Behavioral, Psychosocial and Ecological Aspects of Health and Disease
Social Work 613, Section 002
Winter, 2003

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Course location: 3003 SEB
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1. Course Description:

This course will survey the distribution, determinants, and psychological and behavioral aspects of health and disease across the life span. Social, economic, environmental, and cultural variations in and determinants of health, disease, and quality of life will be addressed, including the influence of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, and biological and genetic factors. Barriers to access and utilization, geopolitical influences, environmental justice, social injustice and racism, historical trends, and future directions will be reviewed. Health beliefs and models of health behavior will be presented, including help-seeking and utilization of health services. Stress, coping and social support, adaptation to chronic illness, the influences of privilege, stigma and discrimination, quality of life, and death and dying will also be covered.

2. Course Content:

This course will provide students with an overview of major causes of mortality and morbidity in the United States, including demographic, biological, behavioral, social, and community factors affecting health, disease, and quality of life. Selective international comparisons will be made. Special emphasis will be placed on risk factors and protective factors and implications for health promotion and disease prevention over the life span. A major focus of this course will be the impact of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and sexual orientation on health and disease, as well as the effects of poverty, discrimination, and privilege on access, utilization, and quality of care. Comparative definitions and theories of health and disease, including their evolution, strengths, limitations, and implications for social work and social welfare, will be presented. Theories and research on health behavior will be examined, including cultural differences in health beliefs and practices, use of health services, and barriers to care. Research and theory on stress, coping, and adaptation to illness over the life span will be presented, including the role of social support and the impact of discrimination and privilege on health status and disease outcomes. Implications for social work practice and social policy will be addressed throughout this course.
3. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the major causes of mortality and morbidity in the United States, and identify significant differences among various population groups.
   a) Discuss the impact of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and sexual orientation on morbidity and mortality across the life span.
   b) Discuss the influence of social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental factors on mortality and morbidity.
   c) Discuss the ethical and social justice implications of differences in mortality and morbidity across population subgroups.

2. Compare concepts and definitions of health and disease, including their evolution, strengths, and limitations, as well as the implications for social work and social welfare.
   a) Identify biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and behavioral risk and protective factors for health, disease, and quality of life across the life span.
   b) Explain the impact of poverty, discrimination, and privilege on health status and disease outcomes, including the ethical and social justice implications.
   c) Discuss the implications of concepts of health and disease for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

3. Describe current theories and models of health behavior and their implications for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.
   a) Describe socioeconomic, cultural, and religious differences in health beliefs and practices, utilization of health services, and barriers to care.
   b) Describe stress, strain, coping, and adaptation as they relate to health and disease across the life span.

4. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

   - *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed throughout this course and will be highlighted in content related to cultural differences in health beliefs and health behavior and the role of protective factors and social support in health status and disease outcomes.
   - *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed in content on differences in mortality and morbidity in population subgroups and access and barriers to care.
   - *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be addressed through content on concepts and definitions of health and disease, theories and models of health behavior, and stress, coping, and adaptation as they relate to health and disease across the life span.
• Behavioral and Social Science Research will be presented throughout the course and will include findings from epidemiology, demography, medical sociology, health psychology, medical anthropology, social work, public health, medicine, nursing, and health services research.

5. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:

This course will address ethical and value issues related to behavioral, psychosocial, and ecological aspects of health and disease. The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to inform practice in this area. Special emphasis will be placed on issues related to health care and the social worker’s responsibility to promote the general welfare of society. In addition, ethical issues related to working with various client systems will be reviewed, such as confidentiality, privacy, rights and prerogatives of clients, the client’s best interest, proper and improper relationships with clients, interruption of services, and termination. Also, please see course objectives 1c and 2b.

6. Course Requirements:

Attendance
You are expected to attend and to be prepared to take part in each class session. Attendance is important for you to keep up with course work. Missing three classes will reduce your final grade one half grade (e.g. and A will be reduced to an A-) and each additional absence will reduce your final grade an additional half grade. As adult learners, I expect you to make appropriate decisions about attending class. Please notify me as soon as possible if you must miss a class. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to be in class.

Assignments
You will have three assignments in this class, and a presentation. Instructions for the assignments are attached to this syllabus.

Format of papers
All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced using a 12 point font and one inch margins. Use APA* for your papers, including proper headings and citations.

I grade all papers for my classes anonymously. With your paper submissions, include a title page without your name on it, and provide a separate duplicate title page with your name. Only after I have read and graded all the papers, will I determine which paper belongs to whom.

General Expectations for Written Work
You must use scholarly literature to support your presentation of material. You need to use multiple sources and synthesize them. Do not rely on direct quotations from your sources, instead summarize them in your own words.

I fully expect that in all written work that students will adhere to the following NASW editorial policy:

In the interest of accurate and unbiased communication, the NASW publications program subscribe to a belief in the importance of avoiding language that might imply sexual, ethnic, or other kinds of discrimination, stereotyping, or bias. NASW is committed to the fair and equal treatment of individuals and groups, and material submitted should not promote stereotypic or discriminatory attitudes and assumptions about people. *(Health and Social Work, 11:3, Summer 1986.)*

Plagiarism – not referencing another’s words or ideas – is a violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment. In addition, papers or journal entries with are completed for another course are not acceptable and will be assigned 0 points. Please refer to page 50 of your *Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program 2001-2002* for further discussion of plagiarism.

All assignments are due **on the dates specified.** Incomplete grades are assigned only through negotiation with me and that negotiation must occur before the paper’s due date.

**Grading**

Each assignment will be given a letter grade. The criteria for each grade are as follows:

- **A or A-** Mastery of subject content, demonstration of critical analysis, creativity and/or complexity in completion of assignment. The difference between A and A- is based on the degree to which these skills is demonstrated.

- **B+** Mastery of subject content beyond expected competency, but has not demonstrated additional critical analysis, creativity or complexity in the completion of the assignment.

- **B** Mastery of subject content at level of expected competency – meets course expectations

- **B-** Less than adequate competency, but demonstrates student learning and potential for mastery of subject content.

- **C or C-** Demonstrates a minimal understanding of subject content. Significant areas needing improvement to meet course requirements.

- **E** Student has failed to demonstrate minimal understanding of subject content.

Both content and format will be considered in assigning grades. Though content is more heavily weighted in grade assignment, format, and presentation are also important. Failure to follow APA guidelines for referencing and for headings will result in a lower grade.

For assistance with writing, you may go to the Writing Workshop, 1139 Angell Hall, (734) 764-0429.

I suggest that you have someone who is unfamiliar with your subject read your paper before you turn it in. An outside reader can tell you if your writing is not clear, if you omitted a word or
phrase, or if you used the wrong word. Spell checkers and grammar checkers are useful tools, but not as reliable as a human reader.

Your final grade will be determined taking into account the following:

Assignment 1 – Health topic description 15%
Assignment 2 – Distribution and social determinants of health issue 35%
Assignment 3 – Effects of culture and behavior on health and illness 35%
Presentation to class on your term study 15%

Final grades will be assigned with the following scale:
A+ = 99 - 100  B+ = 86 - 89  C+ = 74 - 77
A = 95 - 98   B = 82 - 85   C = 70 - 73
A- = 90 - 94  B- = 78 - 81   C- = 66 – 69

I will take into account class participation, attendance, tardiness and/or preparation for class when making final grade assignments.

7. Course Materials:

There are two required texts for this class.

There is one recommended text for this class.

Reading Assignments: The numbers preceding the assignment refers to the class session for which you should read the article or book chapter. Articles are either available on-line through the U of M Electronic Journals or can be found in print in the U of M Libraries. Some assignments are handouts and are so noted on the list below.


8. **Course Schedule**: Please note that this schedule should be considered a flexible plan. We may have guest speakers come to the classes, and we may suggest, or require some new reading materials. We will bring any specific changes to your attention prior to their implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Number and Date</th>
<th>Class Content</th>
<th>Preparation and due dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 January 6</td>
<td>Introductions – A review of the course and assignments</td>
<td>Please read through the syllabus before class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 January 13</td>
<td>Epidemiology, Social Epidemiology</td>
<td>Nash &amp; Fraser (handout) Krieger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 January 20</td>
<td><strong>Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday – University Symposia. No class.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 January 27</td>
<td>Introduction to Health as a concept Distribution of Health and Illness</td>
<td>Marmot &amp; Wilkinson, Chapters 1 and 2 Spector, Chapter 1 Poland, Robertson &amp; Eakin Shea, Miles &amp; Hayward <strong>Health Topic Description due</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 February 3</td>
<td>Race, Culture and Health</td>
<td>Spector, Chapters 2 and 4 Harrington &amp; Estes, Chapter 1 Fullilove Bhopal and Donaldson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 February 10</td>
<td>Life course and health Childhood and health</td>
<td>Marmot &amp; Wilkinson, Chapters 3 and 4 Denton &amp; Walters Rahkonen, Lahelma, &amp; Huuhka Van de Mheen, Stronks, Van den Bos, &amp; Mackenbach, <strong>Return Health Topic Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 February 17</td>
<td>Health and adulthood – Unemployment, work and travel</td>
<td>Marmot &amp; Wilkinson, Chapters 5 – 7 Matthews, Hertzman, Ostry, &amp; Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Winter Break No class</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 March 3</td>
<td>Social Support and social cohesion</td>
<td>Marmot &amp; Wilkinson, Chapter 8 Spector, Chapters 5 and 6</td>
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9. **Housekeeping**

**Electronic Devices**

In consideration of your classmates, and due to their disruptive nature, I request that all students turn off all telephones and pagers while you are in my class. This is your time and I want you to be able to protect it. I prefer that you receive no messages during class time, however, if you must be on call for an emergency, please let your home or office know that you are only available for emergencies that no one else can handle. If you must carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.
Special Circumstances
If there are any circumstances that require that I and/or the class adapt to your special needs, please consult with me.

Religious Observances
Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

10. Additional Source Materials:

A. Books


B. Journals

- American Journal of Epidemiology
- American Journal of Public Health
- Ethnicity and Disease
- Gerontologist
- Health and Social Work
- Health Psychology
- Journal of Adolescent Health
- Journal of Aging and Health
- Journal of Gerontology
- Journal of Health and Social Behavior
- Journal of the American Medical Association
- Journal of the National Medical Association
- New England Journal of Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Public Health Reports
- Social Science and Medicine
- Social Work in Health Care
- Women and Health