

Soc364H1F Urban Health

University of Toronto
Fall 2013 (Sept - Dec)
Wednesday 12-2pm
Room 1016, Wilson Hall, 40 Willcocks St.
Course website: <https://portal.utoronto.ca> (login using your utoid)

Instructor: Brent Berry, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Toronto
brent.berry@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Tuesday afternoons 2:00-3:30, or by appointment
Room 366 at the Sociology Department (725 Spadina Ave)

Teaching Assistant: Aya Bar Oz, Graduate Student in Sociology, University of Toronto
Office Hours: 12-2pm in Room 225 at the Sociology Department
on the following Mondays only – Oct 14th, 21st, Nov 11th, 18th, 25th, Dec 2nd and 9th

Overview

Sociologists are interested in human differences, the sources of human differences, and how individuals, groups, and organizations respond to those differences. Health and health behaviors arise from a complex web of influences, from individual and household characteristics to institutional, organizational, and environmental contexts. An ecological approach may be fruitful for understanding patterns of health by focusing on the settings that individuals enter into, influence, and are influenced by. To set the context for the course, we will first examine patterns of health within and between nations and cities, focusing on Canada and the United States. Second, we will review historical changes in health (e.g. the epidemiological transition) and urban form (e.g. urbanization and suburbanization, the nature of community, social life in urban areas). Third, we examine why “place” is relevant to health and for whom. What are the obstacles to drawing inferences about “context”? We will cover the literature about the relevance of everyday settings (e.g. neighbourhoods, schools, households, work environments); as well as contrast the insight that different methodological strategies can give (survey research, ethnography, in-depth interviews, and historical comparative methods). Fourth, we focus on the risks and protections for special populations in urban areas, including the poor, the homeless, racial and ethnic minorities, and the young and old. How can public policy better maintain health among these groups? Fifth, we critically discuss the current capacity of medicine and public health for improving the health of urban populations. The topics covered in the course are not intended to be comprehensive. For instance, the lectures and readings focus on urban health problems in more industrialized nations, such as Canada, the U.S., and Western Europe. Nonetheless, the topics in this course are a good entry point into broader issues of urban health.

Evaluation

Final marks will be based on three grades. There is an in-class midterm test worth 32.5%, a noncumulative final exam worth 32.5%, and an independent research project worth the remaining 35%. Choice of paper topics will be discussed in class.

Prerequisites

Completion of a 200 or higher level sociology course is required to take this course. Students without prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice.

Readings and Lectures

The readings can be downloaded from the class web page. Due to copyright restrictions, you must login to access them. Most of the readings are in PDF format. The “further readings” are optional, meaning they are not required and will not be on the test. When available, lecture slides will be posted the evening before class. They are provided to benefit in-class note taking. Besides the posted lecture slides, I often incorporate a range of audiovisual material into lectures. It is important to complete all required readings and attend class because the midterm and final exam will cover both required readings and in-class material.

Email and the Course Webpage

In my courses, email and the ability to access the course webpage is important. I will use e-mail for reminders, clarifications, last-minute notifications, etc. Feel free to contact me via e-mail with questions, requests or problems that were not --or could not be-- addressed in class.

Accessibility Needs

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Make-Up Tests

Students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero unless **within three days** of the missed test he/she contacts the instructor requesting special consideration and explaining why the test was missed. The instructor or TA will communicate the time and location of the make-up test. In order to take the make-up test, students must bring **proper documentation from a physician or college registrar** to the make-up test.

- ⤴ In case of **illness**, you must supply a duly completed **Verification of Student Illness** or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted when you take the make-up test.
- ⤴ If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted when you take the make-up.

Deadlines for Submitting Projects

Papers are due on the due date listed in the syllabus. Late work will not be accepted without proper documentation from a student’s physician or college registrar (described above)

Plagiarism

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offense face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove

unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters” in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Schedule

Sept 11th – Introduction: Patterns, Definitions, and Contexts of Urban Health

Introduction and overview of the course

Sept 18th -- Patterns of Health in Urban Canada

Readings:

Trends in mortality by neighbourhood income in urban Canada from 1971 to 1996. Statistics Canada Report, Catalogue 82-003. Supplement to *Health Reports*, Vol 13, 2002

Fitzpatrick, Kevin M. and Mark LaGory. 2003. "Placing" Health in an Urban Sociology: Cities as Mosaics of Risk and Protection." *City and Community*:1-26.

Hulchanski, David J. 2007. “The Three Cities within Toronto: Income polarization among Toronto’s neighbourhoods, 1970-2000.” Centre for Urban & Community Studies Research Bulletin 41, December 2007, 12 pages.

* Also, read the Media Coverage of the “Three Cities” report posted for download with the report.

In-class film (time permitting)

The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces 1988 (55 min)

Presents an engaging and informative tour of the urban landscape, while exploring how it can be made more hospitable for those who must live in it.

Sept 25th -- Health, Urban Settings, and the Concept of Upstream and Downstream Determinants

Readings:

Kaplan, George A. 1999. "Upstream and Downstream Approaches to Inequalities in Health." Pp. 1-11 plus tables, *Karolinska Research Lecture at the Nobel Forum*.

Kaplan's Tables #1-15, Kaplan's Tables #16-30, Kaplan's Tables #31-39

October 2nd -- Health in the city in historical context

Cities have unique forms, densities, and patterns of interaction; the social and physical environments of cities have always been relevant to health, but how life in cities is relevant to health has changed over time. Changes in institutional arrangements, the flow of capital, and corporatization of public space have important influences on segregation, the currency and symbols in social environments, and patterns of interaction and influence. What consequence do these changes in urban life have for the health of urban residents?

Readings:

Wirth, L. (1938). “Urbanism as a Way of Life.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 44(9)

Fishman, Robert. "Megalopolis Unbound." reprinted from *The Wilson Quarterly* (Winter 1990) in *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of our Times*. Philip Kasinitz, ed. p395-417. New York: New York University Press, 1995.

Sorkin, Michael 1992 "Introduction" in Sorkin, Michael, ed. *Variations on a Theme Park: The New*

American City and the End of Public Space. New York: Hill and Wang.

October 9th -- The Health Climacteric: From Material Scarcity to Social Disadvantage

Readings:

"The Determinants of Health from a Historical Perspective"--by John W. Frank, Institute for Work and Health, Toronto and J. Fraser Mustard, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, Toronto, Canada. "Health and Wealth" issue of *Daedalus* Volume 123, Number 4, Fall 1994.

"The Epidemiological Transition: From Material Scarcity to Social Disadvantage?"--by Richard G. Wilkinson, University of Sussex, England. "Health and Wealth" issue of *Daedalus* Volume 123, Number 4, Fall 1994.

October 16th – Explaining Patterns of Urban Health: Concepts and Controversies

How do social environments influence health?

areas of concentrated health disadvantage exist simply as consequence of selective migration of people with problems in (and those without problems out), intergenerational transmission of disadvantage (family background), lack of social services, problems of community (lack of social capital), social supports, stress, pollution, systemic (a discriminatory society).

In this class I will discuss the ways that selectivity contributes to observed patterns of health in urban areas. Clearly some urban areas are destination of at-risk populations, but social structure constrains residential choice as well. Some places are receiving grounds of the disadvantaged and at-risk populations. Other places have buffers. After addressing selectivity, I will begin to discuss the importance of context.

Readings:

Sampson, R.J. and J.D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley. 2002. "Assessing "Neighborhood Effects": Social Processes and New Directions in Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:443-78.

Yen, I.H. and S.L. Syme. 1999. The social environment and health: A discussion of the epidemiologic literature. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 20: 287-308.

Fuchs, Victor R. "A Tale of Two States" *Sociology of Health and Illness*, pp. 50-51.

October 23rd – Midterm test in class today

October 30th -- Critical and Alternative Perspectives on Urban Health.

Readings:

McKinlay JB, Marceau LD. 2000. To boldly go ... *American Journal of Public Health*. 90 (1): 25-33.

Wakefield, S., F. Yeudall, et al. 2007. "Growing urban health: Community gardening in South-East Toronto." *Health Promotion International* 22(2): 92-101.

Klawiter, Maren. 1999. Racing for the cure, walking women, and toxic touring: mapping cultures of action within the Bay Area terrain of breast cancer. *Social Problems* 46(1):104-26.

Further readings (optional):

Hancock, Trevor. 1992. "The Development of the Healthy Cities Project in Canada" in John Ashton's (eds) *Healthy Cities*. Open University Press. pp43-48.

Special Populations and Problems in urban areas

Putting aside the debate about the sources of patterns of health disadvantage, the reality is that some urban areas contain a disproportionate share of disadvantaged people. The next few lectures focuses on the most at-risk groups of the urban landscape—the homeless, the young and old, the socially disadvantaged (the poor, residents of public housing, stigmatized minorities), and recent immigrants. We will also examine the community and service environments intended to alleviate and sometimes aggravate health problems for these populations.

November 6th -- Housing, Homelessness, and Health

Readings:

Stephen W. Hwang. 2001. Homelessness and Health. *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 164(1): 229-33

Bill O'Grady & Stephen Gaetz. 2004. Homelessness, Gender and Subsistence: The Case of Toronto Street Youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*. Vol. 7, No. 4, December 2004, pp. 397-416

Berry, Brent. 2008. "Sociology of Housing". In *Urban Canada: Sociological Perspectives*, Third Edition, edited by Harry H. Hiller. Oxford University Press.

In-class film (time permitting)

November 12th (Tuesday) – Projects are Due no later than 5pm on Tuesday, November 12th. Turn in your projects to the 300-level drop boxes in room 225 of the Sociology Department (725 Spadina Ave).

November 13th -- The Health of Urban Immigrants

Readings:

Noh, Samuel and William R. Avison. 1996. "Asian Immigrants and the Stress Process: A Study of Koreans in Canada." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 37:192-206.

Buzzelli, Michael. 2001. "From Little Britain to Little Italy: an urban ethnic landscape study in Toronto." *Journal of Historical Geography*, 27, 4, 573-587.

In-class film (time permitting)

November 20th -- Special Populations: the young and old

Readings:

Aneshensl, CS, Sucoff CA. 1996. "The neighborhood context of adolescent mental health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 37:293-310.

"The "Squash It" Campaign to Prevent Youth Violence." Harvard School of Public Health, Center For Health Communication.

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/chc/squash-it-campaign/>

November 27th -- The Urban Foodscape, Eating, and Physical Activity in the City

Readings:

- Pothukuchi and Kaufman. 1999. "Placing the food system on the urban agenda: The role of municipal institutions in food systems planning." *Agriculture and Human Values* 16(2) 213-224(12).
- French, SA, M Story, and RW Jeffery. 2001. "Environmental Influences on Eating and physical activity," *Annu. Rev. Public Health* 22:309-35
- Saelens, B.E., Sallis, J.F., Black, J., & Chen, D. (2003). "Neighborhood-based differences in physical activity: An environment scale evaluation." *American Journal of Public Health*, 93, 1552-1558.

Supplemental Reading (optional):

- Berry, Brent. 2007 "Disparities in Leisure Time Inactivity: Trends and Explanations" *Sociological Perspectives* 50(2) Summer: 166-199.

**Final Exam will take place during the exam period (Dec 9-20)
** Date, Time, and Location to be announced ****