

SYO 4404 Health & Social Inequality
(3 credit hours, no prerequisites)
Meets: Wednesdays, 4:20-7pm, ES120

Spring 2012

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Course overview

This course examines how individuals embody their social position, an embodiment that leads to divergent patterns in health outcome. Using a tool kit approach, this course offers a sociological understanding of why some people live longer than others and why their quality of life may be better than others. Some of the tools or applications to understand health inequalities consist of socio-economic status (education, income and occupational prestige), race and ethnicity (including stress due to a lifetime of institutional racism), and gender (the social construction of one's biological sex). Though we will cover the biomedical and lifestyle explanations for health outcome, we devote most of the semester to discussing the social production and/or political economy of health and illness. In addition, we will examine the unequal distribution of health care services in the U.S. and current debates on health care policies as well as explore how social support networks and social capital (community trust and participation for example) may buffer the negative health impacts of a subordinate social position. The latter half of the semester addresses how individuals beyond the U.S. embody their nation's economic and geopolitical position, leading to inferior health and a shortened life relative to others. Within a global context, we will discuss medical ethics in research and drug testing and how immigrant status and/or the experience of civil strife impair one's mental health. Finally, this course will address how exposure to environmental toxins occurs in one's residence, workplace and place of play due to a community's socio-demographics and global position – and how communities are mobilizing to prevent such exposure. Overall, we will cover a range of social inequalities that impair an individual's, a household's or a community's health as well as explore possible solutions.

Course objectives

- To think critically about competing explanations for health differences, including genetic and biomedical justifications, lifestyle or behavioral accounts, medical access explanations, and social determinants as basis for health inequalities.
- To apply key sociological concepts to better understanding health and illness patterns and how they are experienced nationally and globally.
- To apply key sociological perspectives on health inequality in the construction of a creative or research-driven inquiry.
- To use sociology to better understand issues of health and health disparity that is important to you.

Assignments

Exam I: This is an in-class essay exam. To prepare, sample questions will be distributed one week prior to the exam. Please bring blue books for the exam. This exam is worth 30% of your grade.

Study advice: Do the readings, come to class (every class for the entire semester), take detailed notes in class, if you are confused ask questions (in class, by email and/or during my office hours), return to the readings (perhaps reread the readings), and prepare a detailed study guide.

Exam II: This is an in-class essay exam. To prepare, sample questions will be distributed one week prior to the exam. Please bring blue books for the exam. This exam is worth 30% of your grade.

One short paper: This is a 5-6 page paper assignment (excluding title page, excluding selected passages from the assigned reading and excluding a reference page if you include one). It is to be double-spaced, 12pt font, Times New Roman with one-inch margins, page numbers included. This assignment is designed to enable you to demonstrate your critical reading and critical thinking skills. It is based on the assigned readings, not lecture notes, though lecture will facilitate your understanding of the readings. You must cite the readings and include page numbers. There are three components to this paper:

- (1) Select two significant passages from the assigned readings;
- (2) Interpret their meaning in your own words; and
- (3) Apply your understanding of the author's key concepts and/or arguments as identified in the selected passages to better understanding a newspaper's account of a health-related issue that was published in 2011 (attach clip or online printout).

You cannot use the articles that I provide in class or that I list on this syllabus. This paper is worth 30% of your grade. A printed copy must be turned in and it must be sent through SafeAssign by the beginning of class.

DUE DATE: For this paper assignment, you have two options. You could either write a paper on the first half of the readings (Wermuth or Angel et al), which would be due on Feb 22 – OR – you could write a paper based on the last half of the semester (Reid's work) which would be due on April 11.

Consider using LexisNexis Academic to select your newspaper article. LexisNexis is found on the FAU online library: 1) go to e-databases, 2) locate LexisNexis, 3) select major newspapers, and 4) determine your search words.

BASED ON THE ASSIGNED READINGS: Your paper is based on the assigned readings, not lecture notes. Therefore, you must cite the readings, including page numbers, and use your critical analysis of the readings to build your argument. If you use

quotes, you must include author name and page numbers. If you do not reference and cite the readings, you will forfeit an “A” grade. Again, you must read the assigned readings and use them to build an argument and to demonstrate a richer understanding of a news account.

*Note: This is a paper so it must have an introduction, a summary of the case or news article that you are analyzing, and a conclusion. The body or text will be the passages and your assessment and application of them to the news report. The paper should also reflect an even balance between presenting the concepts expressed by the assigned authors and applying them to a news account. See the detailed writing guidelines for greater clarification.

One mini-project: This project is worth 10% of your final grade. This project is a creative reflection and/or research-driven inquiry based on a selected passage from the assigned readings.

- If you choose to write the 5-6 page paper on the first half of the semester (Wermuth and Angel et al’s readings), then your project would be based on a passage from the second half of the readings, (Wermuth or Reid’s work), and it would be due April 11.
- If you choose to write the 5-6 page paper on the second half of the readings (Wermuth or Reid), then your project would be based on a passage from the readings of Wermuth or Angel et al’s work, and it would be due Feb 22.

For this mini-project, provide the selected passage that has inspired your creative or research project, and then express your sociological awareness, reflection or understanding of the selected passage into a creative or research-driven inquiry.

For a creative project, consider:

- a photo essay (3-4 photos with detailed captions),
- a poem (3 pages),
- a song (2-3 pages & provide a recording and written lyrics),
- a piece of art, a painting, a sketch, a sculpture or graphics (provide detailed interpretation),
- film/video (three minutes & provide a transcript),
- simulated news broadcast (three minutes & provide a transcript),
- a comic strip (provide a detailed interpretation),
- a picture book, calendar or poster,
- an essay, short story or novella,
- an educational power point presentation,
- or any other creative expression.

For a research-driven project, consider:

- an open-ended qualitative interview with someone (record the interview and provide a transcript of your interview). For example, ask someone: How would you assess your health and/or the health of your family? Who is or has been sick? Who is healthy? What has been your experience with the health care profession?

How have you managed sickness in your family? Perhaps ask about their level of stress, or their health care routine. Report your assessment (2-3 pages).

- an ethnographic observation: For example, observe someone in the health care profession, observe what people consume or what they buy at the grocery store (who are they, who is with them, what are they buying), or observe something else that is health-related, and report your assessment (2-3 pages).
- a media analysis of a recent news event reported in a newspaper (2-3 pages & provide the news article) [This is very much like the assigned paper, but much shorter.]
- a five question survey that you administer to 4-5 people. Report your findings in a 2-3 page report & provide the survey.

The project is to be an expression of how the selected passage inspired you to think about and/or to pursue a richer understanding of health inequality through a research or creative project. The link between the passage and the project must be clear. This project is worth 10% of your grade. It must be turned in and the word document portion must be sent through SafeAssign by the beginning of class.

Optional extra credit: 6-point extra-credit (possible 0-6pts) to be added to the exam, paper or project of your choice. It is a three-part effort:

- 1) Turn in one research question based on the readings (what question has the assigned readings inspired you to ask, but failed to answer, and that you think is possible for a sociologist to explore) (due Feb 15);
- 2) Based on my feedback, reconsider the question, rewrite it, and pose one more research question for a total of two (due March 14)
- 3) Based on my feedback, reconsider your two questions, rewrite them, and pose one more research question for a total of three (due April 18)

<u>Final grade assessment</u>	<u>Percent worth</u>	<u>Due date</u>
Wermuth or Angel Paper or Project*	30% or 10%	Feb 22
Exam I	30%	Feb 29
Wermuth or Reid Paper or Project*	30% or 10%	April 11
Exam II	30%	May 2

*If you choose the Wermuth or Angel paper based on the first half of the semester, then you must do the Wermuth or Reid project based on the second half of the semester. If you chose the Wermuth or Angel project based on the first half of the semester, then you must do the Wermuth or Reid paper based on the second half of the semester.

Policy on late assignments and make-up exams

- Each day that the paper and/or project is late, 10% will be deducted from the grade.
- Make-up exams may be possible, but must be approved by the professor. Make-up exams will not be an exact duplicate of the in-class exam. If approved, make-up exams will be taken at the Testing & Evaluation Center.

Grading Scale

93-100	A	77-79	C+	60-62	D-
90-92	A-	73-76	C	0-59	F
87-89	B+	70-72	C-		
83-86	B	67-69	D+		
80-82	B-	63-66	D		

Code of Academic Integrity

The honor code states: “Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility.” Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating and plagiarism. For more information, see http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/4.001_Code_of_Academic_Integrity.pdf

Classroom Etiquette, Participation & Attendance

- In-class behavior should be suitable to a group and university setting: turn off your cell phones, be courteous when someone is speaking, be courteous if you arrive late to class.
- Time for comments and questions will be designated each class period, and during those times in-class discussions should be in a manner that is inclusive and respectful of the opinions, insights and contributions of others.
- Attendance is likely to improve your understanding and test scores.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require special accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and follow all OSD procedures. OSD is located in Davie on the 2nd floor of the LA building.

Broward Counseling Center

Psychological counseling services are provided at no charge for students attending the Broward campuses. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 954-236-1210. The office is located in the Student Union Suite 206, on the Davie campus.
<http://www.fau.edu/student/broward/counselingbroward/>

Required texts

- Angel, Ronald J., Laura Lein, and Jane Henrici. 2006. *Poor Families in America's Health Care Crisis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Reid, T. R. 2009. *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care*. NY: The Penguin Press.
- Wermuth, Laurie. 2003. *Global inequality and human needs: Health and illness in an increasingly unequal world*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Recommended readings

You are not required to read the recommended books or news thoughts provided under the weekly assignments. However if you have a special interest in that particular week's reading, you may also be interested in the suggested books.

Overview

Week 1: January 11

- *Handout*: Krieger, Nancy. 1999. "Embodying inequality: A review of concepts, measures and methods for studying health consequences of discrimination." *International Journal of Health Services* 29(2): 295-352. Table 1, pp: 298-99 and Figure 1, p.308.
- *Handout*: Zierler, Sally & N. Krieger. 1997. "Social inequalities and HIV." *Annual Review of Public Health* 18: 401-36. Table 2 and table 3 only.

Health Perspectives

Week 2: January 18

- Wermuth: Chs. 1 & 2

SES

Week 3: January 25

- *Blackboard*: Auerbach, James A. and Barbara Kisvimaie Krimgold. 2001 (out of print). *Income, Socioeconomic Status and Health: Exploring the Relationships*. Washington DC: National Policy Association.: Introduction (editors), Ch. 2 (Kawachi and Kennedy), Ch. 3 (Wilkinson), and Ch. 5 (Adler).
- Goode, Erica. 1999. "For good health, it helps to be rich and important." *New York Times*. June 1, 1999. *LexisNexis Academic, e-database at FAU library*:

Race & Gender

Week 4: February 1

- Wermuth: Ch. 6
- Murray, C. J. L., et al. 2006. "Eight Americas: Investigating Mortality Disparities across Races, Counties, and Race-Counties in the United States." *PloS Medicine* 3(9):1513-1524. **ONLY read: Abstract, Introduction, Table 1, Figure 2, and Discussion.** [Caution: This is a very challenging reading.] *Online through www.plosmedicine.org*

Recommended: Jones, James, H. 1993. *Bad blood: The Tuskegee syphilis experiment*. The Free Press.

Health Care Crisis & The Poor

Week 5: February 8

- Angel, Lein & Henrici: Preface, Chs. 1-2

Recommended: Abraham, Laurie Kaye. 1993. *Mama might be better off dead: The failure of health care in urban American.* University of Chicago Press.

Week 6: February 15

- Angel, Lein & Henrici: Ch. 3 (all), Ch. 5 (p. 113-128), Ch. 7 (p. 158-175)
- Optional extra-credit research question due today.

Health Care Options

Week 7: February 22

- Reid: Prologue, Chs. 1-3
- ****Exam I study guide posted on Blackboard.****

EXAM I

Week 8: February 29

- ***In-class Exam I***

****Week 9: March 7, SPRING BREAK March 5-9****

Health Care Options

Week 10: March 14

- Reid: Chs. 4, 7, 8

Week 11: March 21 – NO CLASS THIS EVENING: Work on your research projects & begin next week’s readings.

Health Care Myths, Morality & Medical Ethics

Week 12: March 28

- Reid: Chs. 11-13 & Appendix
- ****Updated reports on changes in health care policy in 2011 will be available on Blackboard.****
- *Online:* The Nuremberg Code: <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/nuremberg.html> provided by the Office of Human Subject Research, based on *Trials on War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10.* Vol. 11. Nuremberg, October 1946-April 1949.
- ****Research projects are due today.****

Recommended: Kahn, Jennifer. 2006. “India: A Nation of Guinea Pigs.” *Wired* Issue 14.03, March 2006 (www.wired.com). Also published 28 February 2006 on People’s Health Movement (www.phmovement.org)

GLOBAL HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Week 13: April 4

- Wermuth: Chs. 3, 5, & 8
- Reid: Appendix

Week 14: April 11

- Wermuth: Ch. 9 & 10
- *Blackboard and e-journal at FAU library*: Booker, Salih and William Minter. 2001. "Global Apartheid" *The Nation*, p. 11-17, July 9, 2001.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: Unhealthy communities

Week 15: April 18

- The Principles of Environmental Justice. 1991. [Available at: <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>]
- Bullard, R. D., P. Mohai, R. Saha and B. Wright. 2007. *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007*. Introduction (pp: 1-6, or in pdf pp: 17-22); Ch 1 "EJ in the 21st Century" (pp: 7-15, or in pdf pp: 23-31); Ch 6 "Wrong complexion for protection" (pp: 124-133, or in pdf pp: 140-149). [Available at <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/twart.pdf>] **This is a 176-page document. You are required to read the chapters noted above, however, please feel free to read as much of this important work as you would like.
- "Why was Carlitos born this way?" *Palm Beach Post*, March 13, 2005, by John Lantigua, see <http://www.palmbeachpost.com>
- "Abundance of poisons, shortage of monitoring." *Palm Beach Post*, May 1, 2005, editorial, see <http://www.palmbeachpost.com>

Week 16: April 25

- Environmental health discussion and review
- **Exam II study guide posted on Blackboard.**

EXAM II

Week 17: May 2

- Grades are due Monday, May 7, 9am