

## HLTHAGE 3R03: HEALTH INEQUALITIES

### Winter 2021

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**Lecture:** Virtual: Thursday 2.30- 5.20pm

**Office:** Virtual

**Office Hours:** By appointment

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## **Course Description**

Despite today's level of economic development and advancement in health technology, enormous inequalities in health persist both within and between countries. This course will introduce students to the key concepts, and theories that explain health inequalities at the individual, community, national and global levels. Using common examples of the intersections in health inequalities such as gender, ethnicity or race, we will critically analyze mechanisms through which health inequalities are produced, and sustained within societies.

## **Course Objectives**

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

- Define social inequalities and health inequalities and how they relate to each other
- Identify the health inequalities that exist within the local communities, national and global contexts
- Describe and apply the common explanatory models of health inequalities to explain the existing health inequalities
- Critically reflect on the usefulness of the explanatory models of health inequalities
- Critically analyze and evaluate current policies and approaches to reducing the existing disparities in health

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Text Book: Bartley M. Health Inequality: An introduction to Theories, Concepts and Methods. 2017. Second edition. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-9113-8 Polity Press, Cambridge. (The book is available in the book store; an e-book is also available for purchase online from Wiley publishers)
- Additional readings will be available online

## **Class Format**

The learning modes will be online.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

The course will have the following components used for assessment:

1. Group assignment - 25%
2. Tests - 40%
3. Term Paper - 35%

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Assignment 1 (25%), due Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 2021**

This is a group assignment. At the beginning of the semester, students will be divided into groups. Based on the individual exercises at the end of each lecture, students will share their individual application in their group; based on which the group will develop their collective application.

To facilitate this, each group will be allocated a specific health inequality which they will work with. Each week (Week 1- Week 8), they will apply the discussed etiological pathway to their allocated health inequality, and recommend an intervention, based on the pathway; as indicated at the end of each weekly session. This will be compiled into a comprehensive report which will be submitted for grading. Group discussions will have a dedicated time slot: during the tutorials on Wednesdays; when the instructor will be available to provide groups with feedback and respond to any questions. Students will evaluate each other's participation and contribution to the group project. These evaluations will be applied to the group grade.

### **Assignment/test 2 (40 %)**

**You will complete 2 tests (@20%):** The test will cover all the material covered until the date of the test (**Test 1: Week 1- Week 4; Test 2: Week 5- Week 10**). The test will comprise of multiple choice questions and short answer questions.

### **Assignment 3 (35%), due April 19<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Final Paper**

This paper will reflect on the group work as well as material covered throughout the course. Students will reflect on the explanatory power of **the etiological pathways in relationship to the allocated health inequality and analyze the interventions that may be recommended, based on the pathway**. To achieve this,

1. Students will randomly be allocated a health inequality.
2. They will explain reasons why the allocated issue is considered an inequality by describing its distribution within the Canadian context, identifying which populations are most affected.
3. They will identify and apply any **one of the etiological pathways** (*Selection, Cultural behavioral, Psychosocial, Materialist, Macro-social*) that they think **best** explains the health inequality, to explain the health inequality within the Canadian context.
4. Students will then discuss one intervention they would recommend in dealing with the inequality, **based on the etiological pathway** they have used.
5. Students will critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the intervention they have identified, and reflect on the limitations on using a single pathway to address health inequalities.

The final paper should be 8-10 double spaced Pgs. Use at least 10 peer reviewed sources.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Jan 11th)**

Topic: Course overview and Definitions, and concepts: Social inequalities and Health inequalities at the Local, National and Global health inequalities

1. Text Book: Chapter 1 & 2
2. Arcaya MC., Arcaya AL. and Subramanian SV. Inequalities in health: definitions, concepts, and theories. *Glob Health Action* 2015, 8: 27106 –

### EXPLAINING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

### **Week 2 (Jan 18th)**

Topic: Artefact and Natural selection

Readings:

1. Text Book: Chapter 2
2. West P. (1998) Perspectives on Health Inequalities: The Need for a life-course approach Medical Research Council Social & Public Health Sciences Unit MRC Social & Public Health Sciences Unit, Occasional Paper; Pgs. 1-11

Group discussion: *How can the allocated health inequality be explained using the artefact or natural selection explanation? What interventions would you recommend based on this explanation?*

### **Week 3 (Jan 25<sup>th</sup>)**

Behavioral and cultural explanations

Readings:

1. Text Book: Chapter 4
2. Geyen, Dashiel J. Ed.D., M.P.H. (2012) "Behavioral Changes for African Americans To Improve Health, Embrace Culture, and Minimize Disparities," *ECI Interdisciplinary Journal for Legal and Social Policy*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article Available at: <http://ecipublications.org/ijlsp/vol2/iss1/2>

Group discussion: *How can the behavioral and cultural pathway explain the allocated health inequality? What interventions would you recommend based on this explanation?*

### **Week 4 (Feb 1st)**

Model II: The Psycho- social Explanations

Readings:

1. Text Book: Chapter 5
2. Elstad J. (1998). The Psycho-social Perspective on Social Inequalities in Health. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 20 (5): 598-618

Group Discussion: *How can the psycho- social model explain the allocated health inequality? What interventions would you recommend based on this explanation?*

**Week 5 (Feb 8th)**

Test 1 (Feb 11<sup>th</sup> 3.30- 5.20pm (Content: *Week 1-4*))

**Week 6 (Feb 15<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup>) – WINTER RECESS**

No Class/readings

**Week 7 (Feb 22nd)**

Topic: Model III: The materialist explanations

1. Text Book: Chapter 6
2. Blane, D.B., Bartley, M. & Davey Smith, G. (1997). Disease etiology and materialist explanations of socio-economic mortality differentials. *European Journal of Public Health*, 7,385-391.
3. West P. (1998) Perspectives on Health Inequalities: The Need for a life-course approach Medical Research Council Social & Public Health Sciences Unit MRC Social & Public Health Sciences Unit, Occasional Paper; Pgs. 12- 14

Group Discussion: *How can the materialist model explain the allocated health inequality? What interventions would you recommend based on this explanation?*

Notes:

- GROUP ASSIGNMENT DUE

**Week 8 (Feb 29th)**

Model IV: Macro- social explanations

Readings:

- Text Book: Chapter 7

Group Discussion: *How can the macro- social explanations apply to the allocated health inequality? What interventions would you recommend based on this explanation?*

**Week 9 (Mar 5th)**

Topic: Gender and Health Inequalities

Readings:

1. Text Book: Chapter 8
2. Griffith, D.M., Metz, J.M. & Gunter, K. (2011). Considering intersections of race and gender in interventions that address US men's health disparities. *Public Health*, 125(7), 417-423.

Group Discussion: *How might gender explain the distribution of the health issue you were allocated? What interventions would you recommend to address gender inequalities?*

### **Week 10 (March 12th)**

Topic: Race, Ethnicity and Health inequalities

Readings:

1. Text Book: Chapter 9
2. Gee, G.C., Waslemann, K.M. & Brondolo, E. (2012). A life course perspective on how racism may be related to health inequities. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(5), 967-974.

Group Discussion: *How might race explain the health issue you were allocated? What interventions would you recommend to address racial inequalities?*

### **Week 11 (Mar 23rd):**

**Test 2 (March 25<sup>th</sup> 3.30- 5.20pm (Content: Week 5-10))**

### **Week 12 (March 30th)**

Topic: Health Inequality in the Life Course

Readings:

1. Text Book: Chapter 10
2. Hatch, SL. 2005 Conceptualizing and Identifying Cumulative Adversity and Protective Resources: Implications for Understanding Health Inequalities. *J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 60 (Special Issue 2): S130-S134
3. West P. (1998) Perspectives on Health Inequalities: The Need for a life course approach Medical Research Council Social & Public Health Sciences Unit MRC Social & Public Health Sciences Unit, Occasional Paper; Pgs. 15-18

View:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3OBFYIXmAwQ>

Group discussion: *How does the health inequality you have been allocated affect individuals across their life course? What interventions would you recommend to address health inequalities from a life course perspective?*

### **Week 13 (April 6th)**

Topic: Semester and final paper review

View: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PH4JYf4Ns>

### **Week 14 (April 19th)**

Final paper due.



## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

All written assignments should be typed: 1.5 spacing, Font size: 12pt, have a title page with the topic that is discussed in the paper, student's name and number, and course number. Where references are used, you are required to use the citation and referencing guidelines from the American Psychological Association. These guidelines are contained in the publication, Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (the references in the course guide roughly follow APA format).

### **Citations**

I expect you to cite and properly reference any and all material taken from a secondary source. You must acknowledge every idea, fact, or analysis taken from another source and not just direct quotes. This includes ALL material that you use in your papers other than that based on your own ideas and analyses. This includes required course readings and paraphrases taken from a source. It is perfectly respectable to take an idea from another source and then develop that idea in your own way, or to use someone's method or structure and apply it to a new case so long as you indicate clearly what was derived from the original source and what is your own. Papers with poor referencing and acknowledgement or original sources will be marked down severely. Not acknowledging sources that you have used or acknowledging them only part of the time borders on plagiarism and may be treated as such. If in doubt, acknowledge the source.

### **Retention of work**

I require that students keep ALL of their rough work for their essays and be able to produce this material on 24 hours' notice. In some cases, I will ask for this material to be submitted with your assignments. This includes rough notes, early drafts, etc. This is partly a protection for you. If there is any doubt over the grade assigned on a project, or if you decide to appeal a grade or if you happen to be charged with plagiarism, this work can provide a basis for settling the issue. Without it, you may not be given the benefit of the doubt. With it, the issue is easily resolved. You should keep this material until you have been notified of your grade for the course and decided that you are not going to appeal any grades. If you are using a word-processor, keep both your rough notes and early drafts.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</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**

Assignments are to be submitted on A2L on, or before, the due date indicated. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course. All papers submitted after the due date will be assessed at a 5% per day penalty.

Weekends will be treated as one day late. Please note that extensions will be permitted only if discussed with the instructor BEFORE the due date. If you are unable to hand-in a paper because of illness, please consult with the Dean's Office.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any 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.

### **University Policies**

#### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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 behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Courses with an On-line Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Online Proctoring**

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a

positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work**

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

### **Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Copyright And Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### **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.