

Social Epidemiology (Online)

Soc 3673-090

Fall Semester, 2012

Department of Sociology

University of Utah

Credit hours: 3

Location: This is an online course except for exams, which must be taken at a proctored testing center arranged through U-Online.

Instructor:

Yiqing Yang, MBA
Department of Sociology
University of Utah

Email: through the Canvas system (preferred)
or yiqing.yang@soc.utah.edu
Office: 424 BEH S

Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION¹:

Why does a disease develop in some people and not in others? What is the burden of a disease in the community? How does a disease spread quickly from a population to another and even across the world? Can public policies regarding disease prevention and health promotion make a difference in controlling or reducing the spread of disease? What kind of influence the ObamaCare would have on the health outcomes of Americans and on their quality of life? Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health-related outcomes in populations. This course will provide students with an understanding of the basic principles of epidemiologic study design, analysis and interpretation. We will examine how epidemiologists measure morbidity, mortality, and life expectancy across a population. We will discover how to statistically identify the risk factors or causes of a disease. Also in this course, we will explore social epidemiology as a social science by reviewing the social causes and consequences of health, especially on how social factors contribute to the development and distribution of disease and health inequality.

CLASS OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able:

- To calculate, interpret, and compare various measures of morbidity, mortality, survival, and measures of disease-exposure associations; and to decide the validity and reliability of diagnostic tests;
- To explain the logic, pros and cons of various epidemiological study designs;
- To critically read, analyze and discuss epidemiological studies;
- To understand the complexity and importance of social factors and social interactions in forming social disparity in health outcomes.

¹ To create this syllabus, I drew from Dr. Ming Wen and Michael S. Hollingshaus who taught the same course in the department of sociology.

PREREQUISITES:

The course fulfills both the Quantitative Reasoning (QB) and Quantitative Intensive (QI) requirements of the University of Utah. Knowledge of basic algebra and elementary statistics is required before taking this course. Students must have already completed one of the following courses prior to enrolling.

- Soc 3112
- Econ 3640
- Fcs 3210
- Psy 3000

The student should contact the instructor for permission to register for the course if the prerequisites are not completed.

READINGS

Required Text:

Leon Gordis's Epidemiology (4th edition). Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders. 2008.

A copy of the textbook is on reserve in the Marriott library.

Additional Assigned Readings (Provided by the Instructor):

Berkman, Lisa F. and Ichiro Kawachi. 2000. "A Historical Framework for Social Epidemiology." Pp. 3-12 in *Social Epidemiology*, edited by L. F. Berkman and I. Kawachi. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bongaarts, John, Thomas Buettner, Gerhard Heilig, and François Pelletier. 2008. "Has the HIV Epidemic Peaked?" *Population and Development Review* 34:199-224.

Kiene, Susan M. and William D. Barta. 2006. "A Brief Individualized Computer-Delivered Sexual Risk Reduction Intervention Increases HIV/AIDS Preventive Behavior." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 39:404-410.

Link, Bruce G. and Jo Phelan. 1995. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35:80-94.

Reilly, John J, Julie Armstrong, Ahmad R Dorosty, Pauline M Emmett, A Ness, I Rogers, Colin Steer, and Andrea Sherriff. 2005. "Early Life Risk Factors for Obesity in Childhood: Cohort Study." *BMJ* 330:1357.

Smeeth, Liam, Claire Cook, Eric Fombonne, Lisa Heavey, Laura C. Rodrigues, Peter G. Smith, and Andrew J. Hall. 2004. "MMR Vaccination and Pervasive Developmental Disorders: A Case-control Study." *The Lancet* 364:963-969.

Syme S. Leonard and Irene H. Yen. 2000. "Social Epidemiology and Medical Sociology: Different Approaches to the Same Problem. Pp. 365-376 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology*, edited by C. E. Bird, P. Conrad, and A. M. Fremont. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Wise, Paul H. 2003. "The Anatomy of a Disparity in Infant Mortality." *Annual Review of Public Health* 24:341-362.

Videos:

Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge - How Safe Are We?

Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge - Back to the Basics?

The Great Leveler

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? - In *Sickness and In Wealth & Place Matters*.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

1. Proctored Exams (40%)

There will be two proctored, open-book exams, a Midterm and a Final. Both exams will be based on all materials covered in this class, including the textbook, lecture notes, videos, and additional assigned readings. You will have a maximum of 120 minutes to complete each exam. Each exam is worth 20 percent of your final grade.

Each student is responsible to arrange specific exam times during the exam week through UOnline (uonline-testing@lists.utah.edu; <https://uonline.utah.edu>). You will be required to sign up for your exam time slot at least 1 business day before you take the exam (example: students wishing to take an exam on Wednesday must register for the exam by 11:59pm on Monday). You can also select to take exams at the Sandy, Murray and Bountiful extension offices. Make-up exams will be given only if you have a legitimate reason and have properly notified the instructor **before the exam**. Otherwise, no make-up exam will be scheduled and no credit will be given for a missed exam. All make-up exams will be arranged through UOnline. You need to contact the instructor to set this up.

Midterm: Week of October 1 - October 7

Final: Week of December 10 - December 14

2. Online Quizzes (15%)

There will be four timed quizzes completed online in Canvas system. The quizzes will focus more specifically upon the conceptual/factual information presented in the textbook, lecture notes, videos, and additional readings. You may use whatever materials you wish to help you out, but you must not consult another person. The quizzes will be accessible from *Wednesday through Saturday midnight*. **Do not open the quiz before you plan on taking it!** Once you begin a quiz, the timer starts and you will be unable to stop it. Make sure you are ready to take the quiz and you are in a stable computer environment before starting it. Please note that no make-up quizzes will be given, even for emergency situations. However, I will drop your lowest quiz score from your final grade. Each graded quiz is worth 5 percent of your final grade.

3. Homework (20%)

There will be four homework assignments throughout the semester, which will focus more specifically upon quantitative calculations. These must be typed (or handwritten and scanned) and submitted online through the Canvas system. Homework assignments will be due by *Saturday midnight*. Late assignments will be accepted for partial credit. Each homework assignment is worth 5 percent of your final grade.

I will start a discussion board for each homework assignment, where you can request help on the homework and provide assistance to other students. You are not required to participate in these discussions, but you will likely find them helpful.

4. Online Discussion (25%)

There will be twelve online discussion sessions throughout the semester: one for each additional assigned reading or video. These discussions are designed to (1) introduce you to some key social epidemiological paradigms; (2) provide you with the opportunities to critically reading, analyzing and discussing social epidemiological studies; (3) deepen your textbook understanding by exposing you to the real-world data and evidences.

For each required discussion, I will post a series of questions in a discussion board on Canvas. Each student is required to:

- Post a well-reasoned answer to at least one of my questions;
- Respond to at least TWO other student answers or responses.

There is often no a correct or wrong answer to these discussion questions. They are designed to provoke discussion. Answer should be more than a simple “yes” or “no” or “I agree”. Answers and responses should be at least four sentences in length. You are expected to explain why you agree or disagree with the author’s claims. Always explain why you think the way you do. Disagreement and critical thinking are part of healthy debate; however, rude and demeaning comments are not acceptable (see the **Student & Faculty Responsibilities** section of this syllabus).

Discussions are due on *Saturday* midnight. Each discussion is worth 2 percent of your final grade. One more percent will be automatically added to students who miss none of all the discussions.

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on your rounded total score and guided by the following scale:

A 100%-94%	B + 89%-87%	C + 79%-77%	D + 69%-67%	E 59%-0%
	B 86%-83%	C 76%-73%	D 66%-63%	
A - 90%-93%	B - 80%-82%	C - 70%-72%	D - 60%-62%	

ONLINE COMPONENTS OF COURSE

The following notes are important given this is a fully online course (except for exams) will be completed online.

- Online setting and the Canvas system
 - This class can be "attended" from wherever there is an Internet connection. Competence in using an Internet browser and Canvas system is required of the student.
 - With the exceptions of the exams, all quizzes, homework assignments, discussions are completed and submitted via the Canvas system on the Internet.

- All course materials including lecture notes, quizzes, homework assignments, additional readings, videos, and discussion questions are also posted on Canvas system.
- Canvas system uses electronic dating, so you cannot submit quizzes late. For students who are in different time zones, keep in mind that the due dates of this class will follow Utah time.
- Please check the course site and your email via Canvas system on a regular basis. It is highly encouraged you follow the course schedule closely and not get lagged behind.
- Electronic or equipment failure
 - It is your responsibility to maintain your computer and related equipment in order to participate in the online portion of the course.
 - **Equipment failures** will not be an acceptable excuse for late or absent assignments.
- Discussion threads, e-mails, and chat rooms are all considered to be equivalent to classrooms, and student behavior within those environments shall conform to the Student Code. Specifically:
 - Posting photos or comments that would be considered off-topic in a classroom is still off-topic in an online setting.
 - Off-color language and photos are never appropriate.
 - Using angry or abusive language online will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with according to the Student Code.
 - Do not use ALL CAPS, except for titles, since it is the equivalent of shouting online, as is overuse of certain punctuation marks such as exclamation points e.g. !!!! and question marks e.g. ?????.
 - Course e-mails, discussion postings and other online course communications are part of the classroom and as such, are University property and therefore will be subject to GRAMA regulations and the Student Code. Privacy regarding these communications between correspondents must not be assumed and should be mutually agreed upon in advance, in writing.

STUDENT & FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of both students and the instructor to maintain an environment that is safe, respectful, and conducive to learning and critically thinking. Individuals in the course will have different backgrounds and viewpoints. Open and critical dialogue is essential to achieve the objectives of the course; but comments or actions that are hurtful, unkind, uncivil, or intimidating will hamper the learning process, and are not acceptable.

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, and fabrication or falsification of information are serious offenses. The perpetrating student will be punished by failure the individual assessment, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. I will also report any incidences of academic misconduct to the chair of the sociology department. All students should be familiar with the formal definitions of academic misconduct, as outlined in the University of Utah Student Code at <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the *Center for Disability Services*, 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. Please discuss any concerns with the instructor as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE*

Weeks	Text Material	External Readings	Videos	Due
1	Aug 20	Ch 1, 2	Berkman	Discussion
2	Aug 27	Ch 3		How Safe Are We?
3	Sep 3	Ch 4	Bongaarts	Discussion Quiz 1
4	Sep 10	Ch 6		Back to Basics?
5	Sep 17	Ch 7, 8	Kiene	Discussion Quiz 2
6	Sep 24	<i>Catch-up & Review</i>		Homework 2
7	Oct 1	<i>Midterm</i>		<i>Midterm</i>
8	Oct 8	<i>Fall Break</i>		<i>Fall Break</i>
9	Oct 15	Ch 20	Wise	Discussion
10	Oct 22	Ch 9, 10, 13		The Great Leveler
11	Oct 29	Ch 11, 12	Reilly	Discussion Quiz 3
12	Nov 5	Ch 14, 15, 16	Smeeth	Discussion Homework 3
13	Nov 12	Ch 5, 18		Unnatural Causes
14	Nov 19	Ch 17, 19	Link	Discussion
15	Nov 26	Ch 16	Syme	Discussion
16	Dec 3	<i>Catch-up & Review</i>		Homework 4
17	Dec 10	<i>Final</i>		<i>Final</i>

* The videos and external readings are subject to modification by the instructor.