

**SOC 230: Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities  
in the United States (US Health Disparities)[1]**

Instructor: Savannah Larimore | E-mail: [shlarimo@uw.edu](mailto:shlarimo@uw.edu)

Office Hours: By appointment, <https://shlarimo.youcanbook.me/>

Spring 2018 | MW 2:30-4:20 | LOW 219

1. Course Objectives

There are large racial and ethnic disparities in health status and health care in the United States, and this is an important national public health concern. This course critically examines health among racial/ethnic minority groups in the United States. The course will utilize sociological, demographic, (social) epidemiological and (social) psychological concepts to introduce students to racial/ethnic health disparities research. Students will have exposure to the descriptive demography and epidemiology of health indicators across population groups, as well as theories used to understand and explain racial/ethnic health disparities. The course will examine the ways in which multiple forms of interpersonal and institutional discrimination, neighborhood and community factors and inequalities in socioeconomic status influence health behaviors, access to health care services and health status outcomes across racial/ethnic groups.

By the end of this course, it is expected that students will have knowledge of the racial/ethnic health disparities literature and a solid understanding of some of the social causes of racial/ethnic health disparities and possible solutions to these disparities. Students successfully completing the course will be able to:

- Describe and analyze patterns of racial /ethnic health disparities, including health indicators, rates of disease, and health-related behaviors.
- Describe theoretical strategies used to understand/explain health and health care disparities.
- Describe and analyze the determinants of health disparities for population groups beyond health care, including social, political, and economic factors.
- Communicate ideas about the social causes and solutions to health disparities in the United States.
- Create interventions to address health behavior and health care disparities.

2. Guidelines for Classroom Conduct & Accommodations

2.1. Course Organization and Expectations

Given the structure of the course and time constraints of a brief, nine-week summer term, I expect to use the entire allotted course time for every meeting. As such, it is imperative that you come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and relevant topics. You are encouraged to bring in outside resources—current events,

videos, topics from other courses, personal experiences—as well to help facilitate discussion. When you think of questions and/or comments, please try to think of how your input is related to one of the topics or theories we have discussed in the class. Or, if your comment does not relate to one of the issues we have discussed, think of how you can build upon a certain analytic point. In other words: please make sure that your contributions to our discussions are rooted in the topics we are covering.

## 2.2. Students with Disabilities

Your experience in this class is very important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

## 3. Schedule of Course Topics and Assigned or Suggested Readings

### 3.1. Required Text:

There is no assigned textbook for this course. Most assigned readings listed on the schedule below should link to external PDFs and websites. Scanned documents can be found in the "[Files](#)" section of this website. If you are unable to access a file, please let me know but also consider posting on the course [discussion board](#), as one of your classmates might be able to help you more quickly.

Date	Topic(s)
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Course Introduction: <u>The Sociological Study of Health</u></p> <p><i>Assigned Reading</i> - <a href="#">Schwartz and Diez-Roux. "Commentary: Causes of incidence and causes of cases—a Durkheimian perspective on Rose." <i>International Journal of Epidemiology</i>, Volume 30, Issue 3, 1 June 2001, Pages 435–439. (Links to an external site.)</a><a href="#">Links to an external site.</a></p>

March 28 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Defining Health, Health Disparities, Health Inequalities, and Health Inequities</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Sen, Amartya. 2008. Why and how is health a human right? The Lancet 372, no. 9655: 2010-2010. (Links to an external site.)</a><a href="#">Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading – <a href="#">excerpts from Link, B. G. (2008). Epidemiological sociology and the social shaping of population health. Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 49(4), 367-384.</a></p> <p>* Link 2008 excerpts under "Files" on canvas</p>
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<p><u>Introduction to Race and Ethnicity: What are these, how do we measure them, and why do they matter for health?</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Michael Omi and Howard Winant, eds., Racial Formation in the United States, Second Edition, pp. 3-13. (Links to an external site.)</a><a href="#">Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - (<a href="#">Files on Canvas</a>) <a href="#">Waters, Mary C. 2002. "The Social Construction of Race &amp; Ethnicity: Some Examples from Demography". Pp.25-33 in American Diversity: A Demographic Challenge for the Twenty-First Century (Eds. Stew Tolnay &amp; Nancy Denton).</a></p> <p>* Waters Reading is under "Files" on Canvas</p>
April 4 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Introduction to Race Relations: Whiteness and Racism</u></p> <p>Assigned Readings: <a href="#">Camara Jones. 2000. "Levels of Racism: A Gardener's Tale". American Journal of Public Health: 90(8). (Links to an external site.)</a><a href="#">Links to an external site.</a></p>
April 9 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Theories of racial and ethnic health disparities: Social Class</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Lowrey, A. (2014, March 15). "Income Gap, Meet the Longevity Gap." New York Times. March 15, 2014. (Links to an external site.)</a><a href="#">Links to an external site.</a></p>
April 11 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Theories of racial and ethnic health disparities: Neighborhoods</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading – <a href="#">Diez Roux, Ana. 2016. "Neighborhoods and Health: What Do We Know? What Should We Do?." , 106(3), pp. 430–431 (Links to an external site.)</a><a href="#">Links to an external site.</a></p>
April 16 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Theories of racial and ethnic health disparities: Health Behaviors</u></p>

	<p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Jackson, James S., Katherine M. Knight, and Jane A. Rafferty. "Race and unhealthy behaviors: chronic stress, the HPA axis, and physical and mental health disparities over the life course." <i>American journal of public health</i> 5 (2010): 933-939 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Carson, Rob. 2015. "Nearly one-quarter of Vashon Island parents opt out of vaccinations for their children". <i>The News Tribune</i> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
April 18 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Theories of racial and ethnic health disparities: Biology, Stress Processes, and Epigenetics</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Massey, D. S. (2004). <i>Segregation and stratification: a biosocial perspective. Du Bois Review, 1(01), 7-25.</i> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<p><u>Theories of racial and ethnic health disparities: Health Care</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Brandt AM. 1978. <i>Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. The Hastings Center Report 8(6):21-9.</i> (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
April 25 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Designing Interventions: The Good &amp; The Bad</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Frohlich KL, Potvin L. 2010. <i>Commentary: structure or agency? The importance of both for addressing social inequalities in health. Int J Epidemiol. 39(2):378-9.</i> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Kahn, Jonathan. 2007. "Race in a Bottle". (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. <i>Scientific American Magazine.</i> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. p.40-45.</a></p>
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>African American Health</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Lee, Hedwig et al. "A Heavy Burden: The Cardiovascular Health Consequences of Having a Family Member Incarcerated." <i>American journal of public health</i> 104.3 (2014): 421–427. PMC. Web. 12 Jan. 2018. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<p><u>Native American Health</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading- <a href="#">Transcript from "Bad Sugar". 2008. <i>Unnatural Causes. California News Reel</i> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>

	<p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Friedman, Misha. 2016. "For Native Americans, Health Care is a Long, Hard Road Away". NPR (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Asian American and Pacific Islander Health</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading – <a href="#">Zhou, Min. 2004. "Are Asian Americans Becoming White?" Contexts. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Marguerite Ro, "Moving Forward: Addressing the Health of Asian American and Pacific Islander Women", American Journal of Public Health 92, no. 4 (April 1, 2002): pp. 516-519. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Kagawa-Singer, M., &amp; Pourat, N. (2000). Asian American and Pacific Islander breast and cervical carcinoma screening rates and healthy people 2000 objectives. Cancer, 89(3), 696-705. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>* All readings total 24 pages with citations</p>
May 9 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Hispanic/Latinx Health</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading – <a href="#">Holmes, Seth M. 2006. An ethnographic study of the social context of migrant health in the United States. PLoS Med 3(10): e448. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Viruell-Fuentes, E. (2011). "IT'S A LOT OF WORK": Racialization Processes, Ethnic Identity Formations, and Their Health Implications. Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race, 8(1), 37-52. doi:10.1017/S1742058X11000117 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
May 14 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Multiracial Health/Alternative Measures of Race and Health</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Bratter, Jenifer L., and Bridget K. Gorman. "Does multiracial matter? A study of racial disparities in self-rated health." Demography 48.1 (2011): 127-152. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>
May 16 <sup>th</sup>	<p><u>Gender, Sexual Orientation, Stigma, and Health</u></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Court, Emma. 2018. "One side effect of being young, female, and sick: People won't believe you". Market Watch. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p> <p>Assigned Reading - <a href="#">Fredriksen-Goldsen, K. I., Simoni, J. M., Kim, H. J., Lehavot, K., Walters, K. L., Yang, J., ... &amp; Muraco, A. (2014). The health equity promotion model: Reconceptualization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) health disparities. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 84(6), 653. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.</a></p>

May 21 <sup>st</sup>	Student Presentations - Potluck!
May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Student Presentations - Potluck!
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	NO CLASS – University Holiday
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	FREE DAY – REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM

#### 4. Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Students are expected to attend lectures and to have completed all assigned readings prior to coming to class. Students are also expected to participate and add to class discussions on a regular basis. **Respect for your fellow classmates during these discussions is imperative.** An assessment of your understanding of the course material will be based on class participation, a series of assignments, a group presentation, and corresponding solo-authored report.

##### 4.1. Class Participation (20%):

Requires that you come to lecture having read **ALL** of the assigned text for that meeting. In addition, I expect you to engage in class discussions. **This is critical.** Given the size of the class, our allotted meeting time, and the amount of material we are covering, you are expected to be an active participant in the classroom. Your class participation will be assessed based on the following criteria: **Did your presence in the classroom improve our course?** This does not mean that only those who talk the most or answer the most questions will receive full credit. You will have the chance to participate in various classroom structures: lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, cooperative groups in class, in-class presentations, and paired activities. Completion of assignments (see below) will also be considered, but will not be sufficient to receive full credit for participation.

##### 4.2. Assignments (20%):

Requires that you complete a series of assignments designed to test your knowledge of course content and ensure that you are able to think critically about how topics from the course relate to the world around us. Assignments will vary in form and may include, but are certainly not limited to, group work, quizzes, brief homework tasks, and in-class reading exercises. Assignments to be completed outside of class time will be assigned, assignments to be completed during class time will be random.

##### 4.3. Group Presentation (35%):

Requires that you work with group members to develop a report to community members and stakeholders about the state of racial and ethnic health disparities in their

community, what you believe to be the causes of these inequalities, and an intervention that you believe will reduce these inequalities. Your presentation can take on any style or format you choose, but must include the following components:

- A historical and demographic overview of the community
- A summary of health statistics in the community
- An analysis of how theories and concepts from this course can help understand health disparities in the community
- A succinct and well-designed intervention that aims to reduce the health disparities you identified by using the tools and techniques you acquired in this class

Groups will be assigned randomly using Canvas.

Group Presentations should last 30 minutes (AT MOST). We will do presentations in a room to be determined (our own if no other options workout) on Monday May 21st and Wednesday May 23rd. Groups 1-3 will present on Monday and Groups 4-6 will present on Wednesday.

In addition to your oral presentation, you are required to write, as a group, an executive summary which should be **EXACTLY** 2 pages in length (12 point font, single-spaced, Times New Roman, 1" margins). Examples of executive summaries as well as tips on how to prepare executive summaries are available [here](#). Your executive summary should be concise and should highlight all the items mentioned above as well as any other key findings from your research into your community. **Please turn in a hard copy (typed) of your executive summary on the day of your presentation.**

Each day we will have a small potluck for snacks and beverages. Groups 4-6 (and I) will bring snacks and drinks on Monday. Groups 1-3 (and I) will bring snacks and drinks on Wednesday. You are welcome to bring your own cups, plates and utensils to use for yourself if you are so inclined, but I will provide plates, cups, napkins, and utensils as well. Please indicate what you are bringing on your respective day in this [Google spreadsheet \(Links to an external site.\)](#). If you need to use a kitchen space next to store or heat food, please let me know and I can meet you in my office (SAV 252) the day of the presentations.

#### 4.4. Group Reflection Survey (5%):

Requires that you complete a brief survey concerning your group members' as well as your own contributions to the presentation and other matters related to divisions of labor within your group.

#### 4.5. Final Exam (20%):

Requires you to complete a final exam, consisting of multiple choice and short answer questions, in class from 2:30-4:20 p.m. on Tuesday, June 5, 2018.

### 5. Other Matters

#### 5.1. Late Policy:

It is my expectation that you turn in all assignments on the day and at the time they are due as stated on this syllabus. Therefore, it is my policy not to accept late work unless under exceptional circumstances and with appropriate documentation if necessary.

## 5.2. A Note on Plagiarism<sup>[2]</sup>:

The University of Washington formally defines plagiarism as the following:

- Using another writer's words without proper citation.
- Using another writer's ideas without proper citation.
- Citing your source but reproducing the exact words of a printed source without quotation marks.
- Borrowing the structure of another author's phrases or sentences without crediting the author from whom it came.
- Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or using someone else's outline to write your own paper.
- Using a paper writing "service" or having a friend write the paper for you.

If you are inclined to plagiarize in this course, know that as someone who makes a living on citation counts, I find plagiarism personally offensive. Individuals caught plagiarizing material without proper citation will be referred to the UW Office of Academic Conduct.

## 5.3. A Final Note on This Syllabus:

**This syllabus is not a contract**, and is open to revision during the course of the quarter. Should the need arise, I reserve the right to change the order of scheduled readings, remove readings, or make other alterations. Don't worry! I will never add anything or make last-minute changes that will de-rail your personal schedule. If I make changes I will do so in a timely manner and only if it fits everyone's personal schedules.

<sup>[1]</sup> Content for this syllabus was drawn from Lee, Hedy. **Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in the United States**. Fall 2015, University of Washington. Seattle, WA.

<sup>[2]</sup> <https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>