Sociology 6380: Seminar in Medical Care  
Wed 2:00-5:00; ARC 219

Dr. Jarron M. Saint Onge  
Office: 489 PGH  
Office Hours TTh: 10:00-11; by appt.  
Email: jmsaintonge@uh.edu

Learning Outcomes:

1). Learn about population-level social disparities in a variety of health outcomes.

2). Critically assess sociologically-relevant theoretical explanations for health disparities and discuss possible policy solutions

3). Gain in-depth knowledge and research experience in a specific topic area within the broader subject of social disparities in health.

Course Summary:

This seminar involves an examination of topics in population health. We will explore sociology of health theories and examine empirical findings in health disparities. This class will focus on key differences in a variety of health outcomes by key sociodemographic characteristics (i.e. gender, race/ethnicity, SES). We will read current debates and empirical research and will discuss policy strategies for reducing health disparities.

Course Format:

This seminar course requires attendance at each class session. You must do the assigned readings on time and keep up with your assigned work. This class will be discussion based with a focus on the readings. I will not lecture in this class. Rather, this class will be based on discussions about social disparities in health. We will also spend time discussing student research papers. The final grade in the course will be based on article summaries, class participation, an article critique, a semester paper, and presentation of the semester paper.

Requirements:

Classroom Discussion

Your participation in class discussion will be assessed weekly by me. Each student is responsible for contributing to class discussion. Comments should be responsive to the questions posed by the discussion leader, and/or students can raise additional questions of their own. Comments must be closely related to the course materials. Students must be respectful of one another during course discussion in order to remain in the course. Opposing viewpoints are welcome but must be expressed in a respectful manner. Further, students must come to the course prepared to discuss the materials. If students are unprepared and/or disrupt the class with comments that are not directly related to the course material, they will be asked to leave the class until they are able to contribute in an appropriate manner.

Article Summaries and Leading Discussion

In addition to thorough engagement in each classroom discussion, students will be assigned to present and lead a discussion for the sets of weekly readings. On these weeks the student is responsible for leading discussion on this day of class. You will be responsible for providing a brief summary (approximately 1-2 pages) of each article, along with three or more discussion questions pertaining to each article. Provide copies of your summary AND discussion questions for all students on the day of class. You are encouraged to meet with me before presenting materials.
Article Critique

Each student is required to critique one of the provided (or an additional reading with approval) articles during the semester. A 1-2 page critique of the article is expected. Also, the student is expected to discuss this critique during the class period for which it is assigned.

Final Paper

The major course requirement is a 15- to 25-page research paper that presents theoretical ideas and links them to your empirical findings. This paper is due during the last class period. The paper will involve the application of the course materials to explore a research question of your choice. This paper can be qualitative or quantitative, but it must be related to some kind(s) of social inequalities in health. You can either choose to collect data, use secondary data, or write a more theoretical paper. I will provide detailed instructions about the semester paper in advance of the due date and will discuss the format of the assignment in class. A one-page proposal will be required by week 4. A presentation of the final paper is expected during the last week of class. This presentation should be ~20 minutes in a powerpoint format.

Course Grading

Course Requirements (totaling 100% of your course grade):

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<td>Attendance and participation</td>
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<td>Class discussions</td>
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<td>Paper Proposal</td>
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<td>Article Critique</td>
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<td>Research paper</td>
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<td>Final Presentation</td>
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Percent Grade

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Copying and Plagiarism

The Department of Sociology has a “zero tolerance” policy regarding plagiarism and/or cheating on coursework. Engaging in such actions violates the Academic Honesty Policy, and will expose you to sanctions, including a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, or probation or suspension from the university. If you have questions regarding appropriate citations or plagiarism, please ask me.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal antidiscrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protections for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities in Room 110 of the CSD Building. The phone number is (713) 743-5400.
Reading Schedule:

Note: Reading assignments and scheduled items are subject to change. Readings are available through UH libraries or on Blackboard. Contact me if you are unable to find specific articles. Please complete all assignments before the listed class.

Week 1. Jan 20: Introduction

Week 2. Jan 27: Overview of social disparities in health and health behavior


Week 3. Feb 3: Potential causes


Week 4. Feb 10: Theories and Explanations

Turn in hard copy of one-paragraph paper proposal


**Week 5. Feb 17: Life Stress and Health**


**Week 6. Feb 24: Socioeconomic Status and Health**


**Week 7. Mar 3: Socioeconomic Status and Health II**


**Week 8. Mar 10: Race/ethnicity and Health**


**Week 9. Mar 17: Spring Break**

**Week 10. Mar 24: Gender and Health**


**Week 11. Mar 31: Environment and Health**


**Week 12. Apr 7: Neighborhoods and Health**


**Week 13. Apr 14. Reducing Disparities/ Policy**


**Week 14: Apr 21: Presentations**

**Week 15: Apr 28: Presentations**

Turn in Final Paper