The University of Western Ontario

School of Health Studies
Faculty of Health Sciences

HS1002A: Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health
Dr. Jessica Polzer

September – December 2012
Tuesdays: 10:30am-12:30pm
Thursdays: 11:30am-12:30pm
HSB 40

Instructor & Teaching Assistant (TA) Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Office Location</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jessica Polzer</td>
<td>HS 202</td>
<td>Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00—2:30pm</td>
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</table>

TAs will be announced on the first day of class.

Course Description: What is health? How can we measure and understand the health of groups and populations? And how can we understand differences in health status between different groups of people? Can healthy lifestyle “choices” alone explain the inequalities in health that are observed between groups? What kinds of explanations can help us understand why some groups of people are healthier than others? How do historical, political and economic forces influence health and health inequalities? And how do processes of economic globalization affect health inequalities within and between countries?

Observed inequalities in health related to social circumstances and the environment have been documented since the time of Hippocrates and Galen, the founders of the Western medical tradition. This course will introduce students to the social determinants of health and will be guided by and respond to the above questions. The social determinants of health are non-medical determinants of health that include social, political, economic and cultural conditions, forces and factors that influence how health is distributed among entire groups and populations. The social determinants of health is an interdisciplinary field of study that draws on research and scholarship from many areas including sociology, anthropology, political science, policy studies, and critical gender and race studies. The course will examine fundamental determinants of health, including income and social class, gender and sexism, ethnicity and racism and will focus on selected specific determinants (e.g. housing, food security, access to medical care) and health issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular disease). This course will present the social determinants of health both in the Canadian context and in comparative contexts.
**Course Objectives:** The objectives of this course are to:

- differentiate between personal and social determinants of health;
- introduce key social determinants of health and their relevance in Canadian and global contexts;
- understand how health varies systematically in relation to social, economic and political factors;
- understand the ways in which health is political - that is, how health is affected by dominant political discourses and social and economic policies;
- engage students in thinking about and viewing health in relation to social, political and economic forces, and in terms of the principles of equity and social justice;
- introduce basic terms, concepts and measurements related to health, population health and health inequalities;
- familiarize students with the development of universal health insurance in Canada;
- develop skills in reading, writing, studying and critical thinking; and
- give students experience with using the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style.

**Expectations & Responsibilities:** Learning occurs in a social environment and is a collaborative experience that requires the active participation of all those involved – teachers, teaching assistants and students. Successful learning happens when the professor, the assistants and the students uphold their respective roles and responsibilities. In this sense, learning is a co-responsibility that depends on the instructor, teaching assistants and the students coming to class prepared. It is the responsibility of the professor to come to class prepared to lecture on course material. It is also the professor’s responsibility to address and respond to student’s questions about course material in class and during specified office hours. It is the responsibility of the teaching assistants to assist the professor in the preparation and grading of exams and papers, and to address students’ questions about course material during the year and before the final exam. It is the responsibility of students to prepare for class by completing required course readings and attending class regularly and listen to the lectures, take notes in class, and to ask questions about course material in class and on WebCT. Students are expected to purchase a dictionary or use an online dictionary (e.g. www.dictionary.com) if they need help understanding the required course readings.

Students will have the opportunity to ask questions about course material in class, and to discuss course material and ask questions in weekly discussion groups on WebCT. Students are expected to communicate respectfully when online. The discussion groups will be monitored regularly by the professor and the TAs.

**Creating and maintaining a respectful and productive learning environment:** In order to maintain a respectful and productive learning environment, it is essential that students arrive at class ready to listen and attend to lectures and films. Disrespectful and disruptive behaviour during class includes, for example, texting or talking on mobile phones, chatting on or browsing Facebook, persistent talking during lectures or films, wearing headphones, emailing, and/or surfing the Internet for non-class purposes. If this behaviour is observed by the professor, she will use her discretion in deciding how best to deal with the situation. If disruptive behaviour persists, the professor may ask the offending student/s to stop talking and/or leave the classroom. The professor has the right to end class early and without warning should noise levels persist. In the case that class is ended without warning due to disruptive behaviour, the uncovered material will be considered testable and students will be responsible for this material on future exams.
Course Materials: There is no required text for the course. A package of readings is available at the campus book store which is located in the lower level of the UCC building. Readings not included in the course package will be made available on WebCT. Students are expected to download and print these readings from http://webct.uwo.ca/. A complete set of readings will also be put on reserve in the Taylor library.

Evaluation: Your grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Course Material Included on Exam</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>October 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Classes 1-9, inclusive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>December 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Classes 1-26, inclusive</td>
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Assignments (15% each): Students will complete two written assignments which will involve the application of key concepts introduced and explored in the course. Clear instructions for assignments will be provided on WebCT. Late papers will have 5% deducted from the assigned grade for every 24-hour period.

Midterm and Final Exams (35% each): Both the midterm and the final exams will include true/false and multiple choice questions. Exams will test students on all course materials, including required readings and any material covered during regularly scheduled classes (e.g. class lectures, films/videos, guest presentations, etc.). The final exam for this section of the course is cumulative.

The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar’s Office. Students should not plan their holidays/vacations until the Registrar’s Office publishes the exam schedule. Final grades are not released on WebCT until they have been reviewed and approved by the Director of the School of Health Studies.

Policy on missed exams: In the event that a student misses an exam for medical reasons, religious reasons or other extenuating circumstances, appropriate supporting documentation MUST be provided in writing. Medical documentation must be presented to an academic counsellor in the School of Health Studies, not the instructor (see next section). Make up exams for the midterm will be arranged by the course instructor and will be held within one week of the scheduled exam. Make up exams for the final exam will be arranged by the School of Health Studies and will be held in December and January 2012.

Accommodation for Medical Illness or Non-Medical Absences: The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. For more information, see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf
A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm

Documentation is required for non-medical absences where the course work missed is more than 10% of the overall grade. Students may contact their Faculty Academic Counselling Office for what documentation is needed.

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner. Documentation for any request for accommodation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Academic Counselling Office of the student’s Faculty of registration. For BHSc students, you may go to the School of Health Studies Office in HSB room 222.

Privacy: Students will be able to access their grades through WebCT, a secure network which requires a personalized log-in name and password. The sharing of information about student grades (between an instructor/TA and student) will only be conducted over e-mail with the student’s permission. Appointments with the instructor must be made for a student to view their own graded examination.

Use of Electronic Devices: No electronic devices are allowed during the writing of exams. Students may use laptops during class to take notes. The use of laptops for non-class purposes (e.g. email, MSN, Facebook, etc.), and the use of cell phones, is prohibited during class. The instructor may require that students not use their laptops during some specified classes.

Academic Offenses: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Email Policy: Students should direct all email concerning the course to their assigned TA using WebCT mail. TAs will be assigned to students on the first day of class. The TA will field questions and will forward any questions or concerns s/he cannot address to the instructor. Responses to students’ emails will be made as promptly as possible. If a student does not receive a response from the TA within 48 hours, a second email is acceptable as a polite reminder of the student’s question or concern.
Student Code of Conduct
The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf

Lecture Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Course outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 6</td>
<td><strong>Course Perspective and Conceptualizations of “health”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Social model of health</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Conceptualizations of health in Canadian policy frameworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 18</td>
<td><strong>Universal access to medical care as a determinant of health</strong></td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>The development of national health insurance in Canada</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Case study: Universal health insurance and cervical cancer mortality</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td><strong>The Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities</strong></td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Income inequalities and health</td>
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<td>Poverty and health</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td><strong>Political and Economic Barriers to Health Equity</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>The political economy of health</td>
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<td>Neoliberalism as a barrier to equity &amp; health</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td><strong>Gender and the Social Determinants of Health</strong></td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>The feminization of poverty</td>
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<td>Feminomics</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td><strong>Racism as a Determinant of Health</strong></td>
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<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>The social construction of “race”</td>
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<td>Exploring the links between racism and health</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td><strong>The Enduring Effects of Colonization on Indigenous Peoples</strong></td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>The intergenerational effects of residential schools</td>
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<td>Case study of the embodiment of inequality: Diabetes</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td><strong>Midterm and Library Instruction</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Library instruction</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td><strong>The Environment, Race, and the Social Determinants of Health</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Environmental dispossession and Aboriginal health</td>
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<td>Environmental racism and environmental justice: Hurricane Katrina</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td><strong>Global Health Inequalities</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Globalization, trade and health</td>
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<td>Social suffering and structural violence</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td><strong>Globalization and Structural Violence</strong></td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Case study: The Jamaican experience of “structural adjustment”</td>
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<td>Case study: Migrant labourers</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 27</td>
<td><strong>Health and Human Rights</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Case study: Maquiladoras, human rights and social change</td>
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<td>Human rights as a framework for health</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
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<td>Course conclusion and evaluations</td>
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**Lecture Schedule & Required Readings:**

All readings are in Coursepack unless noted with an asterisk (*). Readings with an asterisk (*) will be posted online on WebCT. Students are expected to print these readings.

### Introduction

| Class 1 Thurs Sept 6 | Course Outline |

### Week 1: Course Perspective and Conceptualizations of “health”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 2 Tues Sept 11</th>
<th>Social model of health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required readings:</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3 Thurs Sept 13</th>
<th>Conceptualizations of health in Canadian policy frameworks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required readings:</td>
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*The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.*

*Canadian Government Population Health website. Read sections under “Approach” and “Determinants”.*

### Week 2: Universal access to medical care as a determinant of health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 4 Tues Sept 18</th>
<th>The development of national health insurance in Canada</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required reading:</td>
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</table>


**Film:** Bitter Medicine: Part I, 30 minutes

| Class 5 Thurs Sept 20 | Case study: Universal health insurance and cervical cancer mortality |
Week 3: The Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities

Class 6 Tues Sept 25  Income inequalities and health
Required readings:


Film: In Sickness and In Wealth, from the series `Unnatural Causes`  

Class 7 Thurs Sept 27  Poverty and health
Required readings:


Week 4: Political and Economic Barriers to Health Equity

Class 8 Tues Oct 2  Neoliberalism as a barrier to equity & health
Required reading:
*Martinez, E. & Garcia, A. What is neoliberalism? Located on webct and online at: http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=376&printsafe=1

Film: Life Under Mike (2000)

Class 9 Thurs Oct 4  The political economy of health
Required readings:
Reynolds, Lindor (2009, December 3). Dauphin’s great experiment. Mincome, nearly forgotten child of the ‘70s, was a noble experiment. *Winnipeg Free Press*.


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**Week 5: Gender and the Social Determinants of Health**

**Class 10 Tues Oct 9**

**The feminization of poverty**

*Required reading:*

*Film: Who’s Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics, part I*
National Film Board of Canada (1995)

**Class 11 Thurs Oct 11**

**Feminomics**

*Required readings:*


*Film: Who’s Counting? Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Economics, part II*
National Film Board of Canada (1995)

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**Week 6: Racism as a Determinant of Health**

**Class 12 Tues Oct 16**

**The social construction of “race”**

*Required readings:*


*Film: Race: The Power of an Illusion, California Newsreel*
Class 13 Thurs Oct 18  
**Exploring the links between racism and health**  
*Required readings:*  


*Film: When the Bough Breaks, California Newsreel*

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**Week 7: The Enduring Effects of Colonization on Indigenous Peoples**

Class 14 Tues Oct 23  
**The intergenerational effects of residential schools (IGIRS)**  
*Required readings:*  


*Film: Kuper Island: Return to the healing circle (1997)*

Class 15 Thurs Oct 25  
**Case study of the embodiment of inequality: Diabetes**

*Film: Bad Sugar, from the series ‘Unnatural Causes’, California Newsreel*

**ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE IN CLASS (15%)**
Week 8: MIDTERM EXAM

Class 16 Tues Oct 30  **Midterm Exam (35%)** - location to be announced on WebCT and in class

Class 17 Thurs Nov 1  **Library Instruction: How to search for scholarly articles**

Week 9: The Environment, Race, and the Social Determinants of Health

Class 18 Tues Nov 6  **Environmental Dispossession and Aboriginal Health**  
**Required readings:**  

**Film:** The Beloved Community, California Newsreel

Class 19 Thurs Nov 8  **Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice: Hurricane Katrina**  
Paster, M., Bullard, R., Boyce, J., Fothergill, A., Morello-Frosch, R., and Wright, B. (2006). In the wake of the storm: Environment, disaster, and race after Katrina. In...

Week 10: Global Health Inequalities

Class 20 Tues Nov 13  **Globalization, trade and health**  
**Required readings:**  


Class 21 Thurs Nov 15  **Social suffering and structural violence**  
**Required reading:**  

Week 11: Globalization and Structural Violence

Class 22 Tues Nov 20  **Case study: The Jamaican experience of “structural adjustment”**  
**Film**: Life and Debt

**Class 23 Thurs Nov 22**  
**Case study**: Migrant labourers  
**Required reading**:  

**Film**: Becoming American, from the series `Unnatural Causes`

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**Week 12: Health and Human Rights**

**Class 24 Tues Nov 27**  
**Case study**: Maquiladoras, human rights and social change  
**Required reading**:  

**Film**: Maquilapolis, California Newsreel

**Class 25 Thurs Nov 29**  
**Human rights as a framework for health**  
**Required readings**:  

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**Week 13: Conclusion**

**Class 26 Tues Dec 4**  
**Course conclusion and evaluations**

**ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE IN CLASS (15%)**