

SOC 389-5 Special Topics in Sociology: Health and Inequality Spring 2021 Syllabus

Synchronous meeting times: Thursdays 6:00 pm-7:15 pm Eastern Time

<https://emory.zoom.us/j/93922443504>

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Course Description

Inequalities in social life determine how long people live, how often they get sick, and whether they can receive medical care. We will apply sociological theories to examine paths that lead social inequities to health disparities and how poor health, in turn, can reinforce social disadvantage. Our readings and discussions will cover how inequities cycle between health and social status, which creates a system of injustice that can echo throughout the life-course and across generations.

The course is organized by dimensions of social inequality—social capital, education, gender, social networks, race/ethnicity, neighborhood, and immigration status. Each dimension is vastly complex and is worthy of numerous years of study. This semester-long course aims to introduce you to the major themes, theories, and empirical findings in inequality and health.

We will practice applying sociological tools to real-life situations. We will explore how social standing affected health outcomes during notable events such as pandemics, natural disasters, and policy changes. By the end of the semester, you will be able to engage in public discourse that would expand our knowledge on how health and social status can influence each other.

Your active participation is critical to you and your classmates' success. We will dedicate about 50 percent of lecture time to student-led discussions based on assigned readings. You will work in small groups to complete in-class tasks as well as a semester-long project. Your unique backgrounds, experience, and perspectives is an essential component of this learning environment.

Course goals

1. Generate awareness of the relationship between social processes and health outcomes.
2. Foster thoughtful and compassionate communicators in issues of social and health inequity.

3. Create inspiration to serve as leaders and advocates for social and health justice.

Learning objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Apply sociological theories to articulate connections between social and health inequities
2. Critique empirical evidence that document social and health disparities
3. Analyze major events such as policy changes, natural disasters, and public health crises through a sociological lens
4. Disseminate your views to a broader audience

Technology Requisites and Expectations

Canvas course site

I will make course announcements through Canvas and update due dates on the Canvas calendar. Please submit all quizzes and assignments through Canvas. I will post all required readings and links to media in the Module section of Canvas. Lecture recordings will also be available in the Modules section. I also will moderate a discussion board on Canvas throughout the semester. The discussion board will be a place to post questions and share material between class participants.

Synchronous meetings on Zoom

We will meet once a week for 75 minutes via Zoom. Please be prepared to participate in meetings using video and microphone.

<https://emory.zoom.us/j/93922443504>

Meeting ID: 939 2244 3504

One tap mobile

+14702509358,,93922443504# US (Atlanta)

+14703812552,,93922443504# US (Atlanta)

Dial by your location

+1 470 250 9358 US (Atlanta)

+1 470 381 2552 US (Atlanta)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 939 2244 3504

Find your local number: <https://emory.zoom.us/j/93922443504>

Guide to get started on zoom: <https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/74713/pages/zoom-user-guide-for-students>

Zoom tips and etiquette: <https://canvas.emory.edu/courses/74713/pages/zoom-tips-and-etiquette/>

Email

I will aim to respond to emails within two business days. Please include the course number in the subject line. Please submit all assignments through Canvas and not via email.

Required Readings

- Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition. 2010. Editors Bird, Chloe E., Conrad, Peter, Fremont, Allen M., and Timmermans, Stefan. Vanderbilt University Press. ISBN 0826517226 (**BCF 2010**)
- McDonough, J. E. (2012). Inside National Health Reform, University of California Press. (**McDonough 2012**)
- Sered, S. S. and R. Fernandopulle (2007). Uninsured in America, Updated: Life and Death in the Land of Opportunity, University of California Press. (**Sered & Fernandopulle 2007**)
- Starr, P. (2011). Remedy and Reaction: The Peculiar American Struggle Over Health Care Reform, Yale University Press. (**Starr 2011**)

N.B. Most of these books are available online through Emory Libraries, and the required readings only cover a handful of chapters from each book. I will also provide additional required readings and links to media on Canvas.

Resources

Resources for Inclusive Learning

We all learn differently, and sometimes we need accommodations. Please let me know if any aspect of the course prevents you from learning or being fully engaged. If you need official accommodations for accessibility or alternative course materials, please utilize the University's services through the Department of Accessibility Services. Link to Emory's Accessibility Service: <http://accessibility.emory.edu/index.html> The site also has an informative section for self-advocacy. (<http://accessibility.emory.edu/students/new-to-oas/self-advocacy.html>)

Emory Writing Center

The Writing Center is providing remote support throughout the Spring 2021 semester. They can help you with idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. The Center also has tutors who support the literacy needs of English Language Learners. You can make appointments at writingcenter.emory.edu.

Honor Code

We will follow Emory's code for academic integrity and conduct in this course. Please read Appendix I for properly paraphrasing and quoting another writer. All written submissions will be examined for plagiarism using Turnitin. You can also see common forms of misconduct in Appendices II and III. Please ask if you have any doubts about whether something will violate the policy. Link to Emory's Honor Code: <http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

Course requirements and grading

Summary

Description	Frequency	Percent of Grade
Asynchronous learning	Weekly	20
Synchronous meetings	Weekly	20
Topic proposal	Once	5
Annotated bibliography	Once	10
Opinion editorial (op-ed)	Once	20
Peer review of op-ed	Once	10
Podcast episode	Once	15
Total		100

Weekly Requirements

Asynchronous tasks You are expected to engage in asynchronous learning each week by reviewing the materials and completing tasks that I will post on Canvas. Quizzes will test your understanding of the readings and asynchronous lectures. They may be in multiple-choice, short answer, and paragraph answer forms.

Synchronous meetings You are expected to actively participate during synchronous class meetings. I will aim to keep my "lecturing" to a minimum during these sessions (I will deliver lectures mostly through asynchronous material). You will be placed into "break out groups" to discuss topics or complete tasks with your classmates. You may also be called upon to speak to the entire class. Please treat these synchronous Zoom meetings as if you are present in person. We have 75 precious minutes a week to interact with each other.

Attendance in synchronous meetings is required for this course. I also understand that circumstances may make it difficult for you to attend class. I will be lenient with my attendance policy this semester. Please let me know ahead of time (if you are able) if you cannot attend the Zoom class. Please also let me know in advance if you cannot actively participate during the session with the mic and camera on but would like to join synchronously.

Occasionally, you will be asked to submit tasks that you will complete during synchronous meetings. For example, you may be placed in small groups to discuss a topic and submit a summary of what you discussed during that session.

Course Deliverables

You will be asked to choose a topic (a health crisis or phenomenon, a disease, health behavior etc.) at the beginning of the semester. Your course deliverables will be centered around your chosen topic and will be staged over the course of the semester. A detailed description of each assignment will be posted on Canvas.

Topic proposal You must submit a brief description of your project and a justification on how it would be related to health and social inequities.

Annotated Bibliography You will be asked to submit an annotated bibliography containing five peer-reviewed empirical studies published in the social sciences. The studies must be relevant to your topic of interest.

Opinion Editorial (Op-Ed) Your semester assignment will include writing an op-ed on your chosen topic. You will use the annotated bibliography you created at the beginning of the semester to support your argument.

Peer Review of Op-Ed After submitting your Op-Ed, you will be asked to review the op-ed of one of your classmates.

Podcast Episode You will be in teams of two or three to produce, script, and record a podcast episode related to your op-ed topic. Your podcast will be evaluated primarily on the scripted content. However, I encourage you to use this assignment to interact with your classmates and express your creativity. Detailed assignment instructions are in the assignment section on Canvas.

Late submission policy

Your score will be reduced by 20% for any late submission. For example, if you submit a case study paper after the due date and time, and you received 9 out of 10 possible points, you will receive $9 \times 0.8 = 7.2$ points. You have until the last day of class to submit any late assignments.