

## Soc364H1 Urban Health

University of Toronto  
Fall 2012  
Wednesday 12-2pm  
Room 1016, Wilson Hall, 40 Willcocks St.  
Course website: <https://portal.utoronto.ca> (login using your utoid)

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### 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. I always welcome any suggestions for improving the course.

### Course Requirements and Grading

Important Note: The prerequisite to take this course is a 200+ level SOC course. Students without this prerequisite will automatically be removed from the course.

### Evaluation:

Your final mark will be based on three grades. There is an in-class midterm test worth 35%, a noncumulative final exam worth 35%, and an independent research paper worth the remaining 30%. Your choice of paper topics will be discussed in class.

### For the Record:

- Late submissions: 10% deduction per day, including part of a day.
- Students forced to miss a scheduled test due to illness or crisis must report and provide official documentation within one week of the test date, so as to be able to take a makeup test on a specified day and avoid a zero
- Plagiarism is taken seriously at University of Toronto. The university has prepared documents to make clear what differentiates acceptable from unacceptable practice. See <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>.

### Readings

The readings can be downloaded from the class web page. Due to copyright restrictions, you must login to access them. You can either read the pdf documents in Acrobat or print them out. I assume that everyone knows how to download, save, and view Adobe acrobat documents (i.e. pdf documents). If you don't, please let me know. The "further readings" are optional, meaning they are not required and will not be on the test. Tests will cover all readings and in-class material.

### Lectures and In-Class Material

When available, lecture slides will be posted the evening before class (in PDF and/or PowerPoint format). They are provided to benefit in-class note taking. If you do not have PowerPoint, you can download a free PowerPoint viewer (Google it), or you can use Open Office or Google Presentations. Besides the posted lecture slides, I often incorporate a range of audiovisual material into lectures. Tests are based on all readings and in-class material.

### E-Mail and Internet:

In my courses, e-mail and the ability to access the class 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:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Sept 12<sup>th</sup> – Introduction: Patterns, Definitions, and Contexts of Urban Health**

Introduction and overview of the course

#### **Sept 19<sup>th</sup> -- 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 26<sup>th</sup> -- 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

## **Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> -- 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.

### Further Reading (optional)

Wacquant, Loic J. D. "The Ghetto, the State and the New Capitalist Economy" reprinted in *Metropolis: Center and Symbol of our Times*. Philip Kasinitz, ed. New York: New York University Press, 1995.

Mann, P.H., *The neighborhood*, in *Neighborhood, City and Metropolis*, R. Gutman and D. Popenoe, Editors. 1970, Random House: New York. p. 568-583.

Smith, Neil. 1996. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. Routledge, New York, NY,  
Bauman, Zygmunt, *Community - seeking safety in an insecure world*, Cambridge: Polity, 2001.

### **Oct 10<sup>th</sup> -- 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.

### **Oct 17<sup>th</sup> -- TEST IN CLASS TODAY**

### **Oct 24<sup>th</sup> -- 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.

### **Oct 31<sup>st</sup> -- 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.

#### 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. (CR)
- Hancock, Trevor. 1992. "Toronto" in John Ashton's (eds) *Healthy Cities*. Open University Press. 175-185. (CR)
- 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.
- Leeuw, E. de (1993). Health policy, epidemiology and power: the interest web. *Health Promotion International*, 8(1), 49-52.

### 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.

### **Nov 7<sup>th</sup> -- 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*, Second Edition, edited by Harry H. Hiller. Oxford University Press.

*In-class film (time permitting)*

### **Nov 14<sup>th</sup> -- The Health of Urban Immigrants and their communities**

#### 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)*

### **Nov 21<sup>st</sup> -- Special Populations: the young and old**

#### Readings:

- Aneshensel, 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/>

Optional:

“[The Brains of Babes](#)”, Part 1-3, CBC Ideas Podcast (audio)

**Nov 28<sup>th</sup> -- The Urban Foodscape, Eating, and Physical Activity in the City**

**\* Projects are due today**

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 10-21<sup>st</sup>)**

**\*\* Date, Time, and Location to be announced \*\***