

SPPH 527
Introduction to the Determinants of Health
UBC School of Population and Public Health
Wednesdays, 9am – Noon, School of Population & Public Health (Room B104)

NOTE: *The course outline and readings are in draft and are subject to change.*

Course Description

It is now generally accepted that a combination of personal, social and economic factors influence health status of individuals as well as populations. There is, however, still a great deal of debate about what the specific or most important influences are, and the mechanisms or pathways by which health is either damaged or promoted, and whether and how these factors can be influenced by public policy or other interventions. This course will provide an introduction to some of the foundational thinking that has given rise to the concept of population health and an overview of the current state of research related to the social determinants of health..

Purpose and Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand philosophical and theoretical reasons why social determinants are linked to population health
- Identify the key social determinants of health and a selection of frameworks that link these to the population's health
- Describe some of the pathways through which those determinants affect population-level health and social well-being
- Articulate case examples of policy initiatives and programs either proposed or currently in place to address issues in population health

Instructors:

Jean Shoveller, PhD, Professor (School of Population and Public Health), Email: jean.shoveller@ubc.ca Office Hours: By appointment

Lianping (Mint) Ti, PhD, Assistant Professor (Department of Medicine), Email: mintti@cfenet.ubc.ca Office Hours: By appointment

Class Time & Location: Wednesdays, 9am – noon; SPPH B104 (2206 East Mall).

Class will start promptly at 9am, and students are expected to attend (except under extenuating circumstances) and to arrive on time.

Evaluation

- Weekly short quiz on readings (each week when readings are assigned): 20%
- Mid-term examination (in-class, week 8, 26 Oct): 30%
- YouTube video (due week 13, 30 Nov): 20%
- Policy briefing paper (due Friday, 2 Dec by midnight Pacific time): 30%

NOTE: By Week 4, you must provide via email the **topic** for your policy brief and **3 citations** that you will use in your policy brief, with a 2-3 sentence explanation of the relevance of **each** citation. Emails due to Mint and Jeannie by midnight of **28th September**.

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IMPORTANT

Typically, no late assignments will be accepted. Extensions of the due date for the written assignments will be considered pending extenuating circumstances. Assignments submitted later than the due date will be penalized 10% of the possible grade for each day past due. Each written assignment is due to be emailed to both of the course instructors on time and on the designated due date.

Students are expected to know what constitutes plagiarism, that plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct, and that such misconduct is subject to penalty. Please review the Student Discipline section of the UBC Calendar (available on on-line at www.ubc.ca).

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Class Schedule

Week 1 (September 7) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

We begin with an overview lecture on the origins of population health and social determinants. Here, we introduce the notion of the social gradient and structural determinants of health. We also introduce the place that health care systems have within current structures and their potential to function as one, but not the sole, determinant of health. During this class, we also will review the course outline and administrative issues.

Optional readings:

- Evans RG. Chapters 1 – Introduction. Why are some people healthy and others not? RG Evans, ML Barer, TR Marmor (Eds.) Aldine de Gruyter 1994, pp. 3 – 26.
- Evans RG and Stoddart GL. Producing Health, Consuming Health Care. *Social Science and Medicine* 1990; 31(12):1247-63. (This is Chapter 2 - Why are some people healthy and others not?)

Week 2 (September 14) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

Introduction to some foundational ideas associated with linking the social world to health outcomes at a population level (Geoffrey Rose). We will also show excerpts from the film “Unnatural Causes”.

Readings:

- Rose, G. Sick individuals and sick populations. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 1985;14:32-38.
- Braveman P, Egerter S & Williams DR. The social determinants of health: Coming of age. *Annual Review of Public Health* 2011; 32; 381-98.

Optional readings:

- Syme, S. L. (1994). The social environment and health. *Daedalus*, Vol. 123, No. 4, Health and Wealth (Fall, 1994), pp. 79-86

Week 3 (September 21) – Coordinators: Mint Ti & Jean Shoveller

This class will focus on understanding the mechanisms by which healthcare and health systems have the potential to function as a social determinant of health. In this class, we will explore foundational frameworks and concepts, including Andersen’s Behavioral Model of Health Services Use and Penchansky and Thomas’ five dimensions of access.

Readings:

- Penchansky R & Thomas JW. The concept of access: definition and relationship to consumer satisfaction. *Medical Care*, 1981;19(2): 127-140.
- Andersen RM. Revisiting the Behavioral Model and Access to Medical Care: Does it Matter? *American Sociological Association*, 1995;36(1): 1-10.

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Week 4 (September 28) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

This class is an introduction to the importance of understanding measurement of inequalities, including absolute and relative inequalities, and their implications for understanding, evaluating and responding to inequalities in health.

Readings:

- King, B., Harper, S., and Young, ME. Use of relative and absolute effect measures in reporting health inequalities: structured review. *BMJ* 2012;345:e5774 doi: 10.1136/bmj.e5774.

We will discuss how interventions can sometimes (un)intentionally contribute to increased inequalities (i.e., the Inequality Paradox). During this class, we also will begin to overview the characterization of population-health interventions, featuring examples from within and beyond the health sector.

Readings:

- Frohlich KL & Potvin L. The inequality paradox: The population approach and vulnerable populations. *American Journal of Public Health*; 2008; 98(2): 216-221.

Optional Readings:

- Lorenc, T., Pettecree, M., Welch, V. and Tugwell, P. (2012) What types of interventions generate inequalities? Evidence from systematic reviews. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*

Week 5 (October 5) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti, with Invited Guest Danya Fast

This class will concentrate on place and its links with population health.

Readings:

- Fast D, Shoveller J, Shannon K & Kerr T. Safety and danger in downtown Vancouver: Understandings of place among young people entrenched in an urban drug scene. *Health & Place*; 2010; 16: 51-60.
- Robertson, L. (2007). Taming Space: Drug use, HIV, and homemaking in Downtown Eastside Vancouver. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 14(5), 527–549.

Supplementary Readings:

- Macintyre S, Ellaway A & Cummins S. Place effects on health: how can we conceptualise, operationalise and measure them? *Social Science & Medicine*; 2002 55: 125-139.

Week 6 (October 12) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

During this class, we will continue to examine population-health interventions in more depth. We also will review the concept of proportionate universality.

Readings:

- Proportionate universality. A Policy Brief from the Human Early Learning Partnership

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(HELP), UBC, 2011.

http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/media/publications/proportionate_universality_brief_-_final.pdf

Week 7 (October 19) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti, with Invited Guest Andrea Krüsi

The class will expand upon our discussion regarding interventions to examine how structural interventions (e.g., legal structures) can sometimes (un)intentionally contribute to increased inequalities.

Readings:

- Krüsi A, Pacey K, Bird L, Taylor C, Chettiar J, Allan S, Kerr, T, Montaner, JS, Shannon, K. Criminalisation of clients: reproducing vulnerabilities for violence and poor health among street-based sex workers in Canada—a qualitative study. *BMJ Open*, 2014; 4: e0051191

Week 8 (October 26) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

Midterm Exam: Arrive at 0900hrs! The exam will begin promptly at 0915hrs (no one arriving after 9:15 will be admitted). The midterm will take approximately 90 minutes to complete.

During the second half of the class, we will introduce the YouTube group assignment, which will be due at week 13. **Your proposed groups and topics for this project are due November 2** (to be emailed to Jeannie and Mint by midnight).

Week 9 (November 2) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti, with Invited Guest Rod Knight

This class is an introduction to population and public health ethics, and introduces the importance of understanding measurement of inequalities. We will explore key concepts, such as justice and equity as well as absolute and relative inequalities, and implications for understanding, evaluating and responding to inequalities in health.

Readings:

- Introduction to Justice by Michael Sandel. In Sandel, M. *Justice: What's the right thing to do?* Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York. 2009.
- Braveman, P. (2013). What is Health Equity: And How Does a Life-Course Approach Take Us Further Toward It? *Maternal and Child Health Journal*. doi:10.1007/s10995-013-1226-9
- Harper, Sam, Nicholas B. King, et al. (2010) Implicit value judgments in the measurement of health inequalities *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 88(1): 4-29.

Optional readings:

- The most- and least-unequal counties: Norway, Texas. *The Economist*, June 7, 2014. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21603490-places-america-are-equal-norway-or-unequal-south-africa-norway>

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- Amartya Sen. Inequality Reexamined:
<http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/oso/public/content/economicsfinance/9780198289289/toc.html>

This is available online through a UBC subscription to Oxford Scholarship Online. It can be accessed while you are on campus, or by using a VPN set-up on your computer when you are aware from campus.

Week 10 (November 9) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

Context is a key aspect to understanding which population health interventions are equity enhancing (i.e., redressing systematic differences in health status that are deemed unfair or unjust) – as well as the inverse. This class will introduce the notion of context, using examples from multiple areas of intervention.

Readings:

- Martens, P., Chateau, D., Burland, E., Finlayson, G., Smith, M., Taylor, C., Brownell, M., Nickel, N., Katz, A., Bolton, J., and the PATHS Equity Team. (2014). The effect of neighbourhood socioeconomic status on education and health outcomes for children living in social housing. *American Journal of Public Health*, 104: 2103-2113.
- Shoveller JA, Viehbeck S, Di Ruggiero E, Greyson D, Thomson K, Knight R. A critical examination of representations of context within research on population health interventions. *Critical Public Health*, 2015; 1-14. doi: 10.1080/09581596.2015.1117577.

Week 11 (November 16) – Coordinator: Mint Ti

This class will examine several processes by which social and cultural environments can shape access to health care and health outcomes of populations. We will explore key terminologies, including acculturation, social capital, and social networks.

Readings:

- Berkman, L.F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., Seeman, T.E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51, 843-857.

Optional readings:

- Allen, J.D., Caspi, C., Yang, M., Leyva, B., Stoddard, A.M., Tamers, S., Tucker-Seely, R.D., Sorensen, G.C. (2014). Pathways between acculturation and health behaviors among residents of low-income housing: The mediating role of social and contextual factors. *Social Science & Medicine*, 123, 26-36.
- Cattell, V. (2001). Poor people, poor places, and poor health: the mediating role of social networks and social capital. *Social Science & Medicine*, 52, 1501-1516.

Week 12 (November 23) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

This class will launch our examination of austerity and austerity measures influence population health. Here, we begin by a close reading of *Stuckler, D. and Basu, S. 2013. The Body Economic: Why Austerity Kills. Toronto: HarperCollins*, a text that we will return to throughout the second half of our course together. We will also introduce the notion of migration and its influence on

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Readings:

- Papaevangelou, V., Koutsoumbari, I., Artemis, V., Klinaki E., Zellos, A., Achilleas, A., Tsolia, M., Kafetzis, D. (2014). Determinants of vaccination coverage and adherence to the Greek national immunization program among infants aged 2-24 months at the beginning of the economic crisis (2009-2011). *BMC Public Health*, 14:1192

Week 13 (November 30) – Coordinators: Jean Shoveller & Mint Ti

This class will be reserved for presentation and interactive discussion of YouTube videos / Research-to-Policy Briefs (as presented by each student; 3 minutes per student): The objectives for this activity are: (1) to provide an opportunity for students to share the major findings of their policy briefings; and (2) to provide a forum for integrating the concepts and ideas discussed in the preceding sessions. In particular, we will focus discussion on policy implications and policy levers by posing the question: If you were a local / regional / provincial / federal decision-maker, what is the first action you would take to address the population's health and why? See the detailed description in this syllabus for more information on the requirements for the Policy Brief assignment.

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ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly quiz on readings

Purpose To demonstrate your understanding of the weekly readings assigned.

Content The students will be asked to provide a short response to a question pertaining to one or more of the readings.

Value: 20%

Format The weekly quiz will be hand-written on foolscap paper. There will be 2-4 questions developed each week, and students will be randomized to a specific question.

Marking rubric

Content (2 points)

Articulation of one or more ‘key’ issues or questions on which the student is asked to describe; the student must clearly answer/describe the question/issue as it was presented in the reading(s) (2 points).

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Policy Brief

Purpose To prepare a briefing paper describing the relationship between a determinant of health and health outcomes, and a recommendation for action to modify either the determinant or the relationship. NOTE: Your recommendation for action to modify the health outcomes *must* represent a population health intervention as defined throughout the course (i.e., it must not be an individually oriented intervention, such as an individually-oriented intervention that takes place within clinical encounters).

Due Date Friday of the final week of classes, emailed to course instructor by midnight

Value: 30%

Content The paper should follow a standard briefing paper format: issue / background, current situation, options with pros and cons, and recommended action. Students may choose to follow a different format, as long as that format fits the criterion of crafting a briefing paper for a policy-maker.

The paper is not to exceed 1,500 words (strictly enforced), excluding references and figures / tables (which are not required). Your paper should include 5-10 resources / papers that provide the evidence upon which the briefing is based.

Format Please use double spacing and a standard reference style.

Marking rubric

Issue / Purpose and Background – 10 points

- Identification of your audience – for whom are you writing this briefing?
- Clear purpose, clearly articulated – why is this topic important and why should people care?
- Precise definition of terms

The current situation – 30 points

- Clear description of the association between the social determinant and the outcome, supported by appropriate references.
- Current status of your outcome and current action (or inaction) on your social determinant.
- Concise summary of evidence about the relationship between your determinant and outcome

Options with pros and cons – 30 points

- Identify 2 or 3 different ways that your audience might respond to the current situation
- Use research evidence to critique each option – including intended and possible unintended effects

Recommended action – 10 points

- Identify your recommended option
- Justify recommendation, including further research that may be required

Language and expression – 20 points

- Demonstrates clear organization and logical development of ideas
- Language is clear and concise
- The presentation of ideas is free of grammatical, spelling, punctuation, and typographical errors, colloquialisms, and slang

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YouTube Video Production Assignment

Purpose To prepare a three-minute (or less) video creatively describing social determinants of health – what they are, where they come from and why they matter.

Due Date These will be shown and rated by fellow classmates in week 13 of the course

Value: 20%

Content This is a group project, to be completed in groups of 3 or 4. Groups must be set on or before week 9. This is intended as a creative opportunity for students to demonstrate their grasp of key concepts learned in this course. Our intent is to post the videos on the Social and Lifecourse Theme's website. They should be pitched to a general audience without assumption of familiarity with the content covered in this course.

We assume that groups will have access to the technology needed to produce these videos. If that is not the case, we will provide what is required to you.

Format: YouTube Video, not to exceed three minutes. You can bring your YouTube video to class in the following formats: 1) bring it on a USB stick / flash drive that can be plugged into any laptop, moved to the desktop and run from there; 2) put it on dropbox (if you are dropbox users) and bring the public link for that location; 3) burn a cd / dvd; or 4) bring it on a laptop, and we can simply switch the connection to plug that laptop in to the projector/ sound system.

Marking rubric Each YouTube video will be peer-reviewed and evaluated by class members according to the rubric below. Please bring a computer to class so you can submit evaluations on our online survey platform for each video during the class (link will be provided in class).

Creativity – Is the video engaging? Does it use humour, a sound analogy, visuals or other devices to help convey the messages? (4 points)

Accessibility – Will the video be understandable to a lay audience? Are the messages clear? Do they reflect what we have covered in this course? (4 points)

Receptivity – How was the video received by fellow students? (2 points)
