

HLTHAGE 3R03: HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Ayden Scheim
Email: scheima@mcmaster.ca
Lecture: Tuesdays, 4:30-5:20
 Thursdays, 3:30-5:20

Office: KTH 233
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:00-4:00

Contents

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	3
Required Materials and Texts	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview	3
Course Evaluation – Details	4
One-question Quizzes (20%).....	4
Short essay (20%), due Oct 18.....	4
Test (30%), Nov 22.....	4
Policy brief (30%), due Dec 4	4
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings	5
Introduction.....	5
Explaining Health Inequalities.....	5
Determinants of Health Inequalities	6
Course Policies	8
Submission of Assignments.....	8
Retention of Work	8
Grades.....	9
Late Assignments	9
Absences, Missed Work, Illness	9
Avenue to Learn	9
University Policies	10
Academic Integrity Statement.....	10
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	10
Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)	10

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy 11
Course Modification 11

Course Description

Despite great advances in health and health care, large inequalities persist both within and across countries. In this course, we will begin by identifying key concepts and theoretical frameworks for understanding health inequalities. Next, we will examine health inequalities related to colonialism, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, and their intersections. We will conclude by exploring strategies to reduce health inequalities and promote health equity.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Define health inequalities and the social determinants of health
- Understand connections between social and health inequalities
- Apply and critique explanatory frameworks for health inequalities
- Identify how health inequalities manifest in Canada
- Evaluate policy responses to health inequalities

Required Materials and Texts

- Bartley M. Health Inequality: An introduction to Theories, Concepts and Methods. 2017. Second edition. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-9113-8 Polity Press, Cambridge. e-book is also available for purchase online from Wiley publishers.

Additional Readings are available through McMaster Library's e-journal access or will be posted on Avenue to Learn.

Class Format

In-class time will consist of a combination of interactive lectures, small-group activities, and group discussions. Although attendance is not mandatory, it will be necessary to do well in the course. Lecture slides will be available on the course website before class and are intended to facilitate note-taking. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about announcements and material covered in class from their classmates.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. One-question Quizzes - 20% (4% each, best 5 of 6), due in class unannounced
2. Short Essay – 20%, due Thursday October 18
3. Test – 30%, Thursday November 22
4. Policy Brief – 30%, due Tuesday December 4

Course Evaluation – Details

One-question Quizzes (20%)

Brief quizzes (multiple-choice or short answer) at the start of class, to cover high-level concepts from the week's assigned readings or the previous week's lecture. Quizzes will not be announced in advance but will only be on Thursdays.

Short essay (20%), due Oct 18

Select a health inequality of interest to you. In a brief essay (up to 2500 words), you should:

1. Describe the health inequality (i.e., the condition and how it is unequally distributed in Canadian society).
2. Choose two theoretical frameworks (covered in the section of the course on Explaining Health Inequalities) that you think best explain your health inequality.
3. Use each framework to explain the etiology of your selected health inequality.
4. Reflect on the limitations of each framework for explaining your health inequality.

Your essay should include at least 6 scholarly references, of which at least 3 must not be assigned readings in this course. You can use either American Psychological Association or Vancouver reference formatting, so long as you use one style consistently.

Test (30%), Nov 22

The test will include multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering all course material (lectures and readings) leading up to the test.

Policy brief (30%), due Dec 4

Using the same health inequality you addressed in your short essay, write a brief (no more than 1500 words) advocating for a specific policy solution to reduce or eliminate the inequality. The brief should include the following sections:

1. Executive summary
2. Introduction (to the health inequality and its consequences)
3. Policy recommendation (and intended results)
4. Strengths and limitations of the policy
5. References

Additional details and examples will be provided in class. Your policy brief should include at least 6 references. You can use either American Psychological Association or Vancouver reference formatting, so long as you use one style consistently.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Introduction

Week 1 (September 4 & 6)

Course Overview / What is a health inequality?

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 1
- Arcaya MC, Arcaya AL, Subramanian SV. Inequalities in health: definitions, concepts, and theories. *Glob Health Action* 2015, 8: 27106.

Explaining Health Inequalities

Week 2 (September 11 & 13)

Theoretical frameworks: Behavioural and Cultural

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 4
- Abel T, Frohlich BK. Capitals and capabilities: linking structure and agency to reduce health inequalities. *Soc Sci Med* 2012, 74: 236–244

Week 3 (September 18 & 20)

Theoretical frameworks: Psychosocial

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 5
- Elstad JI. The psycho-social perspective on social inequalities in health. *Sociol Health Illn* 1998, 20: 597–618.

Week 4 (September 25 & 27)

Theoretical frameworks: Materialist & Macrosocial

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 6
- Florey LS, Galea S, Wilson ML. Macrosocial determinants of population health in the context of globalization. In Galea S. (Ed.), *Macrosocial Determinants of Population Health*, 2007, p. 15–51. New York: Springer.
- Karanikolos et al. Financial crisis, austerity, and health in Europe. *Lancet* 2013, 381: 1323–1331.

Week 5 (October 2 & 4)

Theoretical frameworks: Life Course & Intersectionality

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 10
- Hatch, SL. 2005 Conceptualizing and identifying cumulative adversity and protective resources: implications for understanding health inequalities. *J Gerontol B* 2005, 60: S130–S134.

- Bowleg L. The problem with the phrase women and minorities: Intersectionality— an important theoretical framework for public health. *Am J Pub Health* 2012, 102: 1267–1273.

Week 6 (October 9 & 11)

Reading Week – NO CLASS

Determinants of Health Inequalities

Week 7 (October 16 & 18)

Global health inequalities / Indigenous health

Readings:

- Smylie J, Firestone M. The health of Indigenous Peoples. In Raphael D (Ed.), *Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*, 3rd Edition, 2016, p. 434–466. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Reading C. Structural determinants of Aboriginal Peoples' health. In de Leeuw S, Lindsay NM, Greenwood M, Reading C (Eds.), *Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health in Canada: Beyond the Social*, 2015, p. 3–15. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Anderson et al. Indigenous and tribal peoples' health (The Lancet–Lowitja Institute Global Collaboration): a population study. *Lancet* 2016, 388: 131–157.

Notes:

- October 16 Guest Lecture: Amaya Perez-Brumer
- **Short essay due October 18.**

Week 8 (October 23 & 25)

Race, ethnicity, and migration

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 9
- Williams DR, Mohammed SA. Racism and health I: pathways and scientific evidence. *Am Behav Sci* 2013, 57: 1152–1173.
- Veenstra G, Patterson AC. Black–white health inequalities in Canada. *J Immigr Minor Health* 2016, 18: 51–57.
- De Maio FG. Immigration as pathogenic: a systematic review of the health of immigrants to Canada. *Int J Equity Health* 2010, 9: 27.

Week 9 (October 30)

Socio-economic status

Readings:

- Semyonov M, Lewin-Epstein N, Maskileyson D. Where wealth matters more for health: the wealth–health gradient in 16 countries. *Soc Sci Med* 2013, 81: 10–17.

- Rajan K, Kennedy J, King L. Is wealthier always healthier in poor countries? The health implications of income, inequality, poverty, and literacy in India. *Soc Sci Med* 2013, 88: 98–107.

Note: No class Nov 1

Week 10 (November 6 & 8)

Global health inequalities / Gender

Readings:

- Textbook Chapter 8
- Bird CE, Rieker RP. Gender matters: an integrated model for understanding men's and women's health. *Soc Sci Med* 1999, 48: 745–755.
- Armstrong P. Public policy, gender, and health. In Raphael D (Ed.), *Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*, 3rd Edition, 2016, p. 544–560. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Note:

- November 6 Guest Lecture: Dr. Dan Werb
- ***On November 8th our class will be held online.** Additional details will be provided in class.

Week 11 (November 13 & 15)

Gender & sexuality

Readings:

- Meyer IH. Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychol Bull* 2003, 129: 674–697.
- Bauer et al. "I don't think this is theoretical; this is our lives": how erasure impacts health care for transgender people. *J Assoc Nurses AIDS Care* 2009, 20: 348–361.

Week 12 (November 20 & 22)

Review / Test

Readings: No readings assigned

Notes: **Test on November 22**

Week 13 (November 27 & 29)

Policy Action to Reduce Health Inequalities

Readings:

- Bleich, S.N., Jarlenski, M.P., Bell, C.N. & LaVeist, T.A. (2012). Health inequalities: Trends, progress, and policy. *Ann Rev Pub Health*, 33, 7–40.

- Lorenc T, et al. What types of interventions generate inequalities? Evidence from systematic reviews. *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2013, 67: 190–193.
- Semenza JC, Maty SC. Acting upon the macrosocial environment to improve health: a framework for intervention. In Galea S. (Ed.), *Macrosocial Determinants of Population Health*, 2007, p. 443–461. New York: Springer.

Week 14 (December 4)
Conclusion

Notes: **Policy brief due**

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Assignments are to be submitted in hard copy format at the beginning of class and posted to Avenue to Learn (in Microsoft Word format) no later than the start of class. All assignments should have a title page; each page should be numbered and have 1-inch margins. All text should be double-spaced and typed in a clear, professional font.

Proper reference formatting in either [APA](#) or [Vancouver style](#) is required. See <http://library.mcmaster.ca/guides/apa-style-guide/> or <https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/citing/vancouver/> for more information. You must cite all ideas, facts, or analyses taken (or adapted) from any source other than your own thoughts. Not citing ideas taken from other sources (including course readings) is a form of plagiarism and will be treated as such. If in doubt, cite it.

Instructions for assignments will be reviewed in class. Failure to follow these guidelines will negatively impact your grade.

Retention of Work

Please retain your notes and rough drafts of papers until the end of the course; I may ask you to submit these documents in the event that you would like to appeal a grade or a charge of plagiarism.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Deadlines are firm. Extensions for course assignments will only be granted under conditions of medical, family, or other extraordinary circumstances (see below). All other late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day (including weekends and holidays, and assignments handed in late on the due date). Late assignments will not be accepted after 7 days beyond the original deadline without appropriate documentation from the Office of the Associate Dean of Social Sciences.

Late assignments must be submitted to Danielle Schumacher (KTH/226) where they will be date/time stamped and should also be posted to Avenue to Learn. Note that the office closes at 4:30pm and the hard-copy timestamp will be used to determine late penalties.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Absences due to illness or personal emergencies should be reported using the [McMaster Student Absence Form](#) or by visiting the Office of the Associate Dean in the Social Sciences Faculty, as appropriate. Additional details are available here: <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/current-students/absence-form>.

Extensions for late papers will be given if the instructor is contacted within 2 business days. Make-up tests will not be held; written assignments will be re-weighted instead.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available

information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

If you require this course outline in an alternate/accessible format, please contact the Department of Health, Aging & Society (ext. 27227 | e-mail: hasdept@mcmaster.ca).

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.