

# ***Public Health and Society***

---

## **Course Information**

Course Title: Public Health and Society

Class Section: SOC 4369

Class Location and Time: Monday & Wednesday: 11:30am-12:45pm [GR 2.530](#)

\*syllabus is subject to change at instructor's discretion

## **Professor Contact Information**

Zachary R. Simoni, PhD

Office location: Green Hall 2.232

Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 2:00p – 4:00p and by appointment.

E-mail: [zrs160030@utdallas.edu](mailto:zrs160030@utdallas.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Jewel Love, [jnl140330@utdallas.edu](mailto:jnl140330@utdallas.edu)

\*\* Please craft e-mails that are professional in style and nature. It may take up to 24 hours to respond. I will not respond to emails after 7pm. \*\*

---

## **Course Description**

An overview of public and population health, with an emphasis on the relationship between social forces and health. Topics to be covered include the history of public health institutions and occupations; the determinants and social components of infectious and noninfectious diseases, including major public health epidemics and the response to them; public health rates, risk factors, indicators, and vital statistics; public health law, policy, and ethics; and the effects of social forces on health, including social inequality, culture and lifestyle, and environmental and occupational influences on health. Particular emphasis will be devoted to health disparities in the U. S. and globally.

---

## **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Gain a wide vocabulary of public health terms and concepts within a sociological context
  2. Understand the history of public health, major public health epidemics and policy
  3. Describe how social forces influence health disparities in the U.S.
  4. Understand the social determinants of health in terms of infectious and noninfectious diseases
  5. Discuss behavioral and social science theories and public health
  6. Garner perspective on the meaning and experience of illness in American society
  7. Discuss vital actors in the health system
-

## Required Textbooks and Materials

Coreil J., (2010). Social and behavioral foundations of public health, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

---

## Course Requirements

Your final grade will be based on:

10 Weekly Online Quizzes (10 pts. Each)	100 points	Grade Scheme
3 Exams (50 pts. each)	150 points	97+=A+
1 Research Paper	100 points	94-96=A
10 Reflection Assignments (10 pts. Each)	100 points	90-93=A-
Total	450 points	

---

## Course Requirements Explained

### Weekly Online Quizzes

There are 11 online quizzes throughout the term covering content from the book or assigned readings. Quizzes are due 30 minutes before class (11:00 am) the week they are assigned. There is no quiz for the first week of class. Quiz 1 will cover material from Week 2 (Historical and Ethical Perspectives of Public Health) and is due before class begins on Week 2 (Monday 8/28 at 11:00am). I drop the lowest quiz grade for a total of 100 points throughout the term. Quizzes are available on the Blackboard Learn homepage for the entirety of one week before class. Thus, quiz 1 will be available on Blackboard Monday 8/21 at 2pm. I allow students to use the book while taking the quiz but they must be taken individually. The purpose of quizzes are to make sure you have read the material and are prepared for class. I do not try to stump students; instead I formulate basic multiple choice questions that demonstrate whether a student has a general grasp of the material. Each quiz will have 5 multiple choice questions each worth 2 points for a total of 10 points. Students will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz. I do not allow make-ups for full credit unless there is documentation of a technical error or personal issue. Documentation of a technical error entails an email from IT or a screenshot indicating the date of issue. I will allow make ups if evidence of a family emergency or physical/mental ailment is provided. Please contact me if this may present an issue. Students who turn in quizzes late will receive a half credit deduction. After one week being late, students do not receive credit for quizzes.

### Reflection Assignments

There are 11 reflection assignments due throughout the term. They will be completed in class. I drop the lowest assignment grade for a total of 100 points throughout the term. There is no reflection assignment for the first week of class, but I typically provide students with an example assignment to work through in class so students understand what to expect. The goal of reflection assignments is to apply important concepts covered in class in order to understand and clarify key material. Often, reflection assignments are preceded by a video, short reading or in class discussion. I allow approximately 20 minutes in class to complete the assignment. The assignment requires short (2 to 3 sentences) responses to two to three questions. Reflection assignments will be hand written unless students can provide documentation of a medical issue.

They will be completed individually as well as in groups on occasion. I will allow make ups if evidence of a family emergency or physical/mental ailment is provided. Late assignments are not accepted.

### Exams

There are 3 exams for this course meant to assess your grasp of important concepts and ideas related to public health and society. They will be taken in class. Exam questions are based off both the textbook, assigned readings and in-class lectures. Material from reflection assignments will not be in the exams. Exams consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Make-up exams will not be given without documentation of a serious illness, death in the family, or required university-sponsored event. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make arrangements with me to schedule your make-up. Please do not be late for an exam. If you show up after the first person has already finished and left the room you will not be permitted to take the exam, and you will receive a 0. Please be on time so you have the entire class period to take the exam.

### Research Paper

#### **Health Problem Literature Review**

Begin by selecting a particular disease (e.g. heart disease, AIDS), chronic health condition (e.g., diabetes, cancer), or other disabling health condition (mental health condition). Your selection is due at the end of Week 12 (11-6). A link in Blackboard will open and students will submit their topic choices by that date.

Your task is to develop a public health analysis of your selected disease/health condition using published resources and other scholarly sources. The first part of your paper should describe the disease/health problem in detail, highlighting what medical science knows about it and why this particular disease/health problem should be of concern to public health and our society at large.

The primary focus of your paper, however, should be on presenting a detailed analysis of the social groups or populations most likely to be affected by your disease/health condition (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, social class etc.). In addition to describing the basic social epidemiological variation within society, you should also discuss the social forces, you believe, are shaping the disease-related patterns you document. Social forces entail social structural constraints on individual agency including but not limited to, socialization, discrimination, culture and health systems. Lastly, utilize behavioral and social science theory to better understand your selected disease and provide policy programs or implications that may influence your chosen disease. For instance, one particular route would be to go through each component of the Social Ecological Model and describe how it pertains to your selected disease. Please use a minimum of *five journal articles* and/or books cited as references, provided in your bibliography. Papers should be 5 pages in length. Please use ASA format for your bibliography. Students do not need a title page or abstract. Here is a link to ASA format: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/02/>

Do not expect to find the analysis already drawn within the literature; you will most likely need to synthesize both medical and social scientific research on your topic. That being said, I suggest students begin a search using literature reviews and/or government documents. In summary, your job is to pull together empirical evidence to develop a coherent and cogent sociological analysis about a particular disease, chronic health problem or other health condition. For more guidance, I have provided a general outline for your paper:

- **Part 1 (1 page)** – General introduction to your health problem. Define the history of your health problem and why it is important to public health. Use quantitative statistics (check out the CDC/WHO) to demonstrate the breadth and importance of your health problem.
- **Part 2 (2 pages)** – This is the meat of the paper! Review and write a summary of recent social science/epidemiological research published on this health problem. Describe the profile of the people most likely to suffer from your disease/health problem. Most importantly, describe the relevant social forces that may influence the spread of this outcome. Please use a minimum of five journal articles and/or books cited as references, provided in your bibliography.
- **Part 3 (1-2 pages)** – Discuss social theory as it pertains to your health problem as well as the social implications of your observations. What social, policy, or medical responses would be appropriate/are needed to respond effectively to the disease/health problem analyzed in your paper. What is the likelihood that our society can respond in ways you describe?

## **Instructor and Institutional Policies**

### Instructor Guidance Policies

I am committed to helping students individually if they need help understanding key concepts or clarification of course material as well as guidance on course requirements. Hence, I provide office hours on Monday and Wednesday from 2pm to 4pm in my office GR 2.232. Also, I reserve 5-10 minutes at the end of each class period for students to ask questions individually. This time is not just about arguing for grades, but rather the point is to help clarify things that may have been unclear during lectures or in the readings.

### Participation and Attendance

Students are expected to attend class lectures, participate in class discussions/exercises and read required material. It is important that you actively engage in the class. You need to do more than just show up. Arriving late and leaving early is not acceptable. Being late is disruptive to the class and the learning experience of others. If a student is consistently late, I reserve the right to ask that student to leave for the day.

### Classroom Etiquette

I expect a level of dignity and respect for your fellow classmates and myself. While I will allow the use of computers for note-taking, I will not tolerate distractions from technology in class. Please do not make incoming or outgoing phone calls, text messaging, surf the web, gaming, or anything else that could be disruptive during class. If you are expecting an important phone call (e.g., from a child care provider or a job interview), please inform me of this before class, set your phone to vibrate, and sit near a door so that you can leave immediately if you receive a call.

I have the right to deny the use of cell phones, laptops, and any other communication devices during class. Moreover, any use of cell phones during exams, quizzes or reflection assignments, unless otherwise noted, will be considered academic misconduct and may result in an "F."

### Student Conduct and Discipline

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Student Discipline and Conduct, UTDSP5003 (<http://policy.utdallas.edu/utdsp5003>). Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SSB 4.400, 972-883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents>.

### Withdrawal from Class

The administration at UT Dallas has established deadlines for withdrawal from any course. These dates and times are published in the Comet Calendar (<http://www.utdallas.edu/calendar>) and in the Academic Calendar (<http://www.utdallas.edu/academiccalendar>). It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, a professor or other instructor cannot drop or withdraw any student unless there is an administrative drop such as the following:

Have not met the prerequisites for a specific course

Have not satisfied the academic probationary requirements resulting in suspension

Judicial affairs request

Have not made appropriate tuition and fee payments

Enrollment is in violation of academic policy

Was not admitted for the term in which they registered

It is the student's responsibility to complete and submit the appropriate forms to the Registrar's Office and ensure that he or she will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if he or she chooses not to attend the class after being enrolled.

### AccessAbility Services

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable disability-related accommodations and/or services for students with documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required (see <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess>). If you are eligible to receive disability-related accommodations and/or services and to ensure accommodations will be in place when the academic semester begins, students are encouraged to submit documentation four to six weeks in advance. Students who have questions about receiving accommodations, or those who have, or think they may have, a disability (mobility, sensory, health, psychological, learning, etc.) are invited to contact the Office of Student AccessAbility for a confidential discussion.

The Office of Student AccessAbility provides: Academic accommodations for eligible students with a documented permanent physical, mental or sensory disability. Facilitation of non-

academic and environmental accommodations and services. Resources and referral information, and advocacy support as necessary and appropriate. OSA is located in the Student Services Building, suite 3.200. They can be reached by phone at 972-883-2098, or by email at [studentaccess@utdallas.edu](mailto:studentaccess@utdallas.edu).

Reservation:

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus and calendar to better serve the class's needs. Any changes will be announced in advance.

Campus Carry

The University's concealed handgun policy is posted on the campus carry website:  
<https://www.utdallas.edu/campuscarry/>

## Course Calendar

\*Calendar subject to change at Professor's discretion

DATE	DAY	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS AND NOTES
Week 1				
8/21	M	Introduction	Coreil: Chapter 1	
	W			
Week 2				
8/28	M	Historical Perspectives on Population and Disease	Coreil: Chapter 2	
	W			
Week 3				
9/4	M	NO CLASS (no quiz)	NO CLASS (no quiz)	<i>No quiz or readings this week</i>
	W	Ethics in Public Health		
Week 4				
9/11	M	Social Epidemiology	Coreil: Chapter 3	
	W			
Week 5				
9/18	M	Theory: Public Health Theories	Coreil: Chapter 4	
	W			
Week 6				
9/25	M	Fundamental Causes Theory	eLearning Readings	
	W			
Week 7				
10/2	M			<b>Exam 1 in Class</b> ( <i>No quiz this week</i> )
	W	Health Lifestyle Theory	eLearning Readings	
Week 8				
10/9	M	Health and Illness Behavior	Coreil: Chapter 5	
	W			
Week 9				
10/16	M	The Social Environment and Health	Coreil: Chapter 6	
	W			
Week 10				
10/23	M	Social Reactions to Disease and Comparative Health Cultures	Coreil: Chapter 7 and 8	
	W			
Week 11				
10/30	M			<b>Exam 2 in Class</b> ( <i>No quiz this week</i> )
	W	Health Disparities, Race and Cultural Competence	Coreil: Chapter 9	
Week 12				
11/6	M	Reproductive Health	Coreil: Chapter 10	
	W			
Week 13				

11/13	M	Aging/Gerontology	Coreil: Chapter 12	
	W			
Week 14				
11/20	M	No Class	No Class	No Class
	W	No Class	No Class	No Class
Week 15				
11/27	M	Mental Health and Illness	Coreil: Chapter 18	
	W			
Week 16				
12/4	M	Health Systems	BBL Readings	
	W			<b>Research Paper Due through elearning</b>
<b>Finals</b>				
12/8-14				<b>Exam 3 during Final Exam Time (TBA)</b>