

Physical Health Disparities
Sociology 454/854- Spring 2014
Meeting Time: T, Th- 12:30-1:45
Room: 105 CBA

Instructor: Dr. Trish Wonch Hill
Office: 115 Benton Hall
Office Hours: Friday, 9:30-10:30am, Wednesday, 12-1, or by appt.
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Course Content: The NIH government report Healthy People 2020 outlined the goal of reducing and hopefully eradicating health disparities. Racial disparities in health, however, remain pervasive and persistent. A multilevel, macro to microsocial approach to examining health disparities is required in order to address such differences in health outcomes, taking into account the social determinants of health. In this course you will learn about the following- 1) The current state of physical health disparities in the U.S., 2) Macro level health disparities focusing on structural inequality in health care, 3) Microlevel effects including how stress gets under the skin to make people sick and, (4) the degree to which individual physiological processes are driven by the microsocial and macrosocial inequalities. The course is divided into three sections (1) core medical sociological theories regarding population differences in health, (2) in-depth examples of how the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality shape variations in infectious and chronic health outcomes (3) the biology of stress processes and the impact on health outcomes.

Required Books (Undergraduate and Graduate Students):

LaVeist, T.A. and L.A. Isaac (2013). *Race, Ethnicity, and Health: A Public Health Reader. Second Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*
Marmot (2007). *The Status Syndrome: How your social standing directly affects your health and life expectancy. Henry Holt & Co.*
Sapolsky, R.M. (2004). *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: An Updated Guide to Stress and Stress-Related Diseases, and Coping. Third Edition New York: W.H. Freeman & Co.*

Additional Core Readings and Graduate Readings Posted on Blackboard

Class Requirements: This class is organized in a seminar format. Students are required to attend each class and actively participate in class discussions. This is a small class and all students are required to participate in discussion in every class. Students are also expect to have read ALL of the readings thoroughly and be prepared to discuss them in detail during each class session. Having all of the readings completed will make the class easier and more enjoyable!

Absences/Late Assignments

If you have to miss class, let me know ahead of time if possible. The first thing you should do if you miss a class is check blackboard for lectures, updates and assignments. If you have questions, find a friend or email classmates about what was covered. Late assignments will be deducted 20% of the total grade for every 24 hour period it is late, including weekends.

Instructor Availability

You are welcome to visit me for any questions, concerns about the class, or just to talk about your interest in Sociology. Outside of office hours, you may contact me via e-mail to communicate with me or to schedule an appointment. I will respond to e-mails within 24 hours during the week, but often, I am able to respond almost immediately during the day time (8am-5pm). It is fine to send me a reminder after 24 hours if you have not received a response.

Blackboard

In addition to class and office hours, I will use blackboard to post articles, review assignments, and to post important course information and updates. If you have any limitations for using Blackboard, notify me immediately, as computer access is a fundamental requirement of this section.

Communication

Err on the side of communicating questions, concerns, life events, etc., to me as soon as possible. Email is preferable. If you will miss class, notify me as soon as you know. If you have an issue with a due date or assignment, email me prior to the deadline.

Undergraduate Student Course Requirements

Participation/attendance	10%
Weekly Summaries	25%
Class Discussant	15%
Research Paper Proposal	10%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Final Research Paper	25%

Graduate Student Course Requirements

Participation/attendance	10%
Weekly Summaries	25%
Class Discussant I – Core Readings	15%
Class Discussant II – Graduate Supplemental Readings	15%
Final Paper Presentation	10%
Final Paper	25%

Descriptions of the tasks are required for successfully completing this course below:

Weekly Summaries: Students are expected to upload a 1 page summary of readings by 9pm the day before the readings are due. This summary is meant to demonstrate that you have read and thought carefully about each reading. Your summary should include two questions to generate discussion in class and/or in your discussant role. Summaries should be typed in 12 point font, be double spaced, and must include your name and the name of the assigned reading at the top. Summaries **must** be turned in by the class period they are due. Students may opt out of up to 5 summaries over the course of the semester.

Participation: As previously mentioned, students are required to participate in class discussions. Lack of class participation will impact your participation grade. Note that missing more than **two** classes will affect your participation grade.

Class Discussant: Undergraduate and graduate students are required to lead at least two class discussions over the course of the semester based on the core readings. Class discussion leaders are required to come prepared to summarize the assigned readings that day and ask classmates questions to generate discussion. Discussion leaders may also discuss the larger context around this topic as well as relevant debates and trends with the class. Discussion leaders are also required to prepare discussion questions.

Undergraduates:

Annotated Bibliography and Research Proposal: You will be required to develop a research topic (directly related to the topics covered in class) and assemble an annotated bibliography based on that question. Additional details will be posted on Blackboard. In addition, you will be required to develop a research

proposal based on the bibliography (details to be posted on Blackboard). A brief proposal will be due (1/2 page) for approval indicating your research question and two possible journal articles you will use. Brief proposals are due **February 26**. The brief proposal must be typed and late proposals will lose 20% per day. Annotated bibliographies are due **March 19**, and full research papers are due **May 1**, the last day of classes/dead week.

Paper Presentation: Each student will present findings from their research papers by giving a brief presentation 10-12 minutes that summarizes the literature researched.

Graduate Students:

Class Discussant I – Core Readings : Graduate students are required to lead at least two class discussions over the course of the semester. Class discussion leaders are required to come prepared to summarize the assigned readings that day and ask classmates questions to generate discussion. Discussion leaders may also discuss the larger context around this topic as well as relevant debates and trends with the class. Discussion leaders are also required to prepare discussion questions. In reading the assigned articles, you should be able to describe the content of each piece as well as discuss the scientific and theoretical motivations of the study, the strengths and weakness of the study, the adequacy of the methodology implemented, and the scientific implications when relevant.

Class Discussant II (Graduate Supplemental Readings): Graduate students may choose several supplemental readings from a reading list posted on Blackboard (2-3 articles) or other relevant article of interest to you. From those readings, you are expected to develop one class discussion addressing relevance of the studies for the current health debate, how they fit into the broader health disparities literature, and how the readings contribute to the focus of this class. Discussions will be scheduled for late March/early April (date to be determined).

Research Paper: You will be expected to write a research paper on a topic relevant to this class. You will be required to write a one-page proposal due by **February 25** proposing your research question(s) for approval. The proposal should include at least three key peer reviewed journal article references. Details of your research paper assignment will be posted on Blackboard. The final term paper will be due on **May 1**, the last day of classes/dead week.

Final Paper Presentation: In addition to leading class discussion, mentioned above, graduate students are also required to prepare a presentation on their final paper during the last two weeks of class. This presentation should be similar to that of a professional conference presentation. Presentations will be done using Power Point (with or without handouts), providing visual aids when necessary. Presenters should be prepared to field questions.

Grading System

A+	97%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C+	77%-79%	D+	66%-69%
A	93%-96%	B	83%-86%	C	73%-76%	D	61%-65%
A-	90%-92%	B-	80%-82%	C-	70%-72%	F	<60%

Grades

I focus primarily on student learning. If earning a certain grade is important to you, feel free to ask me to “pre review” your work and to assist you in reaching your goal. Please do this by asking me for help with your learning and not in terms specifically about grades. I do not round up grades once the semester has ended for any reason, an 89.9 is a B+.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is a vital element for preserving the integrity of all academic institutions and it is the responsibility of each one of us to maintain this integrity. *Any academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism hurts us all and will result in an automatic failure in the class, and can mean dismissal from the university.* Certain procedural rights are guaranteed to all students charged with academic dishonesty who are subject to disciplinary action; they are outlined in the Regent's Bylaws and the Undergraduate Bulletin. In addition, any student who believes that he or she has been graded unfairly may appeal that grade following standard university procedures. *It is expected that you have read and understand your rights and responsibilities as a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student.* These are available in the Undergraduate Bulletin.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides individualized academic support for students with documented disabilities. Support services can include extended test time, textbooks and handouts in alternative formats (electronic texts, Braille, taped texts, etc), classroom notes, sign language interpreters, and transcriptionists. SSD not only accommodates students who have visible disabilities, but also students with other types of disabilities that impact college life.

If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call SSD at 472-3787 and schedule an appointment with the Director or the Assistant Director.

Classroom Etiquette

- ◆Please turn silence cell phones before entering class. Recorders are not allowed unless you have permission from the instructor. Laptops may only be used with the permission of the instructor.
- ◆If you are going to be late for a class or have to leave early, please inform the instructor ahead of time. Do not make a habit of coming to class late or leaving early.
- ◆Class schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class or posted on Blackboard, and usually work to the students benefit (postponing readings due to falling behind). Not knowing about syllabus changes due to class absence **is not** a legitimate excuse for failures to complete course requirements.
- ◆Staying in the class once the syllabus has been discussed implies consent to conditions set out here.

UNL academic calendar is on line at: http://www.unl.edu/regrec/calendar/calendar_main.shtml