DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION, FOOD STUDIES & PUBLIC HEALTH

E33.2355 SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: By appointment
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Class: Wed 4:55-6:35 Silver Center, Room 701

Course Description
Consider the following assertions:

- Academy Award-winning actors outlive unsuccessful Oscar nominees by roughly four years.
- In a typical corporation the CEO will likely live longer and better than the vice president, the secretary will be healthier and happier than the receptionist, and so on.
- In the United States, African American men die, on average, nearly 10 years sooner than their white counterparts.

What are the explanations for these findings? What can you as a public health professional do about them? This course will help you to explore the way the social environment influences the health of populations. You will learn about the most recent findings in the area of social epidemiology, debate the causes and consequences of social inequalities in health, and gain experience in judging the sometimes conflicting evidence behind some of these claims.

Course Objectives
This course will help you to:
1. Define and describe social determinants of health and explain how they differ from other (e.g. biological) determinants of health.
2. Describe the key components of “core” theories and models of behavior and behavior change for individuals, groups, and communities
3. Describe ways in which health theories are used in public health research and practice.
4. Explain how these theories and models apply to designing health interventions based on social determinants.
5. Assess how these theories apply to specific public health problems that are influenced by social and societal determinants.

Readings
- Readings on Blackboard. All other readings, course handouts, announcements, and on-line discussion forums will be available through the NYU blackboard system. You will probably need to check the system at least once per week. For help using Blackboard, go to http://www.nyu.edu/its/faq/blackboard.

Note: This class requires substantial reading. You may need to read some articles several times, outline the main points, and even look up additional references and background materials. Readings marked “background” are not required but may be necessary to understand some assigned readings. You will also be responsible for lecture notes posted on the blackboard site, which may have additional concepts, examples, or approaches to the topic discussed in the assigned materials. This means you will need to prepare significantly before class.
**Evaluation** (see attached description of each assignment)
- Active and thoughtful participation in class and on-line discussions 25%
- Leading on-line discussion on reading (on blackboard) 20%
- Attend library session on reference management strategies 5%
- Paper abstract 15%
- Term paper 35%

**Grading:** A “C” grade demonstrates substantial reading; a “B” grade demonstrates substantial reading and synthesis; and an “A” grade demonstrates extensive reading and exceptionally thoughtful synthesis and analysis.

**Grading scale** (out of 100 possible points)
100=A+; 99-92=A; 91-90=A–; 89-88=B+; 87-82=B; 81-80=B–; 79-78=C+; 77-72=C; 71-70=C–, etc.

**Assignments**

1. **Participation:** Participation includes in-class contributions as well as written comments posted on blackboard (at least two comments per week) based on student-led discussion questions (see below). Criteria for evaluation of participation include: evidence that the student read and applied readings to what he/she says in class/writes on blackboard; evidence of critical thinking about the topic being discussed; and evidence of any new ideas or perspectives that the student contributes to oral and written discussions. All students are expected to respond to at least two discussion questions per week.

2. **Discussion questions:** Each student will sign up to post 2 discussion questions based on one of the required readings. These questions will be posted on blackboard BY 6 PM ON THE FRIDAY BEFORE THAT READING IS DUE. The designated student will then facilitate on-line discussion of the questions among fellow students (e.g. clarify questions or confusions regarding the text, suggest places to go for more information, summarize discussion points). All students are expected to respond to at least two discussion questions per week (each response should be related to a different article).

3. **Library info session:** During the course of your academic career, you’ll need to become an expert at searching online for appropriate references and managing the bibliographic information using a database format, such as Refworks or Endnote. Students will be required to attend at least one 45-minute information session offered at the Bobst library (or by library staff) on Refworks or Endnote, before the term paper abstract is due. To facilitate this, there will be no class held on September 24. For info on scheduling of library courses, see [http://library.nyu.edu/forms/research/classes.html](http://library.nyu.edu/forms/research/classes.html). Students will need to send the instructor an email, registration confirmation, or some other record of attendance. In addition, your term paper must use one of these software programs to organize references.

4. **Term paper:** The assignment is to review and synthesize the research literature on a particular social determinant of a particular health condition. You may select any health problem or condition that interests you as long as you focus on any the social/societal determinants of that problem or condition. Your research question must be approved by the instructor (see course schedule). There are two parts to this assignment: the abstract and the final paper.
4.A. Term paper abstract: Submit a 2-3 page (double-spaced) abstract of the proposed paper that contains:
1. Background: What is the purpose of the paper? What question(s) are you trying to answer and why? What is the rationale for your review of the topic (quantify its social/political/public health importance);
2. Key terms: Define the terms you will be researching, i.e. define the social/behavioral factor of interest, describe the population group(s) affected, and define the health problem/condition and how it is measured in the literature.
3. Methods: Briefly describe your search strategy, i.e. define the terms, search engines to be used, criteria for selecting articles to be abstracted;
4. Preliminary results: How many articles of what type/study design identified, preliminary assessment of the literature, and any necessary steps to revise/refine the current search strategy, population (e.g. in order to limit the scope of the project, I will write the final paper focusing solely on children below age 5), research question, social/behavioral factor, etc.

4.B. Final paper. The final paper should take up no more than 12-15 pages of text (+ bibliography and appendices), typed, double-spaced, in 11-point type or larger, with one-inch margins all around. For most questions, it is expected that a minimum at least 10 references will be included in the paper. Your paper should be appropriately and consistently referenced, using a standard citation style. (see www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html). Your paper must not plagiarize. See: www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html. These issues will be discussed in class. See attached statement of academic integrity.
Final papers will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
- Introduction: Definition of research question (i.e. description of research question, definition of the conditions and the social determinants being investigated, justification of why it is a problem) (20 points)
- Methods and Results: Review and synthesis of literature/findings (i.e. evaluation of article results, relevance of literature selected, presentation of results) (25 points)
- Discussion: Discussion and analysis of findings (i.e. how well does the literature answer the research question, limitations) (30 points)
- Writing (20 points) (i.e. clarity, appropriate language, absence of jargon, organization of paper, grammar, spelling)
- Use of Refworks or Endnote software (email the library file you used for your paper) (5 points).
### Class Schedule: Social and Behavioral Determinants of Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>Class overview: Understanding social and behavioral determinants of health</td>
<td>Sign up for blackboard discussion questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Health and social inequalities</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 17</td>
<td>Theories of health behavior: individual, group, &amp; community</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 24</td>
<td>No formal class meeting. Attend Endnote and/or Refworks course at Bobst library</td>
<td>Attend library session on Endnote or Refworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>Models of health determinants-Life course approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Income, poverty, and health</td>
<td>Identify paper topic</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Race, racism, and health</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 22</td>
<td>Social integration, networks, and the work environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 29</td>
<td>Gender discrimination, and stigma</td>
<td>(note : Last week to attend library session)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>Culture and acculturation</td>
<td>Turn in paper abstract</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 12</td>
<td>Social position, social cohesion &amp; social capital</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 19</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Magdalena Cerdá, PhD, New York Academy of Medicine. Neighborhoods, residential context, and health</td>
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<td>Nov 26</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday- no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Politics and globalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
<td>Health promotion, health systems, and social protection and course wrap-up</td>
<td>Final paper due</td>
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### Reading schedule

#### September 3: Understanding social and behavioral determinants of health

Marmot, Status Syndrome (Chapter 1)

#### September 10: Health and social inequalities


September 17: Theories of health behavior: individual, group, & community
6. National Cancer Institute: Health behavior theory at a glance. (Note: this article is required, but do not choose it for leading discussion)

Background: IOM Report on Health and Behavior, Chapter 3: Behavioral risk factors

October 1: Models of health determinants-Life course approaches


October 8: Income, poverty, and health
10. Marmot, Status Syndrome Chapters 2 and 3


October 15: Race and Racism


October 22: Social integration, networks, and the work environment
17. Marmot, Status Syndrome, Chapters 4 and 5

October 29: Gender, discrimination, and stigma


November 5: Culture and acculturation

November 12: Social Position, social cohesion, and social capital
26. Marmot, Status Syndrome, chapters 6, 7


November 19: Neighborhood and residential context

December 3: Politics and globalization
35. Marmot, chapter 8

December 10: Health promotion, health systems, and social protection

DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION, FOOD STUDIES & PUBLIC HEALTH

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY*
“Your degree should represent genuine learning”

The relationship between students and faculty is the keystone of the educational experience in The Steinhardt School of Education at New York University. This relationship takes an honor code for granted. Mutual trust, respect and responsibility are foundational requirements. Thus, how you learn is as important as what you learn. A University education aims not only to produce high quality scholars, but also to cultivate honorable citizens.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams, making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others, and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours.

You violate the principle of academic integrity when you:

- Cheat on an exam;
- Submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors;
- Receive help on a take-home examination that calls for independent work;
- Plagiarize

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.

Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score and/or other materials which are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:

- Copy verbatim from a book, an article or other media;
- Download documents from the Internet;
- Purchase documents;
- Report from other’s oral work;
- Paraphrase or restate someone else’s facts, analysis and/or conclusions;
- Copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

Your professors are responsible for helping you to understand other people’s ideas, to use resources and conscientiously acknowledge them, and to develop and clarify your own thinking. You should know what constitutes good and honest scholarship, style guide preferences, and formats for assignments for each of your courses. Consult your professors for help with problems related to fulfilling course assignments, including questions related to attribution of sources.

Through reading, writing and discussion, you will undoubtedly acquire ideas from others, and exchange ideas and opinions with others, including your classmates and professors. You will be expected, and often required, to build your own work on that of other people. In so doing, you are expected to credit those sources that have contributed to the development of your ideas.
Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

- Organize your time appropriately to avoid undue pressure, and acquire good study habits, including note taking.
- Learn proper forms of citation. Always check with your professors of record for their preferred style guides. Directly copies material must always be in quotes; paraphrased material must be acknowledged; even ideas and organization derived from your own previous work or another’s work need to be acknowledged.
- Always proofread your finished work to be sure that quotation marks or footnotes or other references were not inadvertently omitted. Know the source of each citation.
- Do not submit the same work for more than one class without first obtaining the permission of both professors even if you believe that work you have already completed satisfies the requirements of another assignment.
- Save your notes and drafts of your papers as evidence of your original work.

Disciplinary Sanctions

When a professor suspects cheating, plagiarism, and/or other forms of academic dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action is as follows:

- The Professor will meet with the student to discuss, and present evidence for the particular violation, giving the student opportunity to refute or deny the charge(s).
- If the Professor confirms that violation(s), he/she, in consultation with the Program Director and Department Chair may take any of the following actions:
  - Allow the student to redo the assignment
  - Lower the grade for the work in question
  - Assign a grade of F for the work in question
  - Assign a grade of F for the course
  - Recommend dismissal

Once an action(s) is taken, the Professor will inform the Program Director and Department Chair, and inform the student in writing, instructing the student to schedule an appointment with the Associate Dean for Student Services and Public Affairs, as a final step. Copies of the letter will be sent to the Department Chair for his/her confidential student file and the Associate Dean for Student Services and Public Affairs. The student has the right to appeal the action taken in accordance with the School’s Student Complaint Procedure as outlined in The Steinhardt School of Education Student Handbook.

When dismissal is recommended, that recommendation will be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Student Services and Public Affairs, who will convene all parties involved. An appeal of the decision at this step is submitted in writing to the Vice Dean, including full documentation to support the appeal.

*The Steinhardt School of Education Statement on Academic Integrity is consistent with New York University Policy on Student Conduct, published in the NYU Student Guide.*