

School of Public Health

Syllabus and Course Information



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

PubH 6055-Section 001 Social Inequalities in Health Spring 2016

Credits:	2
Meeting Days:	Wednesdays
Meeting Time:	11:15 a.m. – 1:10 p.m.
Meeting Place:	Mayo Building D199
Instructor:	Rhonda Jones-Webb, Dr.P.H.
Office Address:	1300 South 2 nd Street, Suite 300, Room 386
Office Phone:	612-626-8866
Fax:	612-624-0315
E-mail:	jones010@umn.edu
Office Hours:	Any time before or after class and by appointment

I. Course Description

This course examines the causes of social inequalities in health and what can be done to reduce them in the U.S. We specifically examine individual, community, and policy level approaches to reducing health disparities.

II. Course Prerequisites

The course is designed primarily for graduate public health students with professional interests in interventions to reduce health disparities. Students in other related health professions (e.g., medicine, nursing) or human services professions (e.g., public affairs, social work) with an interest in health issues are also welcome. This course fulfills a “Critical Issues- Health Behavior and Policy Intervention” course requirement for Community Health Promotion majors in the School of Public Health. The course also meets the requirement for the Health Disparities Concentration in the School of Public Health.

III. Course Goals and Objectives

As a result of taking this course, students will:

1. Gain an understanding of the use of constructs such as race, ethnicity, and social class in health research in the U.S.
2. Gain an understanding of how data on race, ethnicity, and social class can be used to inform health interventions in the U.S.

3. Gain an understanding of policy, community, institutional, and individual level strategies to reduce social inequalities in health.
4. Apply concepts and tools learned to a health disparity issue.

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations

Students learn in different ways. The course therefore uses a variety of learning formats including lecture, seminar-style discussion of readings, debates, and field trips.

V. Course Text and Readings

Course readings are available on line on the course website.

VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

ASSIGNMENTS

There are five course assignments:

1. Attend all class sessions and participate in class discussions and debates.
2. Reflect on class readings. To encourage classroom discussion, students will be asked to complete written reactions to class readings and lead class discussions of readings.
3. Submit a brief description of your paper topic. Due
4. Submit a detailed outline of final paper. **Due: April 6th**.
5. Write a final paper (10-12 pages). Write a paper on a health or health care disparity and strategies to reduce the disparity. **Due: May 4th**.
6. Present findings from final paper to the class. **Due: April 20th, 27th and May 4th**

Instructions for Completing Assignments 1-5

1. *Class Participation.* Participation is based on attendance and participation in class discussions/debates. For example, each of you will be asked to lead at least one class discussion of readings. If you are unable to attend class due to medical, family or work-related issues, please contact me in advance (**15 points**).
2. *Reflections on Readings.* Much of the course will include seminar-style discussion of readings, therefore completing all the assigned readings before class is very important. To facilitate discussion, select 3 articles you have read for the week and submit an email about one-single spaced page on 1) the strengths and weakness of each study, 2) what changes you would make in the study (e.g., design, program components, measures, analysis, conclusions, and 3) the most important new things you learned. Do not outline or exhaustively summarize the readings; instead let me know what you are *thinking* and *learning* from the readings and what you agree with or disagree with and why. The first reaction piece is due Tuesday, **January 26th**. Comments must be submitted by 3:00 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to each class (otherwise it's difficult for me to read them before class). They must be emailed to jones010@umn.edu. Make sure you retain a copy, just in case your email is lost (5 points for each satisfactory e-mail submitted; a total of 6 are required (**30 points**)). See sample reflections on PH6055 course website.
3. *Detailed Outline of Paper.* Please provide a detailed 2-page outline of your paper (single-space) on **April 6th**. The outline should include the major headings for your paper and supporting evidence for each section of the paper. Your outline will allow me to provide feedback on your paper before you submit a final draft. You will receive feedback on your paper on **April 13th (5 points)**.
4. *Paper.* Imagine you are working for a member of Congress who believes our nation is not doing enough to reduce racial, ethnic, and class-based health disparities. You have been asked to write a paper for Congress outlining your vision of a multi-level and comprehensive strategy to reduce disparity. The paper should 1) provide an overview of a specific health status or health care disparity, 2) present an explanation of why the disparity exists, 3) suggest strategies at multiple levels--policy, community, organizational, and/or individual--that could be implemented to reduce the health disparity, and 4) discuss potential

challenges in implementing the strategies and how you hope to overcome them. **Please strategies at a minimum of three levels.** The strategies you propose should target those risk factors that contribute to the health disparity, i.e., why the disparity exists. Provide support for your strategy based on class readings, the extant literature, and personal experience/observation (**40 points**).

For this assignment, select a health or health care disparity that you believe merits greater national attention, e.g., limited access to health care among the poor. Next, describe in *detail* a multi-level approach to addressing your topic, i.e. discuss strategies at the policy, community, organizational, and/or individual level that should receive greater funding priority. Next, explain why you selected these strategies and if there is any evidence for their effectiveness. Also, discuss any challenges you anticipate in implementing the strategies and how you plan to overcome them.

Example: Violence affects all Americans, but particularly African American men and women. Various hypotheses have been proposed why violence rates are especially high among African American males, e.g., higher levels of unemployment, lower levels of education, high availability and promotion of alcohol in inner cities. For this example, you might propose policies that increase the minimum wage and provide tax incentives for businesses to locate in inner cities; policies that seek to change the alcohol environment, (e.g., restrict off-premise alcohol outlets in problems with high crime rates) and local media campaigns.

The paper should be 10-12 double-space typed pages. Points will be deducted for spelling errors. At the beginning of class (**February 10th**), you will be asked to submit a brief description of the topic and why you selected the topic (1 paragraph).

Presentation of Paper. Students will be asked to give a 15-minute presentation based on their papers (Assignment 4) the last three days of class. Please allow five minutes for Q&A. Your presentation should introduce your topic, describe what strategies are needed to reduce the health disparity you selected and why. You may include PowerPoint slides and/or transparencies, etc. in your presentation (**10 points**).

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

Week 1: January 20 Overview and Introduction to Course

Week 2: January 27 What is Race, Ethnicity, and Social Class and How Do We Measure Them?

Week 3: February 3 Why do Race, Ethnic, and Class-based Health Disparities Exist?

Week 4: February 10 Policy-Level Strategies to Reduce Health Disparities

Topics Due (include a few sentences describing your topic –what topic, why it is important and why you selected it

Week 5: February 17 **Field Excursion**

Representative Karen Clark
Chair, House's Public Health Finance and Housing Policy and Finance Committee
DFL District: 61A
277 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
651-296-0294

Week 6: February 24 Community Level Strategies to Reduce Health Disparities

- Week 7:** March 2 Field Excursion
Dianne Bari, Health Strategist
Northside Achievement Zone
2123 West Broadway Avenue #100
Minneapolis, MN 55411
612-521-4405
- Week 8:** March 9 Sara Axtell, Ph.D.
Department of Family and Social Science, University of Minnesota
Community Engaged Research; Telling Your Personal Story
- Week 9** **Spring Break - March 14- March 20**
- Week 10** March 23 Organizational Strategies to Reduce Health Disparities
- Week 11:** March 30 Individual Level Strategies to Reduce Health Disparities
- Week 12:** April 6 **Field Excursion**
Aqui Para Ti (Here For You)
2810 Nicollet Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-873-8145
- Detailed Outline Due**
- Week 13: April 13 Use of Interpreters in Health Clinical Practice and Health Interventions
Guest Speaker: Cesar Garcia
Community Health Outreach Coordinator
Fairview Hospital
Minneapolis, MN
- Week 14:** April 20 Student Presentations
- Week 15:** April 27 Student Presentations
- Week 16:** May 4 Student Presentations
- Final Paper Due**

VII. Evaluation and Grading

The University utilizes plus and minus grading on a 4.000 cumulative grade point scale in accordance with the following:

- A 4.000 - Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- A- 3.667
- B+ 3.333
- B 3.000 - Represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements

- B- 2.667
- C+ 2.333
- C 2.000 - Represents achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
- C- 1.667
- D+ 1.333
- D 1.000 - Represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
- S Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.

For additional information, please refer to: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html>.

Letter grades and associated points are awarded in this course as follows below and will appear on the student's official transcript. A = 93-100 points, A- = 90-92 points, B+ = 87-89 points, B = 83-86 points, B- = 80-82 points, C+ = 77-79 points, C = 73-76 points, C- = 70-72 points. F (or N) – Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credits, or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (incomplete). S – Achievement that is satisfactory will be expected on all assignments with a minimum total of 73% (an even C) to receive a passing score. I – An incomplete grade is permitted only in cases of extraordinary circumstances and following consultation with the instructor. In such cases an "I" grade will require a specific written agreement between the instructor and student specifying the time and manner in which the student will complete the course requirements. Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year.

All deadlines must be met. Any assignment turned in after the deadline will receive one grade below what it would have earned had it been submitted on time. Unusual circumstances will be considered.

Course Evaluation

The SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval: www.sph.umn.edu/courseval. The system will send email notifications to students when they can access and complete their course evaluations. Students who complete their course evaluations promptly will be able to access their final grades just as soon as the faculty member renders the grade in SPHGrades: www.sph.umn.edu/grades. All students will have access to their final grades through OneStop two weeks after the last day of the semester regardless of whether they completed their course evaluation or not. Student feedback on course content and faculty teaching skills are an important means for improving our work. Please take the time to complete a course evaluation for each of the courses for which you are registered.

Incomplete Contracts

A grade of incomplete "I" shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented illness or hospitalization, death in family, etc.), the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an "I" requires that a contract be initiated and completed by the student before the last official day of class, and signed by both the student and instructor. If an incomplete is deemed appropriate by the instructor, the student in consultation with the instructor, will specify the time and manner in which the student will complete course requirements. Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year (or earlier if designated by the student's college). For more information and to initiate an incomplete contract, students should go to SPHGrades at: www.sph.umn.edu/grades.

University of Minnesota Uniform Grading and Transcript Policy

A link to the policy can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

VIII. Other Course Information and Policies

Grade Option Change (if applicable):

For full-semester courses, students may change their grade option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester courses) can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

Course Withdrawal:

Students should refer to the Refund and Drop/Add Deadlines for the particular term at onestop.umn.edu for information and deadlines for withdrawing from a course. As a courtesy, students should notify their instructor and, if applicable, advisor of their intent to withdraw.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course after the noted final deadline for a particular term must contact the School of Public Health Office of Admissions and Student Resources at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

Student Conduct Code:

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:
http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom:

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference:
<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:
<http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html>.

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: <http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html>. If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to

your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class-e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences:

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html>.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials:

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: <http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html>.

Sexual Harassment:

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: <http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf>

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf.

Disability Accommodations:

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center Student Services is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DRC at 612-626-1333 or drc@umn.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course. For more information, please see the DS website, <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>.

Mental Health and Stress Management:

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

The Office of Student Affairs at the University of Minnesota:

The Office for Student Affairs provides services, programs, and facilities that advance student success, inspire students to make life-long positive contributions to society, promote an inclusive environment, and enrich the University of Minnesota community.

Units within the Office for Student Affairs include, the Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education, Boynton Health Service, Central Career Initiatives (CCE, CDes, CFANS), Leadership Education and Development – Undergraduate Programs (LEAD-UP), the Office for Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, the Office for Student Engagement, the Parent Program, Recreational Sports, Student and Community Relations, the Student Conflict Resolution Center, the Student Parent HELP Center, Student Unions & Activities, University Counseling & Consulting Services, and University Student Legal Service.

For more information, please see the Office of Student Affairs at <http://www.osa.umn.edu/index.html>.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility: for courses that do not involve students in research:

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, (Dr Kristin Anderson, SPH Dean of Student Affairs), or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

** Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".*

Student Academic Success Services (SASS): <http://www.sass.umn.edu>:

Students who wish to improve their academic performance may find assistance from Student Academic Support Services. While tutoring and advising are not offered, SASS provides resources such as individual consultations, workshops, and self-help materials.

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