



Course title:	Behavioral, Psychosocial and Ecological Aspects of Health, Mental Health and Disease	
Course #/term:	SW600, Section 003, Winter 2021	
Time and place:	Monday, 2:00-5:00p, Virtual Classroom	
Credit hours:	3	
Prerequisites:		
Instructor:	Mari Pitcher	
Pronouns:	She, her, hers	
Contact info:	Email: pitcherm@med.umich.edu	Phone: 919-949-4376
	You may expect a response within 24 hours	
Office:	Virtual office	
Office hours:	I will be available by telephone Monday-Wednesday 5p-8p. Or by appointment	

1. Course Statement

a. Course description

This course will survey the distribution, determinants, and biomedical, psychological and behavioral aspects of health inclusive of physical, mental and behavioral health and disease across the life span from pre-birth to death. Social, economic, environmental, structural 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, geography, ability, biological, genetic and epigenetic factors. Barriers to access and utilization, geopolitical influences, environmental justice, social injustice, oppression and racism, historical trends, and future directions will be reviewed. Health

beliefs and models of health behavior (e.g. Health Belief Model, Theory of Planned Behavior,) and structural determinants of health (e.g. Minority Stress Theory) will be presented, including help-seeking and utilization of health services. Stress, allostatic load, 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, community, and epigenetic factors affecting health, disease, and quality of life. 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 (EPAS Competency 2,3,5)
2. 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, geography religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation across the life span. (EPAS Competency 2)
3. Discuss the influence of social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental factors on mortality and morbidity. (EPAS Competency 2,3,5)
4. Discuss the ethical and social justice implications of differences in mortality and morbidity across population subgroups. (EPAS Competency 1,3,5)
5. 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. (EPAS Competency 2,3)
6. Identify biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and behavioral risk and protective factors for health, disease, and quality of life across the lifespan. (EPAS Competency 2,3)

7. Explain the impact of poverty, discrimination, and privilege on health status and disease outcomes, including the ethical and social justice implications. (EPAS Competency 2,3)
8. Discuss the implications of concepts of health and disease for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. (EPAS Competency 2,3)
9. Describe current theories and models of health behavior (e.g. substance use, smoking, exercise and nutrition) and their implications for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation (EPAS Competency 4)
10. Describe socioeconomic, cultural, and religious differences in health beliefs and practices, utilization of health services, and barriers to care. (EPAS Competency 3, 5)
11. Describe stress, strain, chronic illness impact health, coping, and adaptation as they relate to health and disease across the lifespan. (EPAS Competency 3,4)

d. Course design

This course will be held online using a combination of asynchronous and synchronous activities. Asynchronous activities are those activities you will participate in outside of class time, which may include reviewing brief recorded lectures, articles, and/or other materials, posting on discussion boards, working in groups, and completing assignments. Synchronous (real-time) activities will take place each week on Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. These sessions will be held over Zoom. During this time, activities may include brief lectures but will mostly focus on application through small and large group discussion of readings and/or case studies and guest speakers.

e. 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. 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 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.

f. PODS integration

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. Specifically, this course addresses the following competency domains and competencies:

Social Justice Vision and Actions

- Identify and implement steps towards social justice in specific practice contexts.
- Use processes that promote social justice, including those that resist and reduce disempowering and marginalizing dynamics in specific practice contexts.

Conflict, Dialogue, and Community

- Demonstrate intersectional humility in communication and interactions with others.
- Assess the advantages and disadvantages of working collaboratively within and/or across groups (defined by positionality and stigmatized status) and act accordingly
- Initiate and promote dialogue/alliance/and collaboration with others.

Critical Structural Thinking

- Analyze types, levels, and sources of power in practice contexts, theories and actions.
- Identify how inequities are manifested, maintained and reinforced in social systems, theories, processes, and social work practice of different types and levels.
- Recognize the impacts of privilege and inequities on various levels of social ecology (individuals, family, organizations, community, society).
- Value and use multiple ways of knowing and constructing knowledge.
- Understand how individual, family, group, community, organizational, nationality/citizenship history, culture, positionalities, sources of power (ascribed and earned), and multiple ways of knowing shape perceptions, attitudes, cognitive processes, actions, and consequences.

Critical Awareness, Use of Self, and Strengthening Strategies for Resilience and Generativity

- Recognize one's own positionalities on multiple dimensions, including nationality/citizenship (the relative power of the nation) and other insider/outsider statuses.
- Recognize how these intersect with each other and change in interactions with others and in different contexts.
- Learning from those with different voices, values, and experiences, including different ways of knowing.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills for intersectional humility.

g. Relationship 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.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

Gehlert, S., & Brown, T. (2019). Handbook of Health Social Work, 3rd Edition. Jossey-Bass.

The full book is available for download for free through the University of Michigan Library website.

Additional required and recommended readings, as well as multimedia including podcasts, Ted Talks, YouTube videos, etc. are posted on Canvas under Modules Module #. Please let me know if any of the materials are inaccessible (e.g., articles are not compatible with a screen reader or videos do not include closed captions).

b. Class schedule

Date/Time	Agenda	Required Readings
Week 1 Jan 25 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Course introduction and definition of health	READ: "Narrative Health: Using Story to Explore Definitions of Health and Address Bias in Health Care" and "Chapter 1: The Conceptual Underpinnings of Social Work in Health Care" Review Syllabus!!
Week 2	Social Work	READ: "Moving Toward Integrated Health: An

Feb1 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Practice in Healthcare: Integrated Health and Interprofessional Practice Models	Opportunity for Social Work” and “Chapter 9: The Implementation of Integrated Behavioral Health Models”
Week 3 Feb 8 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 3: Epidemiology: Recognizing Patterns and Distributions of Health, Disease, and Health Disparities in Populations	READ: “What Are Health Disparities and Health Equity? We Need to Be Clear” and “Chapter 3: Epidemiology: The Study of Disease, Injury and Death in the Community”
Week 4 Feb 15 Zoom 2p-4:30p	Module 4: Multilevel Stigma and Health Disparities	READ: “Stigma as a Fundamental Cause of Population Health Inequalities” and “A Systematic Review of Allostatic Load, Health, and Health Disparities”
Week 5 Feb 22 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 5: Implicit Bias in Healthcare and Evidence-Informed Stigma Reduction Interventions	READ: “Examining the Presence, Consequences, and Reduction of Implicit Bias in Health Care: A Narrative Review” and “From Mastery to Accountability: Cultural Humility as an Alternative to Cultural Competence”
Week 6 Mar 1 Zoom 2p-430p	Module 6: Social Determinants of Health, Environmental Health, and Social Policy	READ: “Chapter 8: Community and Health” and “Evaluating Strategies for Reducing Health Disparities by Addressing the Social Determinants of Health”
Week 7 Mar 8 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous	Module 7: Social Ecological Risk and Protective Factors for Health and Disease	READ: “How Does the Social Environment ‘Get Into the Mind? Epigenetics at the Intersection of Social and Psychiatric Epidemiology” and “Targeting Health Disparities: A Model Linking

ous learning		
Week 8 Mar 15 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 8: Applying Theories of Health Behavior Change: Implications for Social Work Assessment	READ: "Chapter 7: Theories of Health Behavior" and "Personal Responsibility for Health? A Review of the Arguments and the Evidence at Century's End"
Week 9 Mar 22 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 9: Multilevel EvidenceBased Health Behavior Change Strategies and Pharmacology Competencies	READ: "Health by Design: Interweaving Health Promotion into Environments and Settings" and "Chapter 14: Developing a Shared Understanding: 8 When Medical Patients Use Complementary and Alternative Approaches and Seek Integrative Systems"
Week 10 Mar 29 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 10: Social Construction of Illness, Meaning Making, and Communitybased Interventions	READ: "The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications" and "Disability Through a Native American Lens: Examining Influences of Culture and Colonization"
Week 11 April 5 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 11: Religion and Spirituality in Health Care and Ethical and Legal Issues Related to Health	READ: "Chapter 13: Religion, Belief, and Spirituality in Health Care" and "Exploring Moral Distress for Hospital Social Workers"
Week 12 April 12\ Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous	Module 12: Chronic Disease and Social Work Practice Part 1	READ: "Chapter 15: Families, Health, and Illness" and "Chapter 20: Chronic Disease and Social Work, Diabetes, Heart Disease, and HIV/AIDS" Recommended; Textbook, Chapter 22: Pain Management and Palliative Care

learning		
Week 13 April 19 Zoom 2p-4p, plus asynchronous learning	Module 13: Chronic Disease and Social Work Practice Part 2 and Course Wrap-up	READ (Choose 2): “Educational Issues Following Treatment for Childhood Cancer”, “Knowledge of Diagnosis, Treatment History, and Risk of Late Effects Among Childhood Cancer Survivors and Parents: The Impact of a Survivorship Clinic”, “Living and Learning with Cancer Brochure”, or “Supporting Pediatric Cancer Survivors with Neurocognitive Late Effects: A Model of Care” Self-Assessment of Class Participation (in-class work) Reflections on Key Learnings (in-class work) Endings (in class work)

*See Canvas for Suggested Recommended Readings and Multimedia for additional materials.

- c. Assignments: all assignments are to be submitted via Canvas by 11:59pm the day before class

Assignment	Due date	Percent of overall grade
IPE Module	Week 5: Feb 22	15%
Anatomy of an Illness Paper part 1	Week 7: March 8	20%
IAT Assessment	Week 9: March 22	15%
Pharmacy In-class Presentation	Week 11: April 5	15%
Anatomy of Illness Paper Part 2	Week 13: April 19	20%
Participation	Throughout all weeks	15%

Sample Assignment Descriptions (Brief):

IPE Module: Students will complete an approximately one-hour long module that introduces the current state of the health care system from the perspectives of a patient

and provider. It then provides an overview of the history of interprofessional education and how it relates to the quadruple aim of healthcare: improved patient experience, improved population health, increased workforce satisfaction, and reduced cost of health care. This module includes several reflection activities. After reviewing the module, students will complete a brief (max one-page double-spaced written with 12-point font with 1" margins) reflection in response to three prompting questions.

IAT Assessment: Students will choose at least one Implicit Associations Test (IAT) to complete and write a brief (max 2 pages double-spaced written with 12-point font with 1" margins) reflection in response to five prompting questions.

Pharmacy In-class Presentation: Students will complete a 15-minute presentation in teams of 3-4, focused on pharmacologic interventions. One group each will be assigned to explore either: pharmaceutical assistance programs, sexual functioning pharmaceutical side effects, pain medications, overview of prescription terminology and prescribing information, or application.

Anatomy of an Illness Paper: Students will complete a two-part assignment in order to gain an understanding of the nature and distribution of a particular physical, mental or behavioral health problem, the etiology of the health condition, its prognosis and treatment, noted social determinants and health disparities in these dimensions and the experience of the illness. Students' paper will examine issues of the behavioral, psychosocial and ecological aspects of the health problem, with focused attention to the role of social work/your discipline in addressing micro and macro features of the health problem. The project will be submitted in 2 written papers with 12-point font and 1" margins.

d. Attendance and class participation

In order for us all to benefit from the knowledge and perspective of each individual class member, it is imperative that we all attend and participate in class. This is particularly true when in a virtual classroom environment. In order to maximize class participation and interaction, I encourage you all to attend each virtual class and to complete all asynchronous learning prior to class. I ask that you participate with your camera on (if there is a physical or health reason, why this is not possible, please e-mail or call me to discuss). Your final class participation points will be jointly determined by your responses to a short self-assessment at the end of the semester.

Life does happen, and there may be times when you need to miss class. If so, please call or text me four hours in advance of class. With the class's permission, I will be recording each class session and will provide you with a missed class make-up assignment, via e-mail, within 24 hours of the missed class. It will be your responsibility to complete the make-up assignment and submit it to me prior to the next scheduled

class period. Failure to make-up the missed class will result in a drop of one half of a letter grade for each missed assignment.

If you miss more than two classes, your final course grade will be impacted by at least one full letter grade. Three or more missed classes may result in an incomplete or failing grade. If there are extenuating circumstances, please be in contact with me throughout the semester.

e. Grading

In an effort to encourage each of you to learn and grow in an environment that celebrates the uniqueness of each individual, I will be adopting a credit/no credit grading approach to each assignment. My focus will be on providing you with extensive feedback on your work that aids in your self-reflection, knowledge acquisition and professional development.

Additionally, each of you bring a wealth of knowledge and experience into the classroom. To leverage that knowledge, participation during classroom time and discussion posts is essential.

Hence, if you complete all of your assignments on time, demonstrating scholarly effort at a graduate level and a desire to enhance your social work knowledge and skills, you will receive an A for the course. Incomplete/missing assignments, lack of graduate level effort, class absence and/or lack of participation will result in a reduction in your grade. If you prefer to receive a traditional letter grade for your submitted assignments, please send me an e-mail indicating this preference.

If you disagree with my evaluation of your work, please contact me within a week of receiving your evaluation and I will meet with you, via Zoom, to discuss your concerns. My goal is to assist you in assimilating the course content and applying it to real world situations.

Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with the instructor regarding questions, comments and concerns about their grades before using other approaches. To grieve grades, a student can follow the procedures listed in the [Student Grievance Procedures](#). Other resources related to the school's grading policies include the Policy for [Grading in Special Circumstances](#) and the [Testing and Grading page from the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching \(CRLT\)](#).

Late Assignments / Exams. In principle, late assignments or exams are not acceptable in this class. If you foresee challenges to submit an assignment by the due date, a formal request on Canvas or through E-mail needs to be made to the instructor at least 48 hours (2 days) in advance of the due date. The student is expected to call the instructor to discuss reasons for an extension.

f. Class Recording and Course Materials

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor. Additional information on class recordings can be found the [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#)

g. COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

h. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with

alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*