

## SOC494H1F: SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH (SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF HEALTH)

**Professor Scott Schieman**  
**Thursday: 10:10-12:00; SK100**  
**Office Hours: By Appointment**  
**E-mail: scott.schieman@utoronto.ca**

**Office: 725 Spadina, #266**  
**Phone: 416.946.5905**

**Prerequisite:** The prerequisites to take this course are SOC200H1 and SOC363H1. Students without these prerequisites will be removed at any time they are discovered.

### Course Objectives

*Sociology of Health* will examine the social conditions and contexts that influence health and illness. There will be an emphasis on social contexts and health disparities. Course materials will cover the conceptualization and measurement of health, the social distribution of health, and sociological approaches to understanding health-related processes and outcomes. Some of the many issues we will address include: concepts, theories, perspectives, and debates; socioeconomic status; occupation and work; gender; marriage and the family/household.

### Required Reading

The assigned readings are posted on Blackboard. (You must log in to the Portal to access the materials: <https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>) It is essential that students read the assigned readings before each class period; class discussions will be based on those readings. Given time restrictions, we may not cover every aspect of the readings during class periods. I've included additional readings that are optional (for your own interest and curiosity).

### Course Evaluation

There are five forms of evaluation in this course: (1) A take-home test is worth 35% of your final mark; (2) A research paper is worth 35% (includes presentation); (3) One in-class presentation of a journal article is worth 15%; (4) One critical reaction paper is worth 10%; and (5) class participation is worth 5%.

- The *take-home test* will involve two long essay-format questions that cover materials from the first five weeks of the course. It is due at the beginning of class on October 17<sup>th</sup> (5 marks deducted per each day late).
- The *research paper* is on a topic of your choice that is related to the sociological study of health. The final paper is due in class on November 28 (5 marks deducted per each day late). The paper must adhere to the following specifications: 15 – 17 pages, ASA format, double-spaced, Times New Roman font size 12. A one-page summary of the topic, outline, and 5 references is due on October 24 at the start of class. Students will give brief presentations of their papers in the final two classes of the term (details forthcoming).
- Each student will do one in-class *presentation* of the required journal articles (\*) listed in the schedule. These involve a summary of the main features of the article: (1) the focal research question(s) or issues; (2) the core conceptual or theoretical perspective(s); (3) a brief overview of the methodology; (4) a summary of key findings; and (5) two points of critical insight/reflection designed to engage the class in discussion. Presentations must use PowerPoint and be professional in tone and content. Evaluations will be based on the clarity and quality of your coverage of these five features, your effectiveness at presenting them, and your capacity to lead a discussion on points of interpretation or critique. Each presentation should be approximately 15-20 minutes in length. Part of your presentation should be devoted to engaging the class in points of discussion.
- The critical reaction paper summarizes the main features of the article and describes two main points of critical reflection or insight. Points of critique might include conceptual, theoretical, methodological, or interpretative issues. Length: 2 pages, double-spaced. You must select a journal article other than the one you've selected for in-class presentations.
- Participation: All students must read each of the required readings and come prepared to participate in class discussions (even if you aren't presenting). Participation mark is based on the quality and content of your in-class contributions, questions, insights, and engagement. On-time attendance for all class periods is required and part of your participation mark. I realize that unexpected emergencies occur. If you must be late or miss a class because of a *serious emergency*, please notify me in advance (if possible).

**Student Conduct/Illness:** Full attendance is required for learning the material in this course. The class meets 12 times. Each class is an hour and fifty minutes. By remaining in the course, you are signaling your commitment to

attend class (on time) and satisfy all requirements. I realize that many students work or have other obligations. If you have a scheduling conflict, I encourage you to consider other course options to avoid such conflicts. *Note:* If you have paid employment, you must make the necessary job-related scheduling arrangements to meet this course's requirements. Excessive lateness and other problematic behaviours will not be tolerated and will result in mark penalties (5 marks of your final mark per incident) or punitive action at the discretion of the instructor. For illnesses, three types of documentation are considered "official": a Verification of Student Illness or Injury form, a college registrar's letter, and a letter from Accessibility Services. Excuses like "workloads, stress, work," and so on are not acceptable.

**Accessibility:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, Accessibility Services is your home base for support. It is important to contact the office as soon as you are accepted to U of T so that accommodations for your needs are in place before classes start. All information about your disability is confidential and won't be shared with units outside of Accessibility Services without your consent. [www.accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca). 416-978-8060.

<b>CLASS SCHEDULE</b>
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\* Denotes eligible articles for in-class presentations and critical reaction papers

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
[WEEK 1] September 13	Introductions

[WEEK 2] September 19 Social Contexts and Health: The Stress Process

**Required Readings:**

(1) Pearlin, Leonard I. 1989. "The Sociological Study of Stress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30:241-256.

(2) Pearlin, Leonard I. 1983. "Role Strains and Personal Stress." *Psychosocial Stress*. Pp. 3-31. Academic Press.

**Additional (suggested but not required) Readings:**

- Aneshensel, Carol S. 2009. "Toward Explaining Mental Health Disparities." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 50(4):377-394.
- Pearlin, Leonard I., Scott Schieman, Elena M. Fazio and Stephen C. Meersman. 2005. "Stress, Health, and the Life Course: Some Conceptual Perspectives." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:205-219.

[WEEK 3] September 26 Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities

**Required Readings:**

(3) Phelan, Jo C, Bruce G. Link, and Parisa Tehranifar. 2010. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities: Theory, Evidence, and Policy." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 28-40.

\*(4) Lutfey, Karen and Jeremy Freese. 2005. "Toward Some Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality: Socioeconomic Status and Health in the Routine Clinic Visit." *American Journal of Sociology* 110:1326-1372.

**Additional Readings:**

- Phelan, J. C., Link, B. G., Diez-Roux, A., Kawachi, I., & Levin, B. 2004. "'Fundamental causes' of social inequalities in mortality: A test of the theory." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45:265-285.
- Link, Bruce G., and Jo Phelan. 1995. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35:80-94.

[WEEK 4] October 3 SES and Health I

**Required Readings:**

\*(5) Reynolds, John R. and Catherine E. Ross. 1998. "Social Stratification and Health: Education's Benefit beyond Economic Status and Social Origins." *Social Problems* 45:221-247.

\*(6) Ross, Catherine E. and John Mirowsky. 1995. "Does Employment Affect Health?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 36(3):230-243.

### **Additional Readings:**

- Seeman, Teresa, Elissa Epel, Tara Gruenewald, Arun Karlamangla, and Bruce S. McEwen. 2010. "Socio-Economic Differentials in Peripheral Biology: Cumulative Allostatic Load." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1186:223-239.
- Ross, Catherine E. and John Mirowsky. 1999. "Refining the Association between Education and Health: The Effects of Quantity, Credential, and Selectivity." *Demography* 36(4):445-460.

### **[WEEK 5] October 10 SES and Health II**

#### **Required Readings:**

\*(7) Link, Bruce, Richard M. Carpiano, and Margaret M. Weden. 2013. "Can Honorific Awards Give Us Clues about the Connection between Socioeconomic Status and Mortality?" *American Sociological Review* 78:192-212.

\*(8) Sellers & Neighbors. 2008. "Effects of Goal-Striving Stress on the Mental Health of Black Americans." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 49:92-103.

#### **Additional Readings:**

- Schnittker, Jason. 2004. "Education and the Changing Shape of the Income Gradient in Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45:286-305.
- Marmot, M. G. et al. 1991. "Health Inequalities among British Civil Servants: The Whitehall II Study." *The Lancet* 337:1387-1393.

### **[WEEK 6] October 17 Occupation/Work and Health I**

\*\*\*Take home test due\*\*\*

#### **Required Readings:**

\*(9) Moen, P., Kelly, E. L., & Lam, J. (2013). Healthy work revisited: Do changes in time strain predict well-being? *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 18(2), 157-172.

\*(10) Mirowsky, John and Catherine E. Ross. 2007. "Creative Work and Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 48:385-403.

#### **Additional Readings:**

- Haas, Steven A. 2006. "Health Selection and the Process of Social Stratification: The Effect of Childhood Health on Socioeconomic Attainment." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47:339-354.
- Link, Bruce G., Bruce P. Dohrenwend, and Andrew E. Skodol. 1986. "Socio-Economic Status and Schizophrenia: Noisome Occupational Characteristics as a Risk Factor." *American Sociological Review* 51:242-258.

### **[WEEK 7] October 24 Occupation/Work and Health II**

\*\*\* NOTE: One-page summary and outline of research paper due\*\*\*

#### **Required Readings:**

\*(11) Pudrovska, Tetyana, Deborah Carr, Michael McFarland, and Caitlyn Collins. 2013. "Higher-Status Occupations and Breast Cancer: A Life-Course Stress Approach." *Social Science & Medicine* 89:53-61.

\*(12) Schieman, Scott and Sarah Reid. 2009. "Job Authority and Health: Unraveling the Competing Suppression and Explanatory Influences." *Social Science and Medicine. Social Science and Medicine* 69:1616-1624.

#### **Additional Readings:**

- Inoue, Akiomi, Norito Kawakami, The Japan Work Stress and Health Cohort Study Group. 2010. "Interpersonal Conflict and Depression among Japanese Workers with High or Low Socioeconomic Status: Findings from the Japan Work Stress and Health Cohort Study." *Social Science & Medicine* 71:173-180.
- Schieman, Scott, Yuko Kurashina Whitestone, and Karen Van Gundy. 2006. "The Nature of Work and the Stress of Higher Status." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47(3):242-257.

### **[WEEK 8] October 31 Gender and Health**

#### **Required Readings:**

\* (13) Rosenfield, Sarah. 1980. "Sex Differences in Depression: Do Women Always Have Higher Rates?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 21(1):33-42.

\* (14) Ross, Catherine E. and Chloe E. Bird. 1994. "Sex Stratification and Health Lifestyle: Consequences for Men's and Women's Perceived Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35(2):161-178.

**Additional Readings:**

- Bird, Chloe E., and Patricia P. Rieker. 1999. "Gender Matters: An Integrated Model for Understanding Men's and Women's Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 48:745-755.
- McDonough, Peggy, David R. Williams, James S. House and Greg J. Duncan. 1999. "Gender and the Socioeconomic Gradient in Mortality." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40:17-31.

**[WEEK 9] November 7 Marriage, Family and Health I**

**Required Readings:**

\* (15) Williams, Kristi and Debra Umberson. 2004. "Marital Status, Marital Transitions, and Health: A Gendered Life Course Perspective." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45(1):81-98.

\* (16) Umberson, Debra, Kristi Williams, Daniel A. Powers, Hui Liu and Belinda Needham. 2006. "You Make Me Sick: Marital Quality and Health over the Life Course." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47(1):1-16.

**Additional Readings:**

- Liu, Hui and Debra J. Umberson. 2008. "The Times They Are a Changin': Marital Status and Health Differentials from 1972 to 2003." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 49(3):239-253.

**[WEEK 10] November 14 Marriage, Family, and Health II**

**Required Readings:**

\* (17) Bird, Chloe E. 1999. "Gender, Household Labor, and Psychological Distress: The Impact of the Amount and Division of Housework." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 40:32-45.

\* (18) Ross, Catherine and Marieke Van Willigen. 1996. "Gender, Parenthood and Anger." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58:572-584.

**Additional Readings:**

- Aneshensel, Carol S. Ralph R. Frerichs and Virginia A. Clark. 1981. "Family Roles and Sex Differences in Depression." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 22(4):379-393.
- Glass, Jennifer and Tetsushi Fujimoto. 1994. "Housework, Paid Work, and Depression Among Husbands and Wives." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35:179-191.

**[WEEK 11] November 21 Research Paper Presentations**

**[WEEK 12] November 28 Research Paper Presentations**