

Course Syllabus

Adjunct Professor : Ichiro Kawachi

Course	Behavioral Science / Social Epidemiology		
Credit	1	Method of Teaching	Lecture
<p>Objective</p> <p>The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the major social variables -- social class, gender, poverty, income distribution, social networks/support, community cohesion, the psychosocial work environment and neighborhood contexts -- that affect population health.</p> <p>By the end of the course, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the two strategies of prevention (the high risk and population strategies) and formulate interventions to address population health problems using these concepts and principles. • Critique the validity and reliability of methods used to measure the dimensions of socio-economic status (SES), i.e. income, education, and occupation. • Describe the theories (mechanisms and pathways) through which income, education, and occupation affect health, health behavior, and illness, and analyze their applicability to different types of health problems. • Describe and contrast the absolute versus relative approaches to conceptualizing and measuring poverty. • Identify community-level determinants of health, such as neighborhood assets (e.g. social capital) and deficits (e.g. concentrated disadvantage). • Compare and contrast compositional versus contextual influences of neighborhood environments on health. • Discuss the mechanisms and pathways by which neighborhood contexts influence population health. • Define and describe measurement approaches to assess social networks, social support, and social capital. • Describe the mechanisms through which social networks affect health outcomes. • Describe the demand/control model of job stress. • Describe the hierarchy of public health strategies (information, incentives, regulations) to reduce health disparities. • Describe the process of developing policies to address health disparities, and the barriers to implementing such policies. 			

Outline

The course covers the theoretical underpinnings of each construct, their measurement, and empirical research linking each to population health status. Methods are introduced to operationalize each construct for the purposes of empirical application in epidemiologic research.

Class Schedule (90 minutes each)

1. Introduction to the social determinants of health (10 Jan Thu 9:00-10:30)
2. The prevention paradox and the strategies of prevention (10 Jan Thu 10:45-12:15)
3. Socio-economic status, Measurement and causal evidence (11 Jan Fri 9:00-10:30)
4. Income distribution and health (11 Jan Fri 10:45-12:15)
5. Social networks, social support, and health (12 Jan Sat 9:00-10:30)
6. Social capital, social cohesion, and health (12 Jan Sat 10:45-12:15)
7. Psychosocial work environment and health (13 Jan Sun 9:00-10:30)
8. Reducing health inequalities: a policy perspective (13 Jan Sun 10:45-12:15)

We add seminars by Japanese teachers for each to assist students with difficulty in language/background knowledge

Text

Berkman LF & Kawachi I (eds). Social Epidemiology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Related readings

To be assigned.

Achievement evaluation

2-hour written examination consisting of 4 short-essay questions after the completion of the course.