

## **Social Epidemiology Online (Soc 3673-90) Summer First Half, 2019**

### **INSTRUCTOR**

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### **TEACHING ASSISTANT**

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**Office hours via Canvas or phone: noon to 3pm on Wednesdays or by appointment**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Why does disease develop in some people or some places but not in others? What is the burden of a disease in a community? How does disease spread from a population to another and even across the world? What are the risk or protective factors of health and mortality? Can public policies regarding disease prevention and health promotion make a difference in controlling or reducing the spread of disease?

Epidemiology is the study of the distribution and determinants of health, disease, and mortality in human populations. Epidemiology is also concerned with analyzing health-related data to better understand the natural causes of diseases and provide evidence for the development of public health interventions and policies. Using a variety of methods, we will cover topics such as how exposure to a factor affects health, how disease spreads across a population, and how public health interventions can help control or reduce the spread of disease. We will explore the various types of research methods used in epidemiology, as well as how to statistically identify the risk factors or causes of disease. We will also watch several films and read a review article to further understand social epidemiology as social science, addressing how social, political, cultural, and economic circumstances influence our chances for a healthy life.

### **CLASS OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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;
- to assess the validity and reliability of diagnostic tests;
- to explain the logic, strengths, and weaknesses 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.

## **PREREQUISITES:**

Successful completion of SOC 3673 will satisfy the following University of Utah general education requirement: Quantitative Reasoning B (**QB**), as well as the following bachelor degree requirement: the BS Quantitative Intensive (**QI**) requirement. Knowledge of basic algebra and elementary statistics is required before taking this course.

## **TEXTBOOK**

Text: *Leon Gordis's Epidemiology* (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> edition). Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders

## **ADDITIONAL READING**

Syme SL & Yen IH. 2000. "Social epidemiology and medical sociology: Different approaches to the same problem." (available on Canvas)

## **LEARNING MODULES**

PowerPoints slides will be posted in the weekly module. The instructor selectively goes over some slides and provides audio files for these lectures (available in the corresponding weekly module). These mp3 files correspond to the PowerPoint slides and will be named accordingly. All the assignments and assessment items will also be posted in the weekly learning modules.

## **CANVAS**

All course materials are posted on Canvas. The content in each week's module will be released on Monday morning. Each module starts with a message highlighting what to expect during the week. All the lectures notes (PPT and audio files), assignments, and assessment items are also posted in the weekly learning modules.

Please check the course site regularly. This is a **highly intensive** course. It is strongly encouraged that you closely follow the course schedule, keeping up with the fast pace of the course material, and not getting lagged behind. **Please link your canvas account to your personal contact methods via email or phone texting.**

## **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

This class can be "attended" from wherever there is a functioning Internet connection. All lecture notes, discussion threads, homework assignments, quizzes, and exams are posted and submitted on Canvas. Competence in using an Internet browser and Canvas is necessary to take this class effectively.

## **EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE**

Email via Canvas is the best way to communicate with the instructor and the TA. We do our absolute best to respond to emails within 24 hours, though additional time may be required if your query requires considerable thought and/or a lengthy explanation. Or if you email us on a Friday night. Any questions or requests for clarification should be made well in advance. In other words, do not leave everything until the last minute (or last hours before the due dates) if you need us to help.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING**

- **Homework assignments (5%)** – There will be three homework assignments in this class. They are based on the textbook including both quantitative and substantive problems. Homework assignments will be posted on Canvas. They are due at midnight on Sunday in that week. Late assignments are not accepted regardless of the reason for the delay; so try to avoid last minute submission. The grading of the homework assignments will be based on the extent of the completion rather than accuracy. Students are encouraged to collaborate on these homework assignments. A ‘General Discussion’ thread has been created to facilitate student-to-student interaction.
- **Quizzes (35%)** – There will be five timed weekly quizzes. The quizzes are to be completed on Canvas. Quizzes will be open on Monday morning and closed on Sunday midnight. ***Do not open the quiz if you do not plan on taking it!*** Once you begin a quiz, the timer starts, and you will NOT be able to stop it. Make sure you are ready to take the quiz, and you are in a stable computer/Internet environment before starting it. You may use whatever materials you wish to help you out while taking the quiz, but **you must not consult another person**. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final grade to accommodate any unexpected contingencies. No additional accommodations will be given. Quizzes cannot be redone or made up.
- **Online Discussion (10%)** – There will be four online discussion sessions. Each session will run for a week. The discussion threads will be open on Monday morning and closed at midnight on Sunday. Each student is expected to post at least one meaningful comment on the discussion thread to receive full credit. Comments posted after the Sunday midnight deadline will not receive credit.
- **Final Exam (50%)** – In the last week, there will be one final cumulative online exam consisted of true/false and multiple choice questions. The exams will be entirely based on the corresponding course materials including the textbook, lecture notes, films, and additional required readings. This is a timed, open-book, open-note exam completed online in Canvas. You may use whatever materials you wish to help you out while taking the exam, but **you must not consult another person**. ***Do not open the exam if you do not plan on taking it!*** Once you begin the exam, the timer starts, and you will not be able to stop it. You only have one chance to take the exam. Make sure you are ready to take the exam, and you are in a stable computer environment before starting it. The deadline for taking this exam is midnight of June 19 (Wed) when the first summer session ends.
- **Extra credit**– In the last week, there is a final, cumulative, optional quiz where you can earn up to 15 extra exam points. The deadline for taking this exam is midnight of June 19 (Wed) when the first summer session ends.

Your **final letter grade** will be given based on your total numerical score after taking into account all the grade components and will be **curved** according to the class performance. There is no fixed scale at the University to convert from a number to a letter. It is at the discretion of every instructor. In this course, **the average usually is a B/B+**.

Many students find the material in this course challenging. Having said that, we believe that every student is capable of succeeding in this course provided he or she is willing to put in the necessary effort.

## **LATE POLICY**

- The deadline is enforced electronically and strictly by **Canvas** based on its server's clock of **Utah Time**. Each activity/assignment/test is due at 11:59 PM on the corresponding due day. Be sure to pay close attention to the deadlines. It is your responsibility to finish and submit assignments, discussion comments, quizzes, and exams on time.
- No late submission will be accepted. There is no exception. A late or missed activity, assignment or test will receive a score of zero automatically.
- Computer or Internet or power related problems (i.e., electronic or equipment failure) are not valid excuses for not completing or submitting an assignment on time. It is your responsibility to keep your computer, Internet, and related equipment functioning in order to participate in this online class effectively. You are given a whole week to do a homework assignment, attend discussion session and take the quiz. It is advisable to complete the assignments early enough to avoid last-minute submission.

## **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

- An 'incomplete' will only be granted if you can justify to the instructor that you cannot finish the course because of circumstances beyond your control and if the majority of course work is already completed.
- If you are a member of a university athletic team and need accommodations, you must provide the instructor with a schedule of games and team commitments within the first two weeks of the semester.
- Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Any quiz or exam that is handed in must be your work! However, working with other students to learn the course materials together is encouraged, and student collaboration is allowed for homework assignments.

Recognizing the distinction between cheating and collaboration is very important.

- If you copy someone else's solution, you are cheating. If you let someone else copy your solution, you are cheating. Both the person who copied a solution and the person who let other students copy his or her solution was copied are treated as cheaters.
- If someone dictates a solution to you, you are cheating. Everything you hand in must be in your own words and based on your own understanding of the solution.
- If someone helps you understand the problem during a high-level discussion, you are not cheating. Students are encouraged to help one another to understand the material.
- When taking an exam, you must work independently. Any collaboration during a quiz or an exam will be considered cheating. Canvas can log your presence and activities on Canvas.
- Any student who is caught cheating will be given an E in the course and referred to the Dean of Students. Many students think they can get away with cheating and will not be caught. But it is much easier to spot cheaters than you might think! Please don't take that chance.
- Classroom equivalency: Discussion threads, e-mails, and chat rooms are all considered to be equivalent of a classroom setting, and the student behavior within those environments shall conform to the Student Code.
  - Posting photos or comments that would be considered off-topic in a classroom are still off-topic in an online posting.
  - 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.
- The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when students are given reasonable notice of the modification.

## **INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- ***The Americans with Disabilities Act.*** 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 this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
  - ***Accommodation Policy (see Section Q):*** <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-100.php>
- ***Addressing Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).
- ***Plagiarism/Cheating.*** It is assumed that all work submitted to your instructor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code, “includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.” For detailed definitions and possible sanctions please see the **Student Code** below. <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

- **Wellness Statement.** Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructor or TA before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the Center for Student wellness at [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu) or 801-581-7776.
- **Veterans Support Center.** The Veterans Support Center is a “one stop shop” for student veterans to find services, support, advocacy, and camaraderie. They are located in the Park Building Room 201. You can visit their website for more information about their services and support at <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu>.
- **LGBT Resource Center.** The University of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 of the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu>.
- **Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language.** If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli>).
- Please let us know if there is any additional support you would like to discuss for this class.

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*As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.*



## CAMPUS RESOURCES

**U Heads Up App:** There's an app for that. Download the app on your smartphone at <http://alert.utah.edu/headsup> to access the following resources:

- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus.
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus if you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911!
- **Safety Escorts:** For students who are on campus at night or passed business hours and would like an escort to your care, please call 801-585-2677. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will be sent to walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location.



## COURSE SCHEDULE\*

WEEK	ASSIGNMENTS
<b>1. May 13</b>	Ch 1 - Introduction
	Ch 2 - The Dynamics of Disease Transmission
	<b>Film "Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge - How Safe are We?"</b>
	Online discussion session 1 (about the film; May 13 – May 19)
	Quiz 1 due at midnight of May 19
<b>2. May 20</b>	Ch 3 - Morbidity Measures
	Ch 4 - Mortality Measures
	<b>Film "Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge – Back to Basics?"</b>
	Online discussion session 2 (about the film; May 20 – May 26)
	Homework assignment 1 due at midnight of May 26
<b>3. May 27</b>	Quiz 2 due at midnight of May 26
	Homework assignment 1 answer key released
	Ch 7, 8 - Randomized Trials
	Ch 9, 10 – Observational study designs
	<b>Film - "The Great Leveler"</b>
<b>4. June 3</b>	Online discussion session 3 (about the film; May 27 – June 2)
	Homework assignment 2 due at midnight of June 2
	Quiz 3 due at midnight of June 2
	Homework assignment 2 answer key released
	Ch 5 - Validity and Reliability & Ch 6 - Survival and Prognosis
<b>5. June 10</b>	Ch 11, 12 - Estimating Risk
	Quiz 4 due at midnight of June 9
	No film or discussion this week
	Ch 14, 15 - Association vs. Causation / Bias, Confounding, & Interaction
	Additional reading “Social Epidemiology” (Syme and Yen 2000)
<b>6. June 17</b>	<b>Film: “In Sickness and In Wealth” &amp; “Place Matters”</b>
	Online discussion session 4 (about the two films; June 10 – June 16)
	Homework assignment 3 due at midnight of June 16
	Quiz 5 due at midnight of June 16
	Homework assignment 3 answer key released
	Final exam (cumulative) taken on Canvas before the midnight of June 19 (Wed)
	Extra credit optional quiz (cumulative) taken on Canvas before the midnight of June 19 (Wed)

## **FILMS AVAILABLE ONLINE:**

- RX for Survival: How Safe Are We?  
<https://login.ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/login?url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=102998&xtid=44354>
- RX for Survival: Back to the Basics  
<https://login.ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/login?url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=102998&xtid=44353>
- The Great Leveler  
<http://vimeo.com/50915371>
- Unnatural Causes: In Sickness and in Wealth  
<https://stream.lib.utah.edu/index.php?c=details&id=584>
- Unnatural Causes: Place Matters  
<https://stream.lib.utah.edu/index.php?c=details&id=588>