



The University of Western Ontario  
**SOCIOLOGY 2180A-650**  
**Development and Health Inequalities**  
**Summer 2022**

**Classes are held virtually and asynchronously via OWL**

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### **Course Description**

This course is designed to introduce students to the study of factors that influence the health of populations. In the first part of the course, we will focus on how to interpret common measures of population health, such as life expectancy at birth and measures of morbidity and disability. Next, population health will be considered from a comparative and historical perspective. We will study the principal factors driving the massive health improvements of the past century, as well as some of the obstacles that have recently emerged. Then we will consider the factors underlying the major health disparities across countries and regions and health disparities among individuals that are associated with their gender, level of educational attainment, occupation, and race/ethnicity. The next section will address major health policy issues in developing countries, with reference to the effectiveness of health interventions for improving the health of a population. Attention is paid to dilemmas facing countries with extremely limited resources. Last, we turn to current health issues in highly developed countries such as obesity, smoking, diet, and exercise. We will also discuss social relationships and health and the ways in which we affect each other's health.

***Prerequisite(s):*** None

***Antirequisite(s):*** The former Sociology 2279A/B.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Characterize measures of population health to capture infant and child health, adult health, disability, and mortality.
2. Calculate basic measures of a life table and interpret them.
3. Recognize and critique different types of studies used to understand the factors contributing to changes in health over time and differences in health across subpopulations.
4. Communicate the results of figures, graphs, and tables of results that we discuss in class.
5. Identify the major health policy issues in countries with high and low resources.

**Required Text(s):** Readings will be posted on the course website. See schedule and readings below. There are no required texts to buy for this course. Please make sure you are enrolled on the course website through OWL.

**Method of Evaluation:**

The course is based on class lectures and readings. You are expected to do the assigned readings and complete the weekly activities posted on OWL. Lectures cover material that is not discussed directly in the course readings, but for which you are responsible. Conversely, you also are responsible for the material covered in the readings even if the material is not reviewed in class.

The mid-term and final examinations will include both multiple choice, short answer questions, and short essays. Some of these questions will involve calculating and interpreting measures of population health and communicating the results of figures, graphs and tables. You should bring a basic or scientific calculator to both exams.

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

1. Weekly Activities on OWL: 20%
2. Midterm exam: 35% (June 15 9:00am – June 22 11:55pm)
3. Final exam: 45% (Final exam period TBD)

**Weekly Activities on OWL (20%):**

Each week, I will post a module to our course site on OWL, which can be found by clicking on the Course Content tab on the left-hand side of the homepage. These modules will consist of multiple videos constituting the lecture for a specific week. There will also be a link to a required assessment. The short assignment will consist of a few questions designed to help you practice what you're learning in a relatively low-stress, low-stakes environment. Students may work together through each week's material—but all work they submit must be their own. These will be marked, but I will only count 9 of the 11 weekly activities toward your course mark. In other words, each student is permitted to miss, skip, or do poorly on 2 of the weekly modules. This is intended to serve as a universal accommodation available to all students, for any reason, and with no need for documentation.

New modules will be released *each Wednesday at 9:00am*, beginning on May 11, 2022. Students will have one week to complete all of that week's material at their own pace. All activities and practice questions must be completed by the next Wednesday (at 11:55pm). No late submission will be accepted for the weekly activities. However, once released, weekly modules will be available for the remainder of the term so that students who miss one can still access the material.

### ***Midterm Exam (35%):***

In Week 6, students will take a midterm exam. You can think of this exam as a problem set or homework assignment. Questions will consist of multiple choice and short answer. Students will have the chance to demonstrate what they have learned from the first 5 weeks of the course.

Students will have the whole week to work on the problems in the exam (from Wednesday, June 15, at 9:00am, to Wednesday, June 22, at 11:55pm), and there will be no additional new material that week. This is intended to be a universal accommodation: Because all students will have the full week to complete the exam, most students who typically require extra time accommodations will not need any other special arrangements for this assessment. Additionally, students are not eligible to use an SRA for the midterm, and no late exams will be accepted. Unlike the weekly activities on OWL, students may not work together on the exam.

### ***Final Exam (45%):***

There will also be a final exam scheduled for the regular end-of-term exam period. The date and time for the final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar's office. The format of this exam will be similar to the midterm exam. It will be cumulative in nature, covering material from the entire term (including Stata Labs). Like the midterm, students may not work together on the exam.

The exam will be available to students for 48 hours. Students are free to take the exam at any point during that period, but they will have 4 hours to complete it once they begin. The exam will be designed to take 1.5 hours; by offering 4 hours, all students will be provided with a universal accommodation. Consequently, most students who typically require extra time accommodations will not need any special arrangement for this assessment.

### ***Additional Notes About Grading***

There will be no opportunities for extra credit. I encourage you to work consistently throughout the semester, and to reach out to other students in the class or to me as soon as you have trouble with the material. Consistent with departmental guidelines, it is expected that the class average for this course will be around 70%-75%. Should the final overall grades yield a value significantly below this range, grades will be adjusted upward to ensure an appropriate mean for the class.

### ***How to Contact Me:***

If you have course-related questions that may be relevant to the whole class, I encourage you to post them to the OWL's Forums. If you have a specific question or issue, you may send me an email ([jasmine.ha@uwo.ca](mailto:jasmine.ha@uwo.ca)).

### ***How to get important information:***

You will find course content and announcements posted to our OWL course website. I will also announce any upcoming deadlines or changes to the course schedule in class. If you miss a class, check first with a classmate for any notes or other materials.

## **Important Policies**

### ***Assignment Deadlines***

Students must submit their assignments by the date and time stated in the course outline and on the OWL website. Late assignments will not be accepted except in extraordinary circumstances; for these, please go through the usual accommodations process. An assignment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class. For those with extended illness self-reports who cannot complete the assignment within this time frame, their final course mark will be reweighted without the assignment.

### ***Assignment Evaluation***

All assessments are assigned and turned in using OWL's Tests & Quizzes tool. This tool allows OWL to automatically mark and provide feedback on some—but not all—of the questions in a problem set. Thus, the initial mark you receive on your problem set is likely not your final mark. The instructor will go through and manually complete the marking of your problem sets over the week after they are submitted. After a finalized mark is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting the instructor; to ensure a timely response, reach out with questions within 7 days.

### ***A Note on Plagiarism***

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

### ***Plagiarism Checking***

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

### ***Policies on Examinations***

The midterm and final examinations in this course are open-book and open-note. Students may consult the textbook, their notes, and the OWL course site. They may also use a calculator of their choosing. However, students may not consult with one another or receive any outside help. Computer-marked multiple choice and short-answer exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns, which can indicate cheating.

### ***Copyright of Lectures and Other Course Materials***

Any materials created by the instructor (e.g., videos, notes, hand-outs, summaries, slide decks, assignments, exams, etc.) are protected by copyright law and may not be copied or distributed in any

form without the explicit permission of the instructor. Any non-authorized use of these materials constitutes an academic offense

### ***Scholastic Offenses***

Scholastic offenses are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offense, at the following web site:

([www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)).

### ***Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness***

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

[https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic\\_consideration.html](https://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html).

### ***Academic Consideration for Missed Work***

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a *Self-Reported Absence (SRA)* form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the [Senate policy](#) are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

### ***Accessibility Options:***

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

[www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

### ***Mental Health***

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western ([www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

### ***Disputing a Grade***

Students who wish to dispute an assignment, exam, or course grade must write a one-page explanation justifying why their work should be re-evaluated. Work will not be re-evaluated on the basis that students were sick or feeling stressed when completing the assignment. Please be advised that a student's mark may go up or down upon re-evaluation.

### ***Rounding of Marks***

Final marks, irrespective of the number of decimal places used in marking individual assignments and exams, will be calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest integer (e.g., 74.4 becomes 74, 74.5 becomes 75). Marks will not be bumped to the next grade or GPA (e.g., a 79 will not be bumped up to an 80). The mark attained is the mark you achieved; requests for mark "bumping" will go unanswered and will be denied.

### ***Extraordinary Circumstances***

The content and/or evaluation of this course is subject to change in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's or instructor's control.

## **Course**

Please note: This outline is subject to change over the course of the term in order to meet the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced through our OWL course website.

**New material is released on OWL every Wednesday at 9:00am.** Students will have one week to complete all of that week's material at their own pace. All activities and practice questions must be completed by the next Wednesday (at 11:55pm).

### **Week 1 Frameworks for Studying Health Inequalities (May 11<sup>th</sup>)**

Lee, Ronald D. 2003. The demographic transition: Three centuries of fundamental change. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17(4): 167–190.

### **Week 2 Mortality and the Epidemiological Transition (May 18<sup>th</sup>)**

Rowland, Donald. 2003. Chapter 8: Life Tables, Pages 265-293. In: *Demographic Methods and Concepts*. Oxford University Press.

Wilmoth, John. 2000. Demography of Longevity: Past, Present, and Future Trends. *Experimental Gerontology* 35:1111-1129.

Horiuchi, Shiro. 1999. *Epidemiological Transitions in Human History*.

### **Week 3 Disability and Population Aging (May 25th)**

Zajacova, Anna & Jennifer Karas Montez. 2017. Physical Functioning Trends among US Women and Men Age 45–64 by Education Level. *Biodemography and Social Biology* 63:1, 21-30

Sanderson, Warren and Sergei Scherbov. 2008. Rethinking age and aging. *Population Bulletin* 63(4): 1-16.

### **Week 4 Determinants of Mortality Decline (June 1st)**

Oeppen, Jim and James W. Vaupel. 2002. Broken limits to life expectancy. *Science* 296(5570): 1029-1031

Caldwell, John C. 1986. Routes to low mortality in poor countries. *Population and Development Review* 12(2): 171–220

### **Week 5 Health Disparities (June 8th)**

Elo, Irma T. 2009. Social Class Differentials in Health and Mortality: Patterns and Explanations in Comparative Perspective. *Annual Review of Sociology* 35:553-72.

Case, Anne and Christina Paxson. 2005. Sex Differences in Morbidity and Mortality. *Demography* 42(2):189-214.

McKee, M. and V. Shkolnikov. 2001. Understanding the toll of premature death among men in Eastern Europe. *British Medical Journal* 323(3), 1051–1055

### **Week 6 Mid-term Exam (June 15th)**

No new material.

### **Week 7 Global Health and Health Policy (June 22nd)**

Wisdom, J. P., Berlin, M., & Lapidus, J. A. 2005. Relating health policy to women's health outcomes. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(8), 1776-1784.

Frenk J, Gómez-Dantés O, Moon S. 2014. From sovereignty to solidarity: a renewed concept of global health for an era of complex interdependence. *Lancet* 2014;383:94–7.

Lawrence O. Gostin, Suerie Moon, and Benjamin Mason Meier. 2020. Reimagining Global Health Governance in the Age of COVID-19. *American Journal of Public Health* 110, 1615-1619.

### **Week 8 Health Policy in Poor Countries (June 29th)**

Carr, Debra. 2004. Improving the health of the world's poorest people. *Population Reference Bureau Health Bulletin* No. 1.

Three case studies from: Levine, Ruth. 2007. *Case Studies in Global Health: Millions Saved*.

Case #15: Preventing Iodine Deficiency Disease in China

Case #8: Preventing Diarrheal Deaths in Egypt

Case #17: Eliminating Measles in Southern Africa

### **Week 9 Population Growth and Family Planning (July 6th)**

Bongaarts, John and Steven Sinding. 2011. Population policy in transition in the developing world. *Science* 333(6042): 574–576.

Two case studies from: Levine, Ruth. 2007. *Case Studies in Global Health: Millions Saved*.

Case #13: Reducing Fertility in Bangladesh

Case #2: Preventing HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Thailand

### **Week 10 Health Policy in Rich Countries, and Health Behaviors (July 13th)**

Clement, Fiona, M. et al. 2009. Using Effectiveness and Cost-effectiveness to Make Drug Coverage Decisions: A Comparison of Britain, Australia, and Canada. *JAMA* 302(13):1437-1443.

Olshansky, Jay et al., 2005. A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century. *New England Journal of Medicine* 352(11).

Preston, Samuel H. 2005. Deadweight? The Influence of Obesity on Longevity. *New England Journal of Medicine* 352(11):1135-37.

### **Week 11 Social Relationships, Family Changes, and Health (July 20th)**

Umberson, Debra and Jennifer Karas Montez. 2010. Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health Policy. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(2):S54-S66.

Verdery, Ashton M., and Rachel Margolis. 2017. Projections of white and black older adults without living kin in the United States, 2015 to 2060. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2017:103-41.

Pantell, Matthew, et al. 2013. Social Isolation: A Predictor of Mortality Comparable to Traditional Clinical Risk Factors. *American Journal of Public Health* 103(11).

Kolata, Gina. 2011. Catching obesity from friends may not be so easy. *New York Times*, August 8, 2011. URL <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/09/health/09network.html>

### **Week 12 Environmental Problems and Implications for Population Health (July 27th)**

Giles-Corti, B., Vernez-Moudon, A., Reis, R., Turrell, G., Dannenberg, A. L., Badland, H., ... & Owen, N. 2016. City planning and population health: A global challenge. *The Lancet*, 388(10062), 2912-2924.

Sheffield, P. E., & Landrigan, P. J. 2011. Global climate change and children's health: threats and strategies for prevention. *Environmental health perspectives*, 119(3), 291-298.

Johnston, Fay H., et al. 2021. Unprecedented health costs of smoke related PM<sub>2.5</sub> from the 2019–20 Australian megafires. *Nature Sustainability* 4.1 (2021): 42-47.