Behavioral, Psychosocial, and Ecological Aspects of Health and Disease

Course #/term: SW 613, 001, Winter, 2020
Time and place: Monday, 9:00am-12noon, 3629 SSWB
Credit hours: 3
Instructor: Brad Zebrack, PhD, MSW, MPH
Pronouns: He, him, his
Contact info: zebrack@umich.edu; 734-615-5940
Office: 2778 SSWB
Office hours: Mondays, 12-2pm or by appointment

“Information has become a distraction, a diversion, a form of entertainment, rather than a tool of empowerment, rather than the means of emancipation.”

1. Course Statement

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. **Course objectives and competencies**
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.** (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.SPE, 4.CO, 4.MHS, 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
   1.1. Discuss the impact of diversity dimensions such as ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation across the life span. (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.SPE, 4.CO, 4.MHS, 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
   1.2. Discuss the influence of social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental factors on mortality and morbidity. (Practice Behaviors 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS)
   1.3. Discuss the ethical and social justice implications of differences in mortality and morbidity across population subgroups. (Practice Behaviors 2.IP, 2.CO, 2.SPE, 2.MHS, 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS)

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.** (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
   2.1. Identify biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and behavioral risk and protective factors for health, disease, and quality of life across the life span. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
   2.2. Explain the impact of poverty, discrimination, and privilege on health status and disease outcomes, including the ethical and social justice implications. (Practice Behaviors 5.IP, 5.SPE, 5.CO, 5.MHS)
   2.3. Discuss the implications of concepts of health and disease for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)

3. **Describe current theories and models of health behavior and their implications for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.** (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)
   3.1. Describe socioeconomic, cultural, and religious differences in health beliefs and practices, utilization of health services, and barriers to care. (Practice Behaviors 4.IP, 4.SPE, 4.CO, 4.MHS)
   3.2. Describe stress, strain, coping, and adaptation as they relate to health and disease across the life span. (Practice Behaviors 7.IP, 7.SPE, 7.CO, 7.MHS)

d. **Course design**
The course format includes lectures, discussion, individual and group projects, written assignments, and relevant videos. Guest speakers will present information relevant to their work as it relates to the course focus on behavioral, psychosocial and ecological aspects of health. Assessments include exams and written assignments. Brief homework assignments that are linked to weekly topics and readings are also assigned to learn about health resources that are available online.
e. Curricular themes

- Diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) will be addressed throughout this course and will be highlighted in content related to differences in health outcomes, beliefs, behaviors, and the role of protective factors and social support in health status and disease outcomes. The key diversity dimensions will be examined as they relate to health beliefs and health behavior.
- Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed in content examining differences in mortality and morbidity in population subgroups, and access and barriers to care. This course emphasizes the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge.
- 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.

f. Relationship to SW Ethics and Values

This course will address ethical and value issues related to behavioral, psychosocial, and ecological aspects of health and 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.

g. Intensive Focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

Required Text
Available for purchase or rent through Amazon.com or other online venues.

Required course material
Other required readings, websites, podcasts and materials for class will be available via hyperlink from the course syllabus or downloadable through the course Canvas site.

This is a reading intensive class. Research has identified several strategies for effective reading comprehension.
• Identify the purpose for the reading(s): What is the author(s) message and purpose in writing?
• Focus your attention on what you are to learn from the reading(s): Identify new terms, concepts and perspectives
• Think actively as you read: What reflections and/or questions do you have about the readings?
• Monitor your comprehension of the material as you read: What are the main themes in the reading(s)? How would you summarize or paraphrase the reading(s)?
• Review content and relate what you have learned to what you already know: How is this information similar to what you already know about this topic? How is it different? How might this information relate to Social Work practice?

b. Class participation, attendance, and preparation
Class attendance and participation (5% of final grade) are important to students’ learning and to the success of this course. Accordingly, students are expected to attend, be prepared for, and make constructive contributions to the course. Students’ contributions will be assessed by their quality and relevance to course content and themes. It is the responsibility of each student to bring reading materials to class each week, and to obtain class notes, handouts, or other materials distributed in class if you are unable to attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Participation Grade Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>You showed an active interest in class. You were involved every day. You read each week’s assigned readings and your comments in class were informed by concepts presented in the readings. You always actively participated in small group discussions in class and often facilitated those discussions. You used smartphones, laptop computers, or other electronic devices for class-related activities only. You made use of non-class time to seek clarification from the professor on course topics or assignments. No absences or tardies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>You showed a willingness to participate or were often involved. You most always read each week’s assigned readings, and your comments in class were informed by concepts presented in the readings. You actively participated in small group discussions in class and occasionally facilitated those discussions. You used smartphones, laptop computers, or other electronic devices for class-related activities only. You sought clarification from the professor on course topics or assignments. You may have been tardy or absent once or missed parts of one or two classes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>You showed a willingness to participate and occasionally initiated conversation or dialogue in class. You occasionally read each week’s assigned readings, and your comments in class were informed by course content. You participated in small group discussions in class. You missed 1 or 2 classes, were late 2 or more times, or missed parts of classes.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>You rarely participated in class, rarely raised your hand or contributed in class. You rarely read the week’s assigned readings. You came late to class more than once. You did not take advantage of time with professor outside of class. You missed more than 2 classes or were late more than twice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>You did not participate in class and repeatedly came to class late or without materials or were unprepared.</td>
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Absences from class are not evaluated as “excused” or unexcused” but rather as a reality that occurs due to personal choices, prioritization of competing demands, or uncontrollable events
and circumstances. Absences also affect student competence, learning, and ability to provide professional service to clients. **Students are permitted one absence, after which the professor reserves the right to lower that student’s final grade by 5 percentage points for each class missed beyond the one allowed.** If a student is going to be absent, efforts should be made to contact the professor in advance. Students are responsible for any materials missed or assignments due on a day of absence.

There will always be a break mid-way through each class session, and students are encouraged to minimize class disruptions by waiting for the break before leaving the classroom. Please take care of personal needs before class, and notify the instructor in advance of class of any conditions or situations that may require your absence during class. Extended absences during class, as well as tardiness, will be noted and considered in assigning a course participation grade.

c. **Assignments/Required Activities**

Assignment details are posted in the Assignments section of the course Canvas site. All assignments are to be submitted online, uploaded through the course Canvas site. Students are responsible for reading the assignment instructions and monitoring due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment/Required Activity</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points (% of Final Grade)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Health Equity and Justice paper</td>
<td>Friday, January 24, 2020</td>
<td>10 points (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Take home mid-term exam</td>
<td>Will be posted online on Friday, February 21, 2020.</td>
<td>100 points (25%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The take home quiz covers material from sessions 1 through 7 focusing on basic frameworks and concepts of health, population health, and social determinants of health.</td>
<td>Exam must be completed by Monday, March 2, 2020, 11:59pm ET</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Two Reflection papers*</td>
<td>9am Monday morning of assigned readings</td>
<td>10 points each (20%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Sessions 4-7</td>
<td></td>
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<td>b. Sessions 8-14</td>
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<td>*An optional 3rd paper may be submitted and grade used to replace a prior lower grade</td>
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<td>4. Discussion Facilitator*</td>
<td>Sign-up date</td>
<td>10 points (10%)</td>
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<td>*Must be different from reflection papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Health Issue Brief</td>
<td>Monday, April 27, 2020 by 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>100 points (25%)</td>
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<td>6. Participation</td>
<td>End of semester</td>
<td>10 points (5%)</td>
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**APA format** is the definitive source for standardized writing in the behavioral and social sciences and is required for assignments requiring referencing. Please refer to the MLibrary APA Citation Guide as needed. The Purdue Owl website is another helpful resource for assistance with APA formatting.
**Key components of APA format to be used in written papers include:**

- Title page with your name, date, and title
- Double spaced, 12-point font, 1 inch margins
- Number pages except for title page in upper right corner
- Indent 5 spaces for first line of every paragraph
- Sources must be cited in the paper text and referenced in a bibliography at the end of the paper. All in-text citations and bibliographic references must be formatted in APA style.

Strong writing and communication skills are essential to effective professional practice. As professionals we will be continually assessed and judged on our ability to express ideas clearly and professionally on behalf of our clients, our organizations, our profession and ourselves. Graduate level writing skills are expected for this course, and include appropriate grammar, in-text citations, references, organization of thought, clarity of expression, and active as opposed to passive writing.

You may find it useful to 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. For assistance with writing, contact The Sweetland Writing Center, sweetlandinfo@umich.edu; http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/contact.html

**Late Assignments**

Except in the case of emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor prior to the due date, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Late assignments will be assessed a 5% point deduction (e.g., assignment worth 20 points will receive a 1-point deduction after grading) per day late. Requests for extensions on or after the due date of an assignment will NOT be considered and thus subject to point reductions.

**d. Grading**

Assignments throughout the semester are weighted (see above), with grades assigned according to percentage totals as follows:

- 100% - 95% = A
- 94% - 91% = A-
- 90% - 88% = B+
- 87% - 85% = B
- 84% - 81% = B-
- 80% - 78% = C+
- 77% - 75% = C
- 74% - 71% = C-
- 70% - 68% = D+
- 67% - 65% = D
- 64% - 61% = D-
- 59% and below = E

A grade suggests mastery of material, inclusive of both deep description and analysis. B grade suggests competence related to course material.
C grade suggests familiarity with material and is not considered adequate for professional practice. 
D/E grades indicate deficiency and carry no course credit. 
I grades (Incomplete) are given in rare situations in which significant unforeseen, extraordinary, or compelling reasons prevent student completion of work AND there is a definite plan and date for completion. Students are responsible for initiating advanced contact with the instructor to request an incomplete grade and to establish a specific plan for completion. If no contact has been initiated by the student with the instructor regarding incomplete work and/or no specific plan has been established to complete work by the last day of class, a grade will be given based on the work submitted thus far. This may potentially result in a grade which carries no course credit.

If students are concerned about their class performance or grade, the professor is willing to work with them to help improve their understanding of the class material or the assignments prior to the end of the semester.

e. Course Administration and Conduct

Academic Conduct and Honesty
UM Students are held to the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. Cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through use of any dishonest, deceptive or fraudulent means. Plagiarism is one form of cheating and is unacceptable and inconsistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Academic and Professional Conduct which applies to all students enrolled in the School of Social Work. Any form of cheating (use of someone else’s work, obtaining or sharing tests from previous semesters, re-use of one’s own work/assignments from other classes without acknowledgement), plagiarism (verbatim copy of another’s material and not acknowledging the direct quotation, or unacceptable paraphrasing which does not use one’s own words and structure, and failure to acknowledge that the content is not original) and/or aiding and abetting academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the relevant assignment and is grounds for expulsion. You are responsible for understanding the meaning of academic integrity and plagiarism. Please refer to the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program, or see https://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/understanding-academic-integrity-and-plagiarism-students.

Digital Citizenship: Use of digital electronic devices in-class
The concept of “digital citizenship” is a complex topic that has become increasingly important and will continue to evolve as we explore the impact of technology on individuals and communities. In this class, we will be intentional about digital etiquette and ethical use of electronic devices for professional use. Using electronic devices to assist in note taking and specifically-directed class activities is encouraged for those who find this beneficial. However, please note that Research conducted at the University of Michigan suggests that 40-46% of students are distracted by other students’ use of electronic devices for non-coursework related activities. Thus, use of electronic devices for non-course-related activities demonstrates disregard for others. Use of digital devices for non-class related activities will be reflected in reductions in students’ course participation grade. If you feel you must monitor email, text messages, or social media you are respectfully asked to do so during breaks and/or to leave the classroom.
Classroom Climate and Dialogue.
As class participants, we encourage and commit ourselves to respectful and open dialogue that underscores the importance of engaging course content and perspectives in a civil and professional manner. The classroom environment and our ongoing interactions provide opportunities to practice professional communication with clients and other colleagues. If, in the course of our conversations, you share personal information, you may stipulate that you do not want it repeated outside of this class. Course content and perspectives may, at times, require us to engage information that is challenging to us and requires that we move out of our ‘comfort zones’. As the instructor for this course, I am committed to encouraging each of us to explore new and challenging ideas and issues, while maintaining a respectful, civil, safe and supportive environment.

Accommodations for Students With Disabilities: If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know early in the term. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. If there are any circumstances and/or adaptations that are required for instruction or the classroom situation, please consult me.

Religious Holidays and Academic Conflicts: From the Provost’s Office: Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University’s policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Department Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Ombudsperson. Final appeals will be resolved by the provost. Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources.
f. Class schedule

Session 1 -- January 13, 2020
Course Introduction; What is "health"? Social ecology as context for health and disease

Required Reading
• 10 Principles of Burning Man

Session 2 – January 20, 2020 -- NO CLASS
In lieu of class, students are to select and attend one Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium event and complete the Health, Equity and Justice Assignment (Due Friday, January 24, 2020).

Recommend events:
❖ Memorial Keynote Lecture, January 20, 2020, Angela Davis, Hill Auditorium, 10:00am-11:30am.
❖ University of Michigan Health Sciences lecture, January 20, 2020, Dr. Jalonne White-Newsome, Dow Auditorium at Towsley Center University Hospital, 1:00-2:30pm

Required Reading

*Health, Equity and Justice assignment Due Friday, January 24, 2020*

Session 3 -- January 27, 2020
Personal v social responsibility; theories of human behavior, biopsychosocial and sociocultural models of health

Required Reading
Session 4 -- February 3, 2020
Population Health, Community Health, Epidemiology/patterns of disease

Required Reading

Session 5 – February 10, 2020
Social Epidemiology, social determinants of health, health disparities; health equity

Required Reading

Session 6 – February 17, 2020
“Race,” or racism; sex or sexism; discrimination and health

Required Reading
- Webcast: Considering the Whole Person: Contexts for LGBTQ People of color: Mental and behavioral health treatment.

Session 7 – February 24, 2020
Social Genomics, epigenetics

Required Reading
- Unlocking Life’s Code: The Animated Genome video https://unlockinglifescode.org/media/animations/659#660
**Take-home Mid-term Exam Due by Monday, March 2, 2020**

SPRING BREAK – March 2-6, 2020 No Classes

**Session 8 – March 9, 2020**
Social Work in Health/Medical care, Inter-Professional Practice (IPE)

*Required Reading*

**Session 9 – March 16, 2020**
Chronic disease; disease management; medical care

*Required Reading*

*And Select TWO (2) of the following:*

**Session 10 – March 23, 2020**
Disease v Illness; experiences of illness, meaning of illness

*Required Reading*
• Appendix 10.1 Medical Terminology

**Session 11 – March 30, 2020**
Society and Medicine, Social and Cultural Meanings of Illness and Disability

**Required Reading**

**Session 12 – April 6, 2020**
Multi-level community-based interventions; health promotion and disease prevention; Neighborhoods and Community health

**Required Reading**

**Session 13, April 13, 2020**
Social Movements in health care

**Required Reading/Activity**
• Watch the Film: “…and the Band Played On” (access via Canvas)*
Session 14, April 20, 2020
Bringing it all together: Integrating social needs care into health care delivery

Required Reading/Activity
- Integrating social needs care into the delivery of health care to improve the nation’s health.
  (Watch the slide presentation)

Report at a glance:
- Report highlights
- Key Messages
- Report Recommendations

Health Brief Assignment Due Monday, April 27, 2020