

**SOC364H1F-Sociology of Urban Health  
Summer 2013**

**Professor:** Marisa Young  
**Location:** 2135 Sidney Smith Hall  
**Time:** Tuesday and Thursday 12:10-2:00pm

**Office Hour:** Wednesday 1:00-2:00  
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*Prerequisite:* A 200+ level SOC course

**Important Note:** Students who do not have the prerequisite for this course may be removed from the class at anytime.

**Overview of Course**

Think about the neighbourhood and broader city in which you live. *How might this context impact your own--or perhaps your family's--mental, physical, and social well-being?* For example, does your immediate neighbourhood present signs of disorder, violence, crime, and mayhem? Or do you live in a community with a strong sense of trust and wide social support network? Do you have access to good quality grocery stores with fresh fruits and vegetables? Or convenient outdoor parks, walking paths, green spaces, and safe recreational facilities? Does your immediate neighbourhood and broader city have amenities or resources to help you cope with the stressors you face on a daily basis, like conflicting work and family demands? Does your neighbourhood affect you differently as a man, woman, immigrant, ethnic minority, low income, young, old, or middle-aged person, compared to otherwise? And if so, why? From a sociological perspective, this course explores these issues by unpacking the health consequences associated with aspects of urban (and suburban) environments. We'll begin by discussing both historical and contemporary sociological and epidemiological perspectives that address the connection between urban contexts and health. We'll also consider alternative views of urban health surrounding urbanization, violence, crime, social and psychological resources, and mental health outcomes. We'll then turn our lens to specific problems and concerns of subgroups in the urban setting, including social patterns of health among men and women, the homeless, low socioeconomic status, immigrants, ethnic minorities, and adolescent and aging populations. We'll conclude the course by discussing work and family-related issues within an urban setting more broadly, and neighbourhoods specifically. Overall, students who take this course will obtain a comprehensive sociological view of how *place* affects individuals' health and well-being through various social features of the urban/suburban landscape that influence experiences of key social identities.

**Required Readings**

I will post assigned readings on Blackboard. (You must log in to the Portal to access the materials: <https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>). It is important that students read the assigned readings before each class period. My lectures and our in-class discussions will be based on these readings. Given time restrictions, I may not cover every aspect of the readings during class periods. However, all materials referenced on the syllabus will be covered on the tests (excluding listed supplementary material). Students are encouraged to express related opinions, questions and insights about the readings in class. While time restrictions place limits on the extent and depth of these discussions, I encourage students to also use the "Discussion Board" in Blackboard to post questions or engage in dialogue about substantive, course-specific topics. I will be checking in on Blackboard to review and contribute to the discussion throughout the semester.

## Evaluation

Your final mark will be based on several grades. There is an in-class midterm test worth 35%, a noncumulative in-class final test worth 25%, two response papers each worth 5% (total 10%; details to be discussed in class), and an independent research project worth the remaining 30%. Details about the response papers and research project will be discussed during the first week of class. Tests will cover all materials from readings and lectures from the designated periods in the schedule, but are not cumulative. The format includes multiple choice, short-answer/essay questions. Tests are **time** and **writing intensive**, so please come prepared.

## Important Information

- **Attendance:** responsibility for being aware of what the professor says in lectures (including administrative announcements) rests with students. As a precaution in case they miss a lecture, students should have a “buddy” who is willing to share their lecture notes.
- **Communication:** students cannot submit their work by fax or email, or to the receptionist at the Department of Sociology. Emails should be sent to your TA, not the professor.
- **Deadlines:** Late submissions are strongly discouraged; 10% will be deducted for each business day late (note, you may be deducted marks the day the assignment is due if not turned in by the time specified in the syllabus).
- **Policy Regarding Missed Tests:** The privilege of taking make-up tests or exercises will only be granted in cases where there is legitimate, university-approved evidence of a *serious* illness or personal/family emergency. If your reasons for the absence are medical, you must submit an original University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate (completed by a Health Services physician or by your own physician). No other medical certification will be accepted. (<http://www.healthservice.utoronto.ca/pdfs/medcert.htm>). Make appropriate scheduling arrangements in advance. Notify your TA within three days of the test to schedule a makeup. I will be strict about make-up tests to ensure that the process is fair for all students. A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test. Instead, the student will receive a zero for the test grade.
- **Accessibility needs:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.
- **Plagiarism:** cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices accepted by teachers 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. A first rule of thumb: each time you use a sequence of three or more words written by someone else, use quotation marks and give the source. But more than this is involved in citing properly, so read “HOW NOT TO PLAGIARIZE” below.
- **Submitting the same work for more than one course:** Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters says it is an offence *“to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.”*
- **Grading:** See U of T guidelines: <http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/rules.htm#term>
- **E-mail etiquette and Blackboard Policy:** Email correspondence with the professor or TA must contain your full name and student ID. All use of the Blackboard, especially “Discussion Board” content, must relate specifically to the substantive content of course material. This must not be used as a forum for evaluations about the course or content that is unrelated to in-class lecture or readings. All emails and posts must be respectful in tone and content.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### PART 1. Overview: Patterns, Definitions, and Contexts of Urban Health

NOTE: Assigned readings are numbered below.

#### [WEEK 1]

##### May 14: Introduction to Sociology of Urban Health

- (1) Vlahov, David et al. 2007. "Urban as a Determinant of Health." *Journal of Urban: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 84(1):i16-i26.
- (2) WHO. 2010. *Why Urban Health Matters: World Health Day 2010*.
- \***Movie Clip:** *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* 1988 (55 min)

##### May 16: The Health Climacteric: From Material Scarcity to Social Disadvantage

- (3) Frank, John W. and Fraser Mustard. 1994. "The Determinants of Health from a Historical Perspective." *Daedalus* 123(4): 1-19.
- (4) Wilkinson, Richard G. 1994. "The Epidemiological Transition: From Material Scarcity to Social Disadvantage?" *Daedalus* 123(4): 61-77.

#### [WEEK 2]

##### May 21: Sociological and Epidemiological Explanations of Health in the Urban Context

- (5) Fitzpatrick, Kevin M. and Mark LaGory. 2003. "Placing" Health in an Urban Sociology: Cities as Mosaics of Risk and Protection." *City and Community* 2(1):33-46.
- (6) Kaplan, George A. 1999. "Upstream and Downstream Approaches to Inequalities in Health." Pp. 1-11 in *Karolinska Research Lecture at the Nobel Forum*. Also, read Kaplan's Tables #1-15, Kaplan's Tables #16-30, Kaplan's Tables #31-39

##### May 23: Alternative Perspectives and Explanations of Urban Health

- (7) Sampson, Robert 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.
- (8) McKinlay, John B. and Lisa D. Marceau. 2000. "To Boldly go..." *American Journal of Public Health* 90 (1): 25-33.
- (9) Wakefield, Sarah, et al. 2007. "Growing Urban Health: Community Gardening in South-East. Toronto." *Health Promotion International* 22(2): 92-101.

- **response paper due at the beginning of class**

#### [WEEK 3]

##### May 28: Urban Context and Mental Health

- (10) Hill, Terrence D. and David Maimon. 2013. "Neighborhood Context and Mental Health." Pp. 479-501 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, edited by C. S. Aneshensel, J. C. Phelan, and Alex Bierman. New York: Springer.
- (11) Ross, Catherine E., John Mirowsky, and Shana Pribesh. 2001. "Powerlessness and the Amplification of Threat: Neighborhood Disadvantage, Disorder, and Mistrust." *American Sociological Review* 66:568-91.

\**Supplementary*

- Ross, Catherine E. and John Mirowsky. 2009. "Neighborhood Disorder, Subjective Alienation, and Distress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 50:49-64.

May 30: **Test 1** [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials to date]

## PART 2. Special Populations and Problems in Urban Health

### [WEEK 4]

#### June 4: Housing, Homelessness, and Health

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

(13) O'Grady, Bill and Stephen Gaetz. 2004. "Homelessness, Gender and Subsistence: The Case of Toronto Street Youth." *Journal of Youth Studies* 7(4): 397-416

\***Movie Clip:** *The Street*

\**Supplementary*

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

#### June 6

**Documentary: *Sprawling From Grace: Driven to Madness (2008)*.** This documentary feature film "...is about the unintended consequences of suburban sprawl. It illustrates the importance of altering the course of how we develop our nation's cities. It communicates the dangers of continuing to invest in the inefficient horizontal growth patterns of suburban communities, and details how they threaten to bankrupt the remaining wealth of our nation. It explores how the depletion of fossil fuels will impact this living arrangement, and investigates the viability of alternative energies that are currently available. This film sounds the alarm that the cheap fossil-fuel-dependant suburban American way of life is not just at risk. It is in peril!"

### [WEEK 5]

#### June 11: The Health of Urban Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities

(14) 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.

(15) Montazer, Shirin and Blair Wheaton. 2011. "The Impact of Generation and Country of Origin on the Mental Health of Immigrant Children: New Models for Understanding Adjustment across Generations." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52: 23-42.

\***Movie Clip** (time permitting): *Jane Finch Again*. 1997.

\**Supplementary*

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.*

- **response paper due at the beginning of class**

#### June 13: Special Populations: Youth and Older Adults

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

(17) Schieman, Scott, Len Pearlin, and Stephen C. Meersman. 2006. "Neighborhood Disadvantage and Anger among Older Adults: Social Comparisons as Effect Modifiers." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47(2): 156-172.

\**Supplementary*

"The Brains of Babes", Part 1-3, CBC Ideas Podcast (audio)

### [WEEK 6]

#### June 17 Urban Context and the Work-Family Interface

(18) Swisher, Raymond, Steven Sweet, and Phyllis Moen, P. 2004. "The Family-Friendly Community and its Life Course Fit for Dual-Earner Couples." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66: 281-92.

(19) Young, Marisa and Blair Wheaton. 2012. "The Impact of Neighborhood Composition on Work-Family Conflict and Distress." Paper presented at the 106<sup>th</sup> American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada.

- **Research projects are due today**

#### June 20: Test 2 [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials from Test 1]

\*\***IMPORTANT NOTE**\*\* This is a tentative schedule. Unforeseen circumstances sometimes require flexibility in scheduling. If that occurs, we will notify students in advance and provide a revised schedule.