

# The University of Western Ontario

## School of Health Studies Faculty of Health Sciences

### HS1002B: Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health Dr. Jessica Polzer

January – April 2011  
Tuesdays: 10:30am-12:30pm  
Thursdays: 11:30-12:30  
HSB 40

#### Instructor & TA Information

Instructor	Office Location	Office Hours
Dr. Jessica Polzer	HS 202	Tuesdays 1:00—3:30
Teaching Assistants	Email Address	Assigned Students
Stephanie Lagosky	slagosky@uwo.ca	Students with last names: Abdihalim - Coupland
Matthew Lucas	mlucas5@uwo.ca	Students with last names: Coutts – Insley
Sarah Woolmore-Goodwin	swoolmor@uwo.ca	Students with last names: Iqbal - Petrou
Alejandra Mendoza	amendoz4@uwo.ca	Students with last names: Petrovic - Zielinski

#### **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 term of this full-year 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:

- introduce key social determinants of health and their relevance in Canadian and global contexts;
- understand how health varies systematically among groups and in relation to social, economic and political factors;
- to understand some of the ways in which health is political - that is, how health is affected by dominant political discourses and social and economic policies;
- differentiate between personal and social determinants of health;
- 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; and
- develop skills in reading, writing, studying and critical thinking.

**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 both the instructor *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 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 before class, to attend class regularly and listen to the lectures, 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](http://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 (e.g. persistent talking during lectures or films, wearing headphones, using cell phones, facebooking, emailing, and/or surfing the Internet for non-class purposes) will be considered offensive by the Professor who 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 leave the classroom and may end class early and without finishing the lecture for the class. 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 Inprint 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:

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Course Material Included on Exam</u>
Assignment 1	10%	February 15	
Midterm Exam	30%	February 11	Classes 1-10, inclusive
Assignment 2	20%	April 4	
Final Exam	40%	TBA	Classes 1-26, inclusive

**Assignments (10%, 20%):** 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.

**Midterm Exam (30%) and Final Exam (40%):** 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.

**Policy on missed exams:** In the event that a student misses an exam for medical reasons or extenuating circumstances, appropriate supporting documentation **MUST BE** provided in writing. **Students are responsible for presenting medical documentation to an academic counsellor, NOT to the Instructor.** If the student is eligible to make up the exam, a makeup examination will be scheduled within one week of the scheduled exam.

**Course Grading and Appeals:** Average grades for all School of Health Studies courses are expected to be within the following ranges:

Year 1	68 – 72
Year 2	70 – 74
Year 3	72 – 76
Year 4	74 – 78

Faculty cannot release final grades until they have been reviewed and approved by the Director of the School of Health Studies.

**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/scholoff.pdf>. **Cheating on exams is considered a serious scholastic offence and can lead to expulsion from the University.** 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. TAs will be assigned to students on the first day of class. The TA will field questions and will forward any questions or concerns she cannot address to the Instructor. Students who wish to communicate with the TA by email should clearly indicate the course number (HS1000) in the subject line. 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.

## Lecture Schedule

Week #	Date	Topic
1	Jan 4 Jan 6	<b>Introduction</b> Course perspective What is “health”?
2	Jan 11 Jan 13	<b>Conceptualizations of “health”: Canadian Contributions</b> Health promotion & population health The social determinants of health
3	Jan 18 Jan 20	<b>Universal Access to Medical Care as a Determinant of Health</b> The development of medicare in Canada Case study: Universal health insurance and cervical cancer mortality
4	Jan 25 Jan 27	<b>Health Inequalities</b> Income inequalities & health Poverty and health
5	Feb 1 Feb 3	<b>Political and Economic Barriers to Health Equity</b> The political economy of health Neoliberalism as a barrier to equity & health
6	Feb 8 Feb 10	<b>Gender and the Social Determinants of Health</b> The feminization of poverty Feminomics
7	Feb 15 Feb 17	<b>“Race” as a Determinant of Health</b> What is “race”? Self-directed learning: Exploring the links between racism and health
8	Feb 22 Feb 24	<b>READING WEEK</b>
9	Mar 1 Mar 3	<b>Racism as a Determinant of Health</b> The history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada The history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (cont.)
10	Mar 8 Mar 10	<b>The Social Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health</b> Proximal, intermediate and distal determinants of health Case study: Violence and Aboriginal women
11	Mar 15 Mar 17	<b>Global Health Inequalities</b> Globalization, trade and health Globalization as a barrier to equity and health
12	Mar 22 Mar 24	<b>Global Health</b> Social suffering and structural violence Case study: Undocumented migrant day labourers in San Francisco
13	Mar 29 Mar 31	<b>Health and Human Rights</b> Case study: Maquiladoras, human rights and social change Human rights as a framework for health
14	Apr 5 Apr 7	<b>Environmental Justice and Course Conclusion</b> Environmental justice and human rights Exam review and conclusion

*\*The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar’s office.*

## **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.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Class 1 Tues Jan 4

#### **Course Perspective**

##### Required Readings:

Picard, A. (2004, 30 September). Bring on the duelling top-10s: Two lists not to die for. *The Globe and Mail*, A21.

Johnson, A. G. (2008). *The Forest and the Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice, and Promise*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 7-34 of 203. ISBN 1592138764

Class 2 Thurs Jan 6

#### **What is “health”?**

##### Required readings:

Aggleton, P. (1990). *Health*. London and New York: Routledge. pp. 1-24 of 176. ISBN 0415008166

Durie, M. (2004). Understanding health and illness: Research at the interface between science and indigenous knowledge. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 33(5), 1138-1143.

### **Week 2: Conceptualizations of “health”: Canadian Contributions**

Class 3 Tues Jan 11

#### **Health promotion & population health**

##### Required reading:

Rootman, I. & Raeburn, J. (2007). A new appraisal of the concept of health. In O’Neill, M., Pederson, A., Dupere, S., & Rootman, I. (Eds.) *Health Promotion in Canada: Critical Perspectives (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press Inc. pp. 19-31 of 406. ISBN 9781551303253

\*The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.

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

Class 4 Thurs Jan 13

#### **The social determinants of health**

##### Required reading:

Raphael, D. (2004). Introduction to the social determinants of health. In D. Raphael (Ed.) *The Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc. pp. 1-19 of 435. ISBN 1551302373

\*Canada's public health history. Public Health Agency of Canada website:  
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2008/cphorsphc-respcacsp/cphorsphc-respcacsp05b-eng.php>

### Week 3: Universal Access to Medical Care as a Determinant of Health

- Class 5 Tues Jan 18      **The development of medicare in Canada**  
Required reading:  
Clarke, J. (2008). *Health, Illness, and Medicine in Canada (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, pp. 267-283 of 446. ISBN 9780195428421
- Armstrong & Armstrong (1998). *Universal health care: What the United States can learn from the Canadian Experience*, New York: The New Press. pp. 6-32 of 176, ISBN 978-1565845152
- Film: Bitter Medicine: Part I, 30 minutes
- Class 6 Thurs Jan 20      **Case Study: Universal health insurance and cervical cancer mortality gradients**  
Required reading:  
Ng et al (2004). Cervical cancer mortality by neighbourhood income in urban Canada from 1971 to 1996. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 170(10), 1545-1549.

### Week 4: Health Inequalities

- Class 7 Tues Jan 25      **Income inequalities and health**  
Required reading:  
\*Unnatural causes: Is inequality making us sick? Press release from California Newsreel, 2007.
- Sapolsky, R. (2005). Sick of poverty. *Scientific American*, December, 92-99.
- \*The Whitehall II Study (2004). International Centre for Health and Society/Dept. of Epidemiology and Public Health, University College London, UK, pp. 3-7.  
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/whitehallII/findings/Whitehallbooklet.pdf>
- Film: In Sickness and In Wealth, from the series 'Unnatural Causes'

Class 8 Thurs Jan 27

**Poverty and health**

Required reading:

Bloch, G., & The Ontario Physicians Poverty Work Group. (2008). Why poverty makes us sick: Physician backgrounder. *Ontario Medical Review*, May, 32-37.

Bloch, G., & The Ontario Physicians Poverty Work Group. (2008). The many faces of poverty in Ontario. *Ontario Medical Review*, June, 31-36.

**Week 5: Political and Economic Barriers to Health Equity**

Class 9 Tues Feb 1

**The political economy of health**

Required reading:

Raphael, D. (2007). Poverty and policy in Canada: Implications for health and quality of life. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc. pp. 5-25 of 424. ISBN 9781551303239

Class 10 Thurs Feb 3

**Neoliberalism as a barrier to equity & health**

\*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)

**Week 6: Gender and the Social Determinants of Health**

Class 11 Tues Feb 8

**The feminization of poverty**

Required reading:

Reid, C. (2007). Women's health and the politics of poverty and exclusion. In Morrow, M., Hankivsky, O. & Varcoe, C. (Eds.), *Women and Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto. pp. 199-220 of 557. ISBN 9780802039392

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

Class 12 Thurs Feb 10

**Feminomics**

Required reading:

Luxton, M. (2009, 1980). More than just a labour of love: Three generations of women's work in the home. Women's Press: Toronto. Pp. 13-21 of 260. ISBN 9780889610620

Zerbisias, A. (2010). Feminomics: Calculating the value of 'women's work' .*The Globe and Mail*, October 30.

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



## MIDTERM – FRIDAY FEBRUARY 11, 6:00-8:00 PM, LOCATION TBA

### Week 7: “Race” as a Determinant of Health

Class 13 Tues Feb 15    **What is “race”?**  
*Film:* Race: The Power of an Illusion, California Newsreel

### ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE (10%)

Class 14 Thurs Feb 17    **Self-directed learning: Exploring the links between racism and health**  
Required reading:  
\*Smedley, B., Jeffries, M., Adelman, L., & Cheng, J. (2008). *Race, racial inequality and health inequities: Separating myth from fact*. Minority Fellowship Program.  
  
\*McIntosh, P. (1989). *White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack*  
Cooper, R. , Rotimi, C., & Ward, R. (1999). The puzzle of hypertension in African-Americans, *Scientific American*, February, 56-63.  
  
\*See WebCT for instructions on Self-Directed Learning Exercise

### Week 8: READING WEEK! February 21-25

### Week 9: Racism as a Determinant of Health

Class 15 Tues Mar 1    **The history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada**  
Required Reading:  
Kelm, M. (1998). Colonizing bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50. Vancouver: UBC Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3-18 of 248. ISBN 0774806788  
  
Smith, D., Varcoe, C. and Edwards, N. (2005). Turning around the intergenerational impact of residential schools on Aboriginal people: Implications for health policy and practice. *CJNR*, 37(4), 39-60.

Class 16 Thurs Mar 3    **The history of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (cont.)**  
Required Reading:  
\*Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s statement of apology. 11 June 2008  
<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/pm-statement.html>  
  
\*Indian Residential Schools. Agreement in principle: FAQs  
<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-faqs-residential-schools.html>  
  
*Film:* Kuper Island: Return to the healing circle (1997)

## Week 10: The Social Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples' Health

Class 17 Tues Mar 8

### **Proximal, intermediate and distal determinants of health**

#### Required reading:

\*Reading, C. & Wien, F. (2009). Health Inequalities and Social Determinants of Aboriginal Peoples' Health. National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. pp. 1-25.

[http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/docs/social%20determinates/NCCAH-Loppie-Wien\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/docs/social%20determinates/NCCAH-Loppie-Wien_Report.pdf)

Richmond, C. & Ross, N. (2009). The determinants of First Nation and Inuit health: A critical population health approach. *Health & Place*, 15, 403-411.

White, P. (2010). Tuberculosis stalks Nunavut, and echoes a painful past. *The Globe and Mail*, December 13.

*Film:* Bad Sugar, from the series 'Unnatural Causes'

Class 18 Thurs Mar 10

### **Case study: Violence and Aboriginal women**

#### Required reading:

Bourrassa, C., McKay-McNabb, K. & Hampton, M. (2004). Racism, sexism and colonialism: The Impact on the health of Aboriginal women in Canada. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 24(1), 23-9.

Varcoe, C. & Dick, S. (2008). The intersecting risks of violence and HIV for rural Aboriginal women in a neo-colonial Canadian context. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, January, 42-52.

\*Carter, L. (2005). Where are Canada's disappeared women? *Herizons (Fall)*, pp. 20—3, 45-6.

\*Native Women's Association of Canada (2009). Press Release: Pickton appeal disappointing for Native families. Ottawa, ON, November 27, 2009. Located on WebCT and online at:

<http://www.nwac-hq.org/en/documents/PressReleserePicktonAppealNov27-09.pdf>

## Week 11: Global Health Inequalities

Class 19 Tues Mar 15

### **Globalization, trade and health**

#### Required reading:

\*Labonte, R. (2003). Dying for trade: Why globalization can be bad for our health. Toronto, ON: The CSJ Foundation for Research and Education. ISBN 0968403255.

Marmot, M. (2005). Social determinants of health inequalities. *The Lancet*, 365, 1099-1104.

Film: Life and Debt , part I

Class 20 Thurs Mar 17 **Globalization as a barrier to equity and health**

Film: Life and Debt , part II

## Week 12: Global Health

Class 21 Tues Mar 22 **Social suffering and structural violence**

Required reading:

Farmer, P. (1997). On suffering and structural violence: A view from below. In A. Kleinman, V. Das & M. Lock (Eds.), *Social Suffering*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 261-284 of 425, ISBN 520209958

Film: Selection from Social Genocide

Class 22 Thurs Mar 24 **Case study: Undocumented migrant day labourers in San Francisco**

Required reading:

Walter, N., Bourgois, P. & Loinaz, H. (2004). Masculinity and undocumented labor migration: Injured Latino kay labourers in San Francisco. *Social Science & Medicine*, 59, 1159-1168.

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

## Week 13: Health and Human Rights

Class 23 Tues Mar 29 **Case study: Maquiladoras, human rights and social change**

Required reading:

\*Maquilapolis Discussion Guide, pp. 2-3, 6-12

\*Employment Conditions and Health Inequalities: Final Reprt to the WHO. Commission on Social Determinants of Health. September 20, 2007, pp. 48-52.

Film: Maquilapolis, California Newsreel

Class 24 Thurs Mar 31 **Human rights as a framework for health**

Required reading:

Haigh, F. (2002). Human rights approach to health. *Croatian Medical Journal*, 43(2), 166-9.

Wronka, J. (2008). Human rights and social justice: Social action and service for the helping and health professions. Thousand Oaks: Sage. pp. 16-32 of 368. ISBN 1412938732

**Week 14: Environmental Justice and Course Conclusion**

**ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE ON APRIL 4 (20%)**

Class 25 Tues April 5

**Environmental justice and human rights**

Required reading:

Lewis, H. (2009). Race, class, and Katrina: Human rights and (un)natural disaster. In F. Steady (Ed.), *Environmental Justice in the New Millennium: Global Perspectives on Race, Ethnicity, and Human Rights*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 233-251 of 283, ISBN 9780230615847

Boyden, J. (2010). Why we try to protect our land. *The Globe and Mail*, December 13.

Film: Bhopal or The Beloved Community or When the Levees Broke

Class 26 Thurs Apr 7

**Exam Review and Conclusion**

Required Reading:

Gladwell, M. (2000). *The Tipping Point: How Little Things can Make a Big Difference*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, Introduction and Chapter 1, "The three rules of epidemics". pp. 3-29 of 301. ISBN 316316964