



Behavioral, Psychosocial and Ecological Aspects of Health, Mental Health and Disease

Course #/term:	SW 600, Section 004, Winter, 2023
Time and place:	Mondays, 2:00pm-5pm, SSWB 3752
Credit hours:	3
Instructor:	Brad Zebrack, PhD, MSW, MPH
Pronouns:	<i>He, him, his</i>
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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/racism, 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 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 objectives and competencies

1. Analyze the major causes of mortality and morbidity in the United States, and how they differ among various population groups. (EPAS 2, 3, 5)
2. Evaluate the impact of diversity dimensions, for example, 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, etc., and in particular the impact of discrimination and privilege on health across the lifespan. (EPAS 2, 3)
3. Explain the influence of social, economic, geopolitical, and environmental factors on mortality and morbidity, and the ethical and social justice implications across the lifespan. (EPAS 1, 2, 3, 5)

4. Compare concepts and definitions of health and disease, including their evolution, strengths, and limitations, as well as the implications for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social work practice. (EPAS 2, 3)
5. Examine biological, socioeconomic, cultural, and behavioral risk and protective factors for health, disease, and quality of life across the lifespan. (EPAS 2, 3)
6. Apply current theories and models of health behavior (e.g. substance use, smoking, exercise and nutrition) and their implications for health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social work practice across the lifespan. (EPAS 4)
7. Distinguish how cultural and religious differences in health beliefs and practices may impact utilization of health services, and barriers to care. (EPAS 3, 5)
8. Determine how stress, strain, and chronic illness impact health, coping, and adaptation among individuals in relation to health and disease across the lifespan. (EPAS 3, 4)

c. 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.

d. Intensive focus on Privilege, Oppression, Discrimination and Social Justice (PODS)

This course integrates PODS content 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.

Students will be encouraged to actively contribute from their experiences, field placement practice, current news and knowledge of readings to considerations of health and health care to:

- Develop a vision of social justice as it related to health social work
- Learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice
- Work toward social justice
- Apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks
- Strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

1. Gehlert, S., & Brown, T. (2019). Handbook of Health Social Work, 3rd Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-1-119-42072-9.

[Online access is available through the University of Michigan Library website.](#)

2. All required and recommended readings, as well as multimedia including podcasts, Ted Talks, YouTube videos, etc. are posted on Canvas under Modules → Session #.
- b. **Class schedule (all required readings, resources and materials are located on the course Canvas site)**

Session 1 – January 9, 2023

Course Introduction; What is “health”?

Session 2 – January 16, 2023 (NO CLASS MEETING)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium

Session 3 – January 23, 2023

Health, equity, and justice

Session 4 – January 30, 2023

Inter-Professional Education (IPE) and Social Work Practice

Session 5 – February 6, 2023

Population health; epidemiology; patterns of health and disease

Session 6 – February 13, 2023

Social determinants of health; health disparities; health risk and resilience factors

Session 7 – February 20, 2023

Chronic Disease – Serious Illness Conversations Assignment

Spring Break February 27 – March 3

Session 8 – March 6, 2023

Personal v. Social Responsibility, Theories of Human Behavior

Session 9 – March 13, 2023

Social and Cultural meanings of illness

Session 10 – March 20, 2023 (NO CLASS MEETING)

Take home Midterm Exam

Session 11 – March 27, 2023

Chronic disease management; personal experiences and meanings of illness; implicit bias

Session 12 -- April 3, 2023

Chronic disease and disease management Social Work, social care

Session 13, April 10, 2023

Multi-level community-based intervention; health promotion

Session 14, April 17, 2023

Advocacy, Action and Social Change

c. Course Assignments and Activities

This course requires completion and submission of three types of assignments:

1) Assignments

	Points	Due Date
Health in the News	5	As scheduled
The One-to-One Meeting & Reflection Paper	5	Friday, January 13
Health, Equity, and Justice paper	15	Friday, January 27
Inter-Professional Education (IPE) module and Reflection Paper	5*	Sunday, January 29 module completion Friday, February 3 paper due
Serious Conversations Podcast/Video production (Group Project)	15	Friday, February 24
Mid-Term exam (online; no class)	20	Monday, March 20
Reflection Paper: Implicit Bias test	5	Friday, March 31
Health Issue Brief – Topic Proposal/Outline	5	Monday, April 10
Health Issue Brief – Final Paper	20	Monday, April 24
Self-rated Class participation	5	Monday, April 24

***Requires completion of the online IPE Module for credit**

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.

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 10% point deduction (e.g., assignment worth 20 points will receive a 2-point deduction after grading). Requests for extensions on or after the due date of an activity or assignment will NOT be considered without point reduction.

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>

d. Attendance and class participation

Class attendance and participation is 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.

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 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.

e. 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-
60% 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.

f. **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>.

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. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including properly wearing a face covering in class and compliance with the University COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. Other applicable and additional safety measures may be described in the Campus Maize & Blueprint. Your ability to participate in this course 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 and those seeking an exemption related to the vaccination requirement should submit an exemption request through WolverineAccess. 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.

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*