

**SOC 457 Society and Health**  
SPRING 2019  
Tu/Th 10:00-11:15  
CBC-C116

*Instructor:* Professor Elizabeth Lawrence  
*Email:* Elizabeth.lawrence@unlv.edu

*Office:* CBC-B 243  
*Office Hours:* W 2-4 or by appointment

*TA:* Karen Villa  
*Email:* villak13@unlv.nevada.edu

*Office:* CBC-B 204  
*Office Hours:* M 11-1

---

This upper-level course introduces medical sociology and the social determinants of health. This course will cover a range of interdisciplinary perspectives, but primarily emphasize sociological contributions. The content focuses on the United States and its diverse, multicultural population, but also considers some key global phenomena. This course will give you a foundation of knowledge about how social factors shape health. It will also improve many important skills, such as critical thinking, critical reading, writing, and public speaking.

Examples of questions we will answer in this course include:

- What social factors contribute to longer life?
- How do social class, race, ethnicity, gender, and other social factors shape health?
- How do health behaviors such as smoking or exercise shape health?
- How does health in the United States compare to other countries?
- What policies improve health?
- What is the role of health care in reducing or exacerbating health disparities?

### **Course Structure**

Generally, each class will be a mixture of lecture, large- and small-group discussions, and small-group activities, focusing on critical thinking and the application of real-life experiences to sociological ideas. You are encouraged to be on the lookout for real-life examples of the concepts we discuss (in the media, in your everyday interactions, etc.) and to bring these examples to class for us to talk about.

Please be aware that some course requirements or assigned readings may change. However, the overall workload will not increase if changes are made.

### **Course Materials**

There is no required book for purchase. The text for this course (*Population Health in America* by Robert Hummer and Erin Hamilton) is not yet in print, so we will use PDFs of the chapters (posted on WebCampus). I suggest you print these chapters out (which uses paper/ink and costs money, but perhaps less than buying the book). The text in each chapter refers to tables, figures, boxes, and footnotes which are then provided at the end of the chapter – be sure to look at these!

Additional readings will also be posted as PDFs on WebCampus.

**Course Contacts:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email/phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email/phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Requirements**

1) Course participation (20%): Attendance at all class sessions is essential and expected. Most class sessions will involve discussion of the readings and/or course requirement information. Course participation will be comprised of: attendance, completion of in-class activities, contribution to whole class discussions, and participation in small group discussions. During most class days, I will ask that you submit some written component of an activity that will count towards your participation grade. These submissions may occur anytime during the class period, and may ask that you reflect on the required readings (especially the articles posted on WebCampus – hint, hint).

Students receiving low participation grades will: have poor attendance, does not pay attention/take notes, does not contribute to discussions/activities, is unprepared for class, is physically but not mentally present in class, does not do the readings prior to class, may distract other students, uses phone during class. Students receiving high participation grades will demonstrate: punctual, regular class attendance, comes to class prepared for the day’s materials including having read the materials, is curious and ask questions, takes notes, pays attention to the instructor and classmates, contributes to whole class and small group discussions. If you are uncomfortable about speaking in class, please email me to discuss strategies or alternative arrangements.

2) Mini-exams (40% total, 20% each): Exams cannot be made up except in unusual circumstances documented above. Exams will include a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essays, and will be discussed further in class. The midterm will cover the first seven weeks of content, and the final will cover the information subsequent to the midterm. That is, the final is non-cumulative.

3) Disparity presentation (10%): Each student will present on a health disparity sometime during the semester. Presentations are 5-7 minutes long, and time will be strictly enforced. During the second week of class, I will give a sample demonstration, distribute the guidelines and rubric, and provide a list of sample topics. Each student will sign up for a presentation date (no more than 2 students per date) and topic (e.g. child asthma across race/ethnicity). You may choose from the list of topics or create your own topic, but new topics must be approved at least one week prior to the presentation.

4) Research assignments (30% total): For this part of your course grade, you will complete two paper projects that involve a combination of original research and writing/presentation.

Assignment 1 (Health in the media, 15% of grade): For this assignment, you will identify how health is portrayed in the media using a particular advertisement or group of advertisements (in print, on television, or on the internet). You will write a 3-5 page paper analyzing the advertisement from a sociological perspective and in light of health research on the topic. Instructions for this assignment will be discussed in class during week 3. The paper will be due on April 2.

Assignment 2 (Policy recommendation, 15% of grade): For this assignment, you will create a policy recommendation for improving the health of local residents. You will choose a health outcome or health behavior and a population (e.g. reducing smoking among teenagers), and then research policies and programs that address this health issue. This project is to be completed in small groups and some class time will be provided for planning. The group will create a one-page information sheet on the recommendation, and each individual will write a three-page paper describing and providing evidence for these recommendations. Details on the assignment will be discussed during Week 11, when you will choose your groups. The information sheet, paper, and a brief evaluation of group members will be due on May 2.

### Grading structure (totals to 100%)

Course Participation 20%

Presentation 10%

Research assignments 30%

Exams 40%

**Grading Philosophy:** Below is the standard for the level of assessment of written assignments and overall evaluation for course grades. These standards may be higher than those you may have encountered previously. The distribution of final grades will meet the standards for fair and rigorous evaluation.

Letter Grade	Percentage Grade	Description
<b>A</b>	<b>90-100</b>	<i>Exceptional:</i> Exceeds all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably higher than what was required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator.
<b>B</b>	<b>80-89</b>	<i>Good:</i> Meets all required elements of the assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required.
<b>C</b>	<b>70-79</b>	<i>Average:</i> Meets all required elements of an assignment, not more, not less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work.
<b>D</b>	<b>60-69</b>	<i>Below average:</i> Does not meet all the required elements of the assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory.
<b>F</b>	<b>59 and below</b>	<i>Failing:</i> Few of the requirements of the assignment are met and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions.

The following table shows the course grading system and final letter grade.

	Percent		Percent
A	93-100	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	D	63-66
B+	87-89	D-	60-62
B	83-86	F	<60
B-	80-82		
C+	77-79		
C	73-76		
C-	70-72		

All course assignments will be completed and handed in on the assigned date. There will be no make-up exams or activities and no exceptions to this policy. All course assignments are due on the assigned due date. The following deductions will be taken if your assignment is late:

1 day late (including the same day but after class)	10 point deduction
2 days late	20 point deduction
3 days late	30 point deduction
4 <sup>th</sup> day and beyond	WILL NOT ACCEPT ("0" points)

### Course Policies:

1. Getting to class late, sleeping, talking out of turn, reading, using your phone for calls, internet use, or text messaging, or otherwise being distracted and distracting, are not acceptable classroom activities.
2. I encourage you to not use your laptop/tablet in class, as it is usually more of a distraction than a helpful tool (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/students-are-better-off-without-a-laptop-in-the-classroom/>), but the decision is yours. Any technology use that distracts other students is not permissible.
3. Please let me know immediately if you have a health problem or disability that necessitates leaving the room during class time, or if you have a conflict that regularly prevents you from getting to class on time.
4. If you miss a class, please get notes from a classmate. **You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.** Information on scheduling changes, assigned work, and announcements may be emailed to students, so you should check your email regularly.
5. All assignments must be handed in as **hard copies at the beginning of class** on the stated due date. Emailed copies will be deducted 10 points. Written work must be spell-checked, grammar-checked, and proofread. The quality of your writing will affect your grade.
6. I will not give incompletes in this course except under extremely unusual, well-documented circumstances.
7. Make-up exams will not be given except under unusual, well-documented circumstances.
8. I want you to do well in this class! If you become concerned about your grade, please see me immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester when you have less work to complete that can raise your grade.
9. When I return written work to you with a grade, take some time to read the comments. I will not discuss your grade until 24 hours after you have received your returned work. If you have concerns, make an appointment with me during office hours and bring your specific questions or comments.

Office hours/Getting Help: No appointment is needed during office hours. I am happy to talk with you about academic issues that are unrelated to course material, such as deciding whether to major in sociology, graduate school, etc. I will also answer questions over email and will check class emails once a day on weekdays. Please write professionally in all emails (e.g., use a greeting such as Dear Dr. Lawrence, use complete sentences, and a closing/signature such as Sincerely, Jane/John Doe). Here are a few websites that can help with professional emails: <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>; <https://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>; <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>

Email/Web Page: Important information will be communicated over email, so make sure that you regularly check the email address listed for you in the university administrative system. The syllabus, schedule, readings, handouts, assignments, and other information will be posted on the course website. The most recent course information will be available here, as information that is on this syllabus may be changed over the course of the semester. Email updates will be sent out when important material is posted on the website. You must regularly log into the course website so that this important information can reach you.

For policies regarding classroom behavior, discrimination and harassment, honor code, religious holidays, and students with disabilities, see end of the syllabus.

**SCHEDULE (reading assignment is due before the first listed class):**

Please be aware that some course requirements or assigned readings may change during the semester. However, the overall workload will remain the same if changes are made.

	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
<b>WEEK 1</b>			
Jan. 22	Course introduction	Course syllabus	
Jan 24	Society and Health	H&H Chapter 1	
<b>WEEK 2</b>			
Jan 29	Population health in the U.S.	H&H Chapter 2 pp.1-17	
Jan 31	Population health in the U.S. <i>-Sign-up for disparity presentation</i>	H&H Chapter 2 pp.18-30	
<b>WEEK 3</b>			
Feb 5	Population health in the U.S. <i>-Discuss Assignment #1</i>	WC Reading #1	
Feb 7	Population health in international context	H&H Chapter 3	
<b>WEEK 4</b>			
Feb 12	Spatial and Social contexts	H&H Chapter 4	
Feb 14	Spatial and Social contexts	WC Reading #2	
<b>WEEK 5</b>			
Feb 19	Socioeconomic status	H&H Chapter 5 pp.1-15	
Feb 21	Socioeconomic status	H&H Chapter 5 pp.16-33	
<b>WEEK 6</b>			
Feb 26	Socioeconomic status	WC Reading #3	
Feb 28	Socioeconomic status <i>-Guest speaker: Alexis Merz from Three Square</i>	WC Reading #4	
<b>WEEK 7</b>			
March 5	Race/ethnicity and nativity <i>-Class time to work on Assignment 1</i>	H&H Chapter 6 pp.1-18	<b>Bring advertisement and ~5 references to work on in class</b>
March 7	Race/ethnicity and nativity	H&H Chapter 6 pp.19-33	

<b>WEEK 8</b>			
March 12	Midterm Exam		<b>EXAM</b>
March 14	Race/ethnicity and nativity	WC Reading #5	
<b>SPRING BREAK</b>			
<b>WEEK 10</b>			
March 26	Gender	H&H Chapter 7 pp.1-13	
March 28	Gender <i>-Class time to work on Assignment 1</i>	H&H Chapter 7 pp. 13-23	<b>Bring rough draft to work on in class</b>
<b>WEEK 11</b>			
April 2	Sexuality	WC Reading #6	<b>Assignment #1 due</b>
April 4	Social support <i>-Discuss Assignment #2; choose groups</i>	WC Reading #7	
<b>WEEK 12</b>			
April 9	Intergenerational relationships	WC Reading #8	
April 11	Stress	WC Reading #9	
<b>WEEK 13</b>			
April 16	Policies and Programs	H&H Chapter 8	
April 18	Policies and Programs	H&H Chapter 8	
<b>WEEK 14</b>			
April 23	Health care in the US	WC Reading #10	
April 25	Health care in the US	WC Reading #11	
<b>WEEK 15</b>			
April 30	Health in Nevada	WC Reading #12	
May 2	Health in Nevada	WC Reading #13	<b>Assignment #2 due</b>
<b>WEEK 16</b>			
May 7	Technology, social media, and politics	WC Reading #14	
May 9	Study week day		
<b>WEEK 17</b>			
Finals Week	FINAL TUESDAY MAY 14 10:10-12:10		<b>EXAM</b>

H&H=Hummer and Hamilton text (PDFs available on Webcampus in the “Hummer and Hamilton” folder)

WC Reading=Webcampus readings (PDFs available on Webcampus in the “Readings” folder).

## OFFICIAL POLICIES

**Academic Misconduct**—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the Student Academic Misconduct Policy (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

**Classroom Conduct**—Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn or of instructors to teach. Use of electronic devices such as pagers, cellular phones, or recording devices, or potentially disruptive devices or activities, are permitted only with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative drop.

**Classroom Surveillance**—Nevada Revised Statutes (State Law) 396.970 Surreptitious electronic surveillance on campus; exceptions. [Effective January 1, 2017.]

1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, it is unlawful for a person to engage in any kind of surreptitious electronic surveillance on a campus of the System without the knowledge of the person being observed.

2. Subsection 1 does not apply to any electronic surveillance:

- (a) Authorized by a court order issued to a public officer, based upon a showing of probable cause to believe that criminal activity is occurring on the property under surveillance;
  - (b) By a law enforcement agency pursuant to a criminal investigation;
  - (c) By a peace officer pursuant to NRS 289.830;
  - (d) By a uniformed peace officer of the Nevada Highway Patrol Division of the Department of Public Safety pursuant to NRS 480.365;
  - (e) Which is necessary as part of a system of security used to protect and ensure the safety of persons on the campus; or
  - (f) Of a class or laboratory when authorized by the teacher of the class or laboratory.
- (Added to NRS by 1993, 2138; A 2015, 575, 3668, effective January 1, 2017)

**Copyright**—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and

the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Incomplete Grades**—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “T” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

**Library Resources**—Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. Subject librarians for various classes can be found here: [https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians\\_by\\_subject](https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students’ access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.

**Religious Holidays Policy**—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

**Transparency in Learning and Teaching**—The University encourages students to use a transparency template to discuss with their instructors how assignments and course activities benefit student success: [https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page\\_files/27/TILT-Framework-Students.pdf](https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/TILT-Framework-Students.pdf).

**Tutoring and Coaching**—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TBE second floor.

**UNLV Writing Center**—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.