the course. Detailed information on FSU's grievance procedure, including special instructions for students enrolled in an FSU branch campus, is maintained on the General Bulletin's Academic Integrity & Grievances webpage. Out-of-state distance learning students should review the Office of Distance Learning Complaint Resolution page for additional procedures.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

To receive academic accommodations, a student:

1. must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
2. must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
3. should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Office of Accessibility Services (Tallahassee Campus). (https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas)

874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
FREE TUTORING FROM FSU (TALLAHASSEE CAMPUS)

On-campus tutoring and writing assistance are available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options - see the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' website (http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring) or contact tutor@fsu.edu (mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

"Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice."
# Course Summary:

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