SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

COURSE DURATION

This course will meet on three mornings, 8:30 am-12:30 pm, Tuesday June 11, through Thursday June 13, 2019.

INSTRUCTOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social epidemiology is the branch of epidemiology that considers how social interactions and purposive human activity affect health. In other words, social epidemiology is about how a society’s innumerable social interactions, past and present, yield differential exposures and thus differences in health outcomes between persons who make up populations. Social epidemiology is thus not only about the identification of new disease specific risk factors (e.g., deficient social capital) it is also about how well-known exposures (e.g., cigarette smoking, lead paint, health insurance) emerge and are maintained by the social system. Importantly, social epidemiology is informing efforts to improve social systems (e.g., policy), address health inequities, and improve population health. In short, social epidemiology is about social allocation mechanisms (i.e., economic and social forces) that produce differential exposures that often yield health disparities, be they deemed good or bad. In the end, this course aims to introduce students to the foundational and cutting-edge issues, both theoretical and methodological, in the subdiscipline.

PREREQUISITES

None

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

None
COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1) Define social epidemiology and its scope

2) Describe the broad landscape of social epidemiologic research and its importance for understanding and addressing health disparities

3) Assess the quality and utility of existing and future social epidemiologic research

4) Recognize the possibilities for improving health by addressing the culture of health in a society

COURSE READINGS

No texts are required. Instead, all readings (PDF version) will be made freely available on the class website (see www.oakeslab.org).

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course will be delivered in-person as part of the 2019 Summer Program in Population Health. All sessions will take place on June 11-13, 2019, from 8:30am – 12:30am daily, in the West Bank Office Building (WBOB) at the University of Minnesota (room TBD). There is easy fee-based surface parking if desired.

The course will be based on discussion of reading and informal lectures by the instructor. Class participation in discussion is strongly required. Light readings will motivate discussion.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1 – What Is Social Epidemiology and Why Does it Matter?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday June 11</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8:30 am – 12:30 am</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Objectives:</strong> In this class meeting we will discuss what social epidemiology is and where it came from. We will address what is different about it, and what are the fundamental research issues in/for social epidemiology. We will learn how social forces (e.g., economics, social norms, institutions) drive so much of population health.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assigned Reading:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Recommended Reading:</strong></td>
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**Class 2 – Research Methods in Social Epidemiology**

**Weds June 12 8:30 am – 12:30 am**  
Learning Objectives: In this class meeting we will learn about some core research design and methodological issues in social epidemiology and

Assigned Reading:


Recommended Reading:


### Class 3 – What Can Be Done Now?

**Thurs June 13**  
**8:30 am – 12:30 am**

**Learning Objectives:** In this class meeting we will learn why, if at all, social epidemiology research is useful for improving population health. We will address key controversies and consider some core weaknesses of the social epidemiologic perspective.

**Assigned Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

Nandi & Harper. 2015. “How consequentialist is social epi” Current Epidemiology Reports