

# 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

Instructor	Office Location	Office Hours
Dr. Jessica Polzer	HS 202	Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00—2:30pm

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 before class, to attend 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](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 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:

Evaluation	Percentage	Due Date	Course Material Included on Exam
Assignment 1	15%	October 25	
Midterm Exam	35%	October 18	Classes 1-9, inclusive
Assignment 2	15%	December 6	
Final Exam	35%	TBA	Classes 1-26, inclusive

**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](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](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**

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

### **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"**

Class 2 Tues Sept 11    **Social model of health**

Required readings:

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

Germov, J. and Hornosty, J. (2012). Imagining health problems as social issues. Chapter 1 in *Second Opinion: An Introduction to Health Sociology*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press. pp. 2-21 of 387. ISBN 9780195431988

Class 3 Thurs Sept 13    **Conceptualizations of health in Canadian policy frameworks**

Required readings:

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".

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

Class 4 Tues Sept 18    **The development of national health insurance in Canada**

Required reading:

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

Kirkey, S. (2012, 31 July). Incoming head of Canadian Medical Association sees a 'deeply demoralized' medical profession. *Postmedia News*.

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:
- 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
- McQuaig, L. & Brooks, N. (2010). Why billionaires are bad for your health. In *The Trouble with Billionaires*. Toronto: Viking Canada, ISBN 9780670064199, pp. 149-169 of 272.
- \*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>
- Simpson, J. (2011, July 20). Do we care that Canada is an unequal society? *The Globe and Mail*.
- Picard, A. (2009, November 25). Rich v. poor: The lives we can expect from our income, *The Globe and Mail*.
- Film: In Sickness and In Wealth, from the series 'Unnatural Causes'

- Class 7 Thurs Sept 27    **Poverty and health**
- Required readings:
- Sapolsky, R. (2005). Sick of poverty. *Scientific American*, December, 92-99.
- Bloch, G., & The Ontario Physicians Poverty Work Group. (2008). Why poverty makes us sick: Physician backgrounder. *Ontario Medical Review*, May, 32-37.

## **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:
- Raphael, D. (2007). Chapter 1: Poverty and the Modern Welfare State. In *Poverty in Canada, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: Implications for health and quality of life*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc. pp. 4-27 of 424. ISBN 9781551303949

Reynolds, Lindor (2009, December 3). Dauphin's great experiment. Mincome, nearly forgotten child of the '70s, was a noble experiment, *Winnipeg Free Press*.

Goar, Carol (2011, January 11). Anti-poverty success airbrushed out. *The Toronto Star*.

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

Class 10 Tues Oct 9

#### **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 11 Thurs Oct 11

#### **Feminomics**

##### Required readings:

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)

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

Class 12 Tues Oct 16

#### **The social construction of "race"**

##### Required readings:

Smedley, A. and Smedley, B. (2005). Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real: Anthropological and historical perspectives on the social construction of race. *American Psychologist*, 60(1), 16-26.

Cooper, R. , Rotimi, C., and Ward, R. (1999). The puzzle of hypertension in African-Americans, *Scientific American*, February, 56-63.

*Film:* Race: The Power of an Illusion, California Newsreel

- Class 13 Thurs Oct 18   **Exploring the links between racism and health**
- Required readings:
- \*McIntosh, P. (1988). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In: *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies*. (Working paper No. 189). Wellesley College. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf>
- \*Smedley, B., Jeffries, M., Adelman, L., & Cheng, J. (2008). *Race, racial inequality and health inequities: Separating myth from fact*. Minority Fellowship Program, The Opportunity Agenda, & California Newsreel. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.emfp.org/MainMenuCategory/Library/ResearchResourceLinks/RaceRacialInequalityandHealthInequitiespdf.aspx>
- Film: When the Bough Breaks, California Newsreel

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

- Class 14 Tues Oct 23   **The intergenerational effects of residential schools (IGIRS)**
- Required readings:
- Smylie, J. (2009). The health of Aboriginal peoples. In D. Raphael (Ed.), *Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives, Second Edition*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc. pp. 280-299 of 475. ISBN 9781551303505.
- 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.
- \*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)
- 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:

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

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:

Coburn, D. & Coburn, E. (2007). Health and health inequalities in a neo-liberal global world. In McIntyre, D. & Mooney, G. (Eds.) *The Economics of Health Equity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 13-35 of 276. ISBN 9780521705066

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

Class 21 Thurs Nov 15    **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

## **Week 11: Globalization and Structural Violence**

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

George, S. (1988). Chapter 11: The IMF solution: Interference, mismanagement and failure in Jamaica. Chapter 11 in *A Fate Worse than Debt*. London: Penguin. pp. 171-188 of 290. ISBN 014022789

Film: Life and Debt

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

Required reading:

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

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

### **Week 12: Health and Human Rights**

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

Required reading:

Williams, D. & Homedes, N. (2001). The impact of maquiladoras on health and health policy along the U.S.-Mexico border. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, 22(3), 320-337.

Film: Maquilapolis, California Newsreel

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

Required readings:

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 13: Conclusion**

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

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