

SOC 3673-001: SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

3 Credit Hours | Spring 2026 | M/W 1:25–2:45pm | ARCH 127

Professor: Max Coleman

Email: max.coleman@utah.edu

Office Hours: TBD

Office Location: Social & Behavioral Science (BEH S) 326, *or via Zoom*

Final Exam: Thursday, April 23, 1–3pm, ARCH 127

Required Materials: Available on [Canvas](#). See “Course Readings” below.

Course Description

Epidemiologists examine the spread and distribution of disease in a population. In this course, we take a broader view, exploring how social forces shape health outcomes beyond the narrow category of “disease.” As the World Health Organization has written, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Some of the most pressing social problems—issues like the opioid crisis and the rise of youth suicide—are not easily conceptualized as “diseases” but are nonetheless worthy of study.

Drawing on these insights, *social epidemiologists* examine how health and well-being are patterned by life experiences in an unequal society. Like wealth, power, and other valued resources, health is not randomly distributed: instead, it is shaped by status categories such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, nativity, disability, and other dimensions of stratification. Importantly, social epidemiologists view these traits not as biological risk factors for disease, but as predictors of *social experiences* like discrimination, poverty, social isolation, and environmental hazard. From this perspective, health inequalities are not inevitable but are the product of structural and cultural conditions that are amenable to change.

In this course, we will explore social patterns of health and well-being along with the forces that exacerbate or weaken such patterns. We will use quantitative approaches to model the process by which social forces “get under the skin” to shape health outcomes. Finally, we will examine existing policies and consider alternatives that might better address health disparities.

This course fulfills the Quantitative Intensive (QI) requirement of the University of Utah. Although there are no formal prerequisites for this course, you are expected to have a basic knowledge and understanding of algebra and elementary statistics before enrolling.

Course Outcomes

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

- Understand how a broad range of social forces impact rates of morbidity and mortality
- Explain how social inequalities contribute to (or exacerbate) inequalities in physical and mental health outcomes
- Identify popular explanations for current public health challenges (e.g., COVID-19, the opioid epidemic, youth suicide) and evaluate the accuracy of these claims

- Move beyond individualistic explanations of morbidity and mortality (e.g., smoking or poor exercise) by identifying upstream causes (e.g., discrimination, poverty, misguided policy)
- Use quantitative reasoning to theorize how the relationship between social forces and health outcomes is sustained, amplified, or diminished by social and biological mechanisms

Course Requirements

Course grades will be based on (1) attendance and participation, (2) weekly Canvas questions, (3) one short writing assignment (“Health in the News”), (4) two quizzes, (5) a research project that includes several components throughout the semester, and (6) a final exam.

The grading scale is as follows:

A = 94 to 100, A- = 90 to 93,

B+ = 87 to 89, B = 84 to 86, B- = 80 to 83,

C+ = 77 to 79, C = 74 to 76, C- = 70 to 73,

D+ = 67 to 69, D = 64 to 66, D- = 60 to 63,

E = 59 or below

1. Attendance & Participation (10% of grade):

Regular attendance is an essential component of this course. However, I understand that there are extenuating circumstances that may prevent you from coming to class. No matter the cause of your absence, please email me in advance whenever possible. If you plan to be absent for a religious holiday, please contact me within the first two weeks of class. Deadlines for assignments will not change unless you make explicit arrangements with me. I also reserve the right to mark tardy students as absent.

In addition to attending regularly, students are expected to be active participants in class discussions. Though I recognize that some students are more talkative than others, it is important that you try to contribute at least once per class period; this constitutes evidence that you are engaged and have done the assigned readings. Other forms of participation include chatting about the course material during office hours or after class (especially if you are feeling shy).

Students are also expected to remain active and alert throughout the discussion, so avoid dozing off, texting, or staring longingly out the window. In academics as in life, much of your success depends on “face work” (a term from sociologist Erving Goffman), so if you’re not feeling up to class, fake it till you make it. Of course, if there is something that is really troubling you, please come talk to me.

2. Weekly Canvas Questions (15% of grade)

Each week, I will post a set of questions to Canvas. These questions may concern course readings, but they may also ask about your own life experiences, goals for the class, how the course material applies to your academic or professional interests, etc. Responses are graded for completion, although I may give you half-credit or no credit if it’s clear you didn’t do the readings, failed to put much effort into your responses, or used generative AI. For each answer, I expect about one short paragraph (around 3-5 sentences) unless the answer is numerical or yes/no.

Questions will be posted at the end of Wednesday’s class and must be answered the night before the following class. (Generally, this means Sunday night at 11:59pm, but if there is a holiday on Monday,

you'll have a little more time and can submit on Tuesday night.) Note: These are not "discussion questions." Your answers will be private. This allows for confidentiality and also prevents you from "borrowing" another student's answers.

3. Health in the News (due February 3) (10% of grade)

Once during the semester, you will write a short (2–3 page, double-spaced) analysis of a news article or opinion piece published in the last month. The purpose of the assignment is to find a health article in the news and critically assess how the topic is being covered. Media coverage of health issues often relies on popular assumptions rather than rigorous scientific research; it also emphasizes individual health behaviors (e.g., diet and exercise) rather than broad social forces. As a result, explanations are sometimes incomplete or misleading. This is your chance to correct the record! Detailed instructions are available on Canvas when you click on the name of this assignment.

IMPORTANT: If you are unhappy with your grade on this assignment, I will give you the opportunity to submit a new assignment (based on a different news article), and I will drop the lower of the two grades. This opportunity is only available to students who submitted their original essay by the deadline. For those interested in this opportunity, you will need to submit a second paper no later than March 5 before class.

4. Two Quizzes (February 9 & March 18) (10% x 2 = 20% of grade)

The quizzes will take place in class, and may include multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. More information will be provided as we approach the day of the quiz.

5. Research Project (30% of grade)

Throughout the semester, you will work on a research project devoted to a social epidemiology topic of your choice. The topic should be as specific as possible, with a clearly defined research question. To make the process easier on you, and to prevent procrastination, the project is divided into three components. Detailed instructions for each component are available on Canvas when you click on the name of each assignment.

1. **Topic Statement (due January 27) (5% of grade):** Provide a summary of your proposed research project (if you have more than one idea, that's okay too!). Your summary should be about one full page, double-spaced. This statement should discuss the subject of your paper as well as some potential sources you intend to use. Feel free to include questions for me (e.g., how to narrow things down), and I will provide feedback. The topic statement will be due before class, like all written assignments this semester.
2. **Outline (due February 24) (10% of grade):** To help with your first draft, you should write a detailed outline of approximately 2 pages, single-spaced. The outline should clearly present the structure of your argument, including specific points you intend to make. The introduction section of your outline must include a thesis statement, and you should also include potential sources. The outline will be due before class, like all written assignments this semester. Because I have strict formatting expectations for this assignment, please see my Example Outline posted on Canvas.
3. **Final Draft (due April 7) (15% of grade):** Your final draft should be 7–8 pages, double-spaced, not including your references page. A strong paper will include a clear and convincing thesis supported by evidence; excellent organizational structure; and proper

spelling and grammar conventions. The paper should also adhere to ASA formatting (see my handout “Writing Conventions in Sociology,” provided at the end of this syllabus). No exceptions will be made for late papers except under extreme circumstances; if you cannot make the deadline, please contact me as soon as possible. The paper will be due before class, like all written assignments this semester.

I strongly encourage you to come to office hours in person or via Zoom to discuss your project, brainstorm ideas, find relevant sources, etc. I’m here as a resource for you.

6. Final Exam (April 23) (15% of grade)

The final exam will take place in our normal classroom (ARCH 127) on Thursday, April 23 from 1:00 to 3:00pm. The exam will be cumulative. Like the quizzes, it will include multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. More information will be provided as we approach the final exam day.

Note about final grades: Students often ask how they can improve their chance of a good final grade. My general advice is this: *Show that you care*. Come to office hours, chat with me about the course material, reach out if you’re struggling, contribute your insights in class discussion. Although these acts alone won’t guarantee you an A, they might help push up a borderline grade, and they may increase my motivation to help out in other ways (e.g., offering an extension on an assignment). If you wait until the end of the semester to voice your concerns, there is not much I can do to help.

KEY DATES

January 19	~ <i>No class (MLK Jr. Day)</i> ~
January 27 (by 11:59pm)	Topic statement due
February 3 (by 11:59pm)	“Health in the News” essay due
February 9	Quiz #1
February 16	~ <i>No class (Presidents Day)</i> ~
February 24 (by 11:59pm)	Outline due
March 3 (by 11:59pm)	Optional: 2 nd “Health in the News” essay due
March 9 & 11	~ <i>No class (Spring Break)</i> ~
March 18	Quiz #2
April 7 (by 11:59pm)	Research paper due
April 23, 1:00 to 3:00pm	Final exam (ARCH 127)

Classroom Policies

Classroom Etiquette

We will be discussing challenging social issues in this class, including various forms of inequality (structural racism, income inequality, anti-LGBT hate), heated social policy (e.g., abortion), and health outcomes that have likely touched the lives of students in this class (e.g., opioid overdose and suicidality). Each person comes to class with a unique background and perspective; I encourage students to draw on that perspective when discussing sociological issues in class. Keep in mind that sharing opinions and experiences is a valuable but sometime uncomfortable experience, and everyone must make the commitment to create an atmosphere of respect for each person's contribution. Various points of view are welcome and expected. Please be as respectful and open-minded as possible not only when listening to viewpoints different from your own, but in responding to those viewpoints if you choose to do so. If students choose to divulge their own experiences, such experiences should not be shared outside of the classroom without permission. Finally, please note that disruptive conduct in class and failure to comply with course policy may result in sanctions.

Course Readings

To minimize costs to you, I have made all of the readings available on Canvas. You should complete each reading *before* class and be ready to discuss the reading during class. This is an important part of your participation grade (see above). Finally, you should know that many of these readings discuss very challenging topics, including self-harm and suicide. If you expect that a reading will be difficult for you, please let me know in advance and we can find alternative options for completion.

Note: All readings marked "Recommended" are completely optional. I've provided them only if you are interested in a topic and would like to learn more. Because these readings are not uploaded to Canvas, please email me and I will send you a digital copy or (when possible) scan a book chapter for you.

ChatGPT and Other Generative AI Programs

It goes without saying, but I have to say it: Programs like ChatGPT are strictly forbidden for any purpose, including but not limited to assignments, Canvas posts, and class participation. (This includes using Grammarly and other programs to rewrite essays. Microsoft Word can already identify basic grammatical errors—you don't need AI to do this.) If you use AI, I will give you a zero and I may or may not give you the opportunity to redo the assignment for partial credit. The persistent use of generative AI may also result in sanctions, including a failing grade and a report of academic misconduct to the Dean of Students.

Late Work

Late assignments will be penalized a half-grade for each day they are overdue. For example, an assignment that *would* have received a B+ will receive a B if turned in one day late, a B- if turned in two days late, etc. If you know you cannot turn in an assignment on time, and have a reasonable explanation (e.g., family emergency, serious illness), please contact me as soon as possible.

Contacting Me

The best way to contact me is by email at max.coleman@utah.edu. Though I aim to respond in a timely manner, I am constrained by other obligations, including research and teaching prep. You can

expect to hear from me within two weekdays; if you haven't, feel free to send me another message: "Just wanted to see if you got my previous email." Please note: If you have sensitive or complex questions, I encourage you to set up a time to meet with me during office hours (or via Zoom).

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Other Electronics

Devices such as laptops and tablets may be used for academic purposes only. Forbidden activities include texting, checking social media, reading emails, shopping, and surfing the web. Studies have shown that laptops detract from classroom learning even when used for noble purposes—for example, notes taken by hand are better remembered than notes taken on the computer. Because digital technologies can be a major source of distraction in the classroom, students may lose the privilege of using these devices. Cell phones should be turned off or silenced (I put mine in Airplane mode to prevent calls). If you have questions about the use of these devices, please contact me.

Online Course Materials

The instructor teaching this course holds the exclusive right to distribute, modify, post, and reproduce course materials, including all written materials, study guides, recorded lectures, assignments, exercises, and exams. While you are permitted to take notes on the online materials posted for this course for your personal use, you are not permitted to re-post in another forum, distribute, or reproduce content from this course without the express written permission of the instructor. Any violation of this course rule will be reported to the appropriate university offices and officials, including to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct.

Writing Help

Located in the Marriott Library in room 2701, the [University Writing Center](#) is designed to help students become more confident writers. Tutors can help students understand assignments, develop ideas, organize thoughts, form arguments, improve the clarity of writing, improve continuity and flow, consider the audience, polish their style, document sources correctly, avoid plagiarism, and learn about common grammatical errors. This is a free service that is available to all students. You can make an appointment [online](#).

I am also here as a resource for you. Feel free to reach out to me, but keep in mind that it's easier for me to provide feedback in advance rather than two days before the deadline. Finally, see the end of this syllabus for a document called "Writing Conventions in Sociology," which may help you with formatting and other concerns.

University Policies

Drop/Withdrawal Policies

Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties. Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A "W" grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade "W" is not used in calculating the student's GPA. For deadlines to withdraw from full-term, first, and second session classes, see the U's Academic Calendar.

Student Mental Health

Your well-being is and should be a top priority. If at any time during the semester you find yourself battling mental health issues that are impacting your participation in or work for the course, please contact me. For adjustments to course requirements or classroom policy, such as extended test-

taking time, please contact the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (see below). Students can obtain **free counseling** in person or online through the [University Counseling Center](#), Student Services Building Rm 426, (801) 581-6826. Free, 24-hour support and problem-solving are also available by chat/messaging through [SafeUT](#) and the [My Student Support Program \(MySSP\)](#) app. For more mental health resources, visit studentaffairs.utah.edu/mentalhealth.

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 & Access](#), 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDA 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 & Access.

Given the nature of this course, attendance is required and adjustments cannot be granted to allow non-attendance. However, if you need to seek an ADA accommodation to request an exception to this attendance policy due to a disability, please contact the [Center for Disability & Access](#) (CDA). CDA will work with us to determine what, if any, ADA accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.

University Safety Statement

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit <https://safeu.utah.edu>.

Bias Reporting

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. Bias incidents (events or comments that target an individual or group based on age, color, religion, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status or veteran status) are unacceptable in our classroom or on campus. What should you do if you witness or experience a bias incident? Report it by submitting a report [online](#) or contacting the Dean of Students Office at deanofstudents@utah.edu or 801-581-7066.

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).

Lauren's Promise: As your instructor for this course, I have made Lauren's Promise. This is a vow that anyone – faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members – can take to indicate to others that they represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking. Anyone who makes Lauren's Promise vows to: 1.) listen to and believe those individuals who are being threatened or experiencing sexual assault, dating violence or stalking; 2.) represent a safe haven for sharing incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking; and 3.) change campus culture that responds poorly to dating violence and stalking. By making Lauren's Promise, individuals are helping to change campus cultures that respond poorly to dating violence and stalking throughout the nation. **Please note, however, that I am a “mandatory reporter,”** so if you share your experiences with me, I am required to report them to the university's Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (OEO/AA). **For a confidential alternative that does not require reporting, you can reach out to a [Victim-Survivor Advocate](#) on their website or via email (advocate@sa.utah.edu).**

Academic Misconduct Statement

It is expected that students adhere to University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's Student Code: <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-410.php>.

Diversity Statement

I stand in support of compassion, dignity, value-of-life, equity, inclusion and justice for all individuals regardless of color, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, language, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, gender identity or expression, immigration status, or any type of marginalization. I stand in support of making our society more inclusive, just, and equitable for all individuals. I stand against individual and systemic racism in all its various forms.

Undocumented Student Support Statement

If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center. Arrangements with the Dream Center will not jeopardize your student status, your financial aid, or any other part of your residence. The Dream Center offers a wide range of resources to support undocumented students (with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed-status families. To learn more, please contact the Dream Center at 801-213-3697 or visit dream.utah.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One (Jan 5 and 7):

Monday, Jan 5:

- First day of class. ☺

Wednesday, Jan 7:

→ *Reminder: Canvas Questions due Sunday, Jan 11 by 11:59pm*

- Boyle (2016): How to do a “fast and thorough read” of academic work
- Sapolsky (2005), “Sick of Poverty”
- Berkman and Kawachi (2014), *Social Epidemiology*, Ch. 1: “A Historical Framework for Social Epidemiology: Social Determinants of Population Health”

Week Two (Jan 12 and 14):

Monday, Jan 12: Rising Life Expectancy Over Centuries

- Wilkinson (1996), *Unhealthy Societies*, Ch. 3: “Rising Life Expectancy and the Epidemiological Transition”
- Woolf (2023), “Falling Behind: The Growing Gap in Life Expectancy Between the United States and Other Countries, 1933–2021”

Wednesday, Jan 14: Falling Life Expectancy Over Decades

→ *Reminder: Canvas Questions due Tuesday, Jan 20 by 11:59pm*

- Podcast: “[Why Americans Are Dying So Young with Anne Case and Angus Deaton.](#)” *Why Is This Happening? The Chris Hayes Podcast.*
- Aburto et al. (2022), “Significant Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Race/Ethnic Differences in US Mortality”
 - **Recommended:** Case & Deaton (2020), *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*, Ch. 1–3
 - **Recommended:** Goldman and Andrasfay (2022), “Life Expectancy Loss among Native Americans during the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Week Three (Jan 21):

Monday, Jan 19: NO CLASS (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

Wednesday, Jan 21: Fundamental Cause Theory

- Link and Phelan (1995), “Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease”
 - **Recommended:** Lupton (1993), “Risk as Moral Danger: The Social and Political Functions of Risk Discourse in Public Health”

Week Four (Jan 26 and 28):

Monday, Jan 26: The Stress Process Model

→ *Topic Statement due Jan 27 by 11:59pm*

- Pearlin and Bierman (2013), “Current Issues and Future Directions in Research into the Stress Process”
- Thoits (2010), “Stress and Health: Major Findings and Policy Implications”
- **Recommended:** McLeod (2012), “The Meanings of Stress: Expanding the Stress Process Model”

Wednesday, Jan 28: Social Support and Social Integration

- Turner and Turner (2013), “Social Relations, Social Integration, and Social Support”
- **Recommended:** Uchino (2006), “Social Support and Health: A Review of Physiological Processes Potentially Underlying Links to Disease Outcomes”
- **Recommended:** Thoits (2011), “Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health”
- **Recommended:** Umberson and Donnelly (2023), “Social Isolation: An Unequally Distributed Health Hazard”

Week Five (Feb 2 and 4):

Monday, Feb 2: The Dark Side of Social Ties

→ “*Health in the News*” essay due Feb 3 by 11:59pm

- Mueller and Abrutyn (2016), “Adolescents Under Pressure: A New Durkheimian Framework for Understanding Adolescent Suicide in a Cohesive Community.”
- **Recommended:** Cohen et al. (1997), “Social Ties and Susceptibility to the Common Cold”
- **Recommended:** Smith and Christakis (2008), “Social Networks and Health”

Wednesday, Feb 4: Income and Health

- Marmot (2002), “The Influence of Income on Health: Views of an Epidemiologist”
- Adler and Newman (2002), “Socioeconomic Disparities in Health: Pathways and Policies”
- **Recommended:** Marmot and Sapolsky (2014), *Sociality, Hierarchy, Health: Comparative Biodemography*, Ch. 16: “Of Baboons and Men: Social Circumstances, Biology, and the Social Gradient in Health”

Week Six (Feb 9 and 11):

Monday, Feb 9: Income Inequality

→ *Quiz #1 today in class*

- Wilkinson and Pickett (2009), “Income Inequality and Social Dysfunction”
- **Recommended:** Schnittker (2021), *Unnerved: Anxiety, Social Change, and the Transformation of Modern Mental Health*, Ch. 8: “Status Anxiety and Growing Inequality”
- **Recommended:** Kawachi and Kennedy (2002), *The Health of Nations: Why Inequality Is Harmful to Your Health*

Wednesday, Feb 11: Gender and Health

- Read and Gorman (2011), “Gender and Health Revisited,” in *Handbook of the Sociology of Health, Illness, and Healing*
- Williams (2003), “The Health of Men”
- **Recommended:** McKinlay (1996), “Some Contributions from the Social System to Gender Inequalities in Heart Disease”
- **Recommended:** Courtenay (2000), “Constructions of Masculinity and Their Influence on Men’s Well-Being: A Theory of Gender and Health”

Week Seven (Feb 18):

Monday, Feb 16: NO CLASS (Presidents Day)

Wednesday, Feb 18: LGBTQ Health; Abortion

- Ogbu-Nwobodo et al. (2022), “Mental Health Implications of Abortion Restrictions for Historically Marginalized Populations”
- Russell and Fish (2016), “Mental Health in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Youth”
- **Recommended:** Foster (2020), *The Turnaway Study: Ten Years, A Thousand Women, and the Consequences of Having—Or Being Denied—an Abortion*
- **Recommended:** Stevenson (2021): “The Pregnancy-Related Mortality Impact of a Total Abortion Ban in the United States: A Research Note on Increased Deaths Due to Remaining Pregnant”

Week Eight (Feb 23 and 25):

Monday, Feb 23: Race and Health, Part 1

→ *Research paper OUTLINE due Feb 24 by 11:59pm*

- Williams, Lawrence, and Davis (2019), “Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research”
- **Recommended:** Williams (2018), “Stress and the Mental Health of Populations of Color: Advancing Our Understanding of Race-related Stressors”
- **Recommended:** Hudson et al. (2020), “The Price of the Ticket: Health Costs of Upward Mobility among African Americans”

Wednesday, Feb 25: Race and Health, Part 2

- Malat, Mayorga-Gallo, and Williams (2018), “The Effects of Whiteness on the Health of Whites”
- **Recommended:** Metzl (2019), *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland*

Week Nine (March 2 and 4):

Monday, March 2: Introduction to Social Capital

→ *Optional: 2nd “Health in the News” essay due March 3 by 11:59pm*

- Podcast: “[Robert Putnam Knows Why You’re Lonely](#),” *New York Times*

Wednesday, March 4: Health Consequences of Declining Social Capital

- Kawachi (1999), “Social Capital and Community Effects on Population and Individual Health”

~ NO CLASS MARCH 7–15 (ENJOY SPRING BREAK!) ~

Week Ten (March 16 and 18):

Monday, March 16: Neighborhood Factors

- Cockerham (2013), *Social Causes of Health and Disease, Second Edition*, Ch. 7: “Living Conditions and Neighborhood Disadvantage”
- Takeuchi, Walton, and Leung (2010), “Race, Social Contexts, and Health: Examining Geographic Spaces and Places”

Wednesday, March 18: Environmental Factors

→ *Quiz #2 today in class*

- Ezell et al. (2021), “The Blueprint of Disaster: COVID-19, The Flint Water Crisis, and Unequal Ecological Impacts”
- DeMarco et al. (2020), “Air Pollution-Related Health Impacts on Individuals Experiencing Homelessness: Environmental Justice and Health Vulnerability in Salt Lake County, Utah”
- **Recommended:** Maffly (2024), “[Airborne dust from Great Salt Lake playa has bigger impact on communities of color](#),” *University of Utah Communications*

Week Eleven (March 23 and 25):

Monday, March 23: Biology, Part 1

- Geronimus (2023), *Weathering: The Extraordinary Stress of Ordinary Life in an Unjust Society*, Intro through Ch. 2

Wednesday, March 25: Biology, Part 2

- Shonkoff, Boyce, and McEwen (2009), “Neuroscience, Molecular Biology, and the Childhood Roots of Health Disparities: Building a New Framework for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.”
- **Recommended:** Kubzansky, Seeman, and Glymour (2014), *Social Epidemiology*, Ch. 14: “Biological Pathways Linking Social Conditions and Health: Plausible Mechanisms and Emerging Puzzles”
- **Recommended:** McEwen and McEwen (2017), “Social Structure, Adversity, Toxic Stress, and Intergenerational Poverty: An Early Childhood Model”

Week Twelve (March 30 and April 1):

Monday, March 30: Health Paradoxes, Part 1

- Luthar (2003), “The Culture of Affluence: Psychological Costs of Material Wealth”
- Nicole (2023), “Paradox Lost? The Waning Health Advantage among the U.S. Hispanic Population”
- **Recommended:** Luthar, Barkin, and Crossman (2013), “I Can, Therefore I Must: Fragility in the Upper-Middle Classes”
- **Recommended:** Bacong and Menjívar (2021), “Recasting the Immigrant Health Paradox Through Intersections of Legal Status and Race”

Wednesday, April 1: Health Paradoxes, Part 2

- Keyes (2009), “The Black–White Paradox in Health: Flourishing in the Face of Social Inequality and Discrimination”

Week Thirteen (April 6 and 8):

Monday, April 6: Deaths of Despair, Revisited

→ *Research paper due April 7 at 11:59pm*

- Case and Deaton (2020), *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*, Ch. 8–9
- Muennig et al. (2018), “America’s Declining Well-Being, Health, and Life Expectancy: Not Just a White Problem”
- **Recommended:** Goldstone (2018), “[The Pain Refugees](#).” *Harper’s Magazine*.

Wednesday, April 8: Social Media and Mental Health

- Podcast: “[The Teen Mental Health Crisis, Part 1](#).” Interview with Dr. Jean Twenge on *The Ezra Klein Show*.
- **Recommended:** Seligman (1990), “Why Is There So Much Depression Today? The Waning of the Individual and the Waning of the Commons”
- **Recommended:** Twenge (2020), “Increases in Depression, Self-Harm, and Suicide Among U.S. Adolescents After 2012 and Links to Technology Use: Possible Mechanisms”
- **Recommended:** CDC (2023), “[Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary and Trends Report, 2013–2023](#).”

Week Fourteen (April 13 and 15):

Monday, April 13: Rising Suicide in Black Youth

- Gordon (2020), “[Addressing the Crisis of Black Youth Suicide](#)”
- Bridge et al. (2018), “Age-Related Racial Disparity in Suicide Rates among US Youths from 2001 through 2015”
- **Recommended:** Watson Coleman et al. (2019), “[Ring the Alarm: The Crisis of Black Youth Suicide in America](#)”

Wednesday, April 15: Social Policy

- House (2015), *Beyond Obamacare*, Ch. 7: “Socioeconomic Policies That Affect Health and Health Disparities”
- **Recommended:** McKinlay (1975), “A Case for Refocusing Upstream: The Political Economy of Illness”
- **Recommended:** Mozaffarian, Hemenway, and Ludwig (2013), “Curbing Gun Violence: Lessons from Public Health Successes”

Week Fifteen (April 20):

Monday, April 20: Review Day

- No readings, but submit Student Course Feedback here:
<https://cte.utah.edu/scf/students/login>

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, April 23 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm in ARCH 127

Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in person or through Canvas.

Writing Conventions in Sociology

Max Coleman, Spring 2026

I expect all of your papers—as well as outlines, bibliographies, etc.—to adhere to American Sociological Association (ASA) format. You may have been trained in other formats, such as MLA or Chicago, but here I will ask that you use ASA format.* The American Sociological Association has prepared a webpage called “[Quick Tips for ASA Style](#),” which will be very helpful. I will not be a stickler about formatting, but I do ask that you respect the following rules:

- All papers must be written in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced (unless I indicate otherwise), and with one-inch margins all around.
- Each page must begin with a header at the top-right that tells me your name as well as the page number. For example: Coleman 1, Coleman 2, Coleman 3 . . .
- The first page of each paper should include the following at the top-left:

Student Name
Course #
Professor Name
Day Month Year [This is the day the assignment is due.]

For example, you might write:

Vanessa Radler
SOC 3673-001
Prof. Coleman
24 September 2020

You will find that this simple four-line approach works well for academic papers in almost any class you ever take.

- If you reference an author’s ideas, you must immediately cite the author, *even if you do not quote them*. This is called an in-text citation, and is formatted as follows: **(LastName PubYear:Page Number)**. For example, you might write:

According to Erich Fromm, the loss of communal ties in the modern age produced a kind of “moral aloneness” **(Fromm 1941:34)**.

If you do not quote the author, you can remove the page number. For example:

The loss of communal ties in the modern age made individuals feel alone and powerless **(Fromm 1941)**.

- You must provide a formal bibliography at the end of your research paper. See “[Quick Tips for ASA Style](#)” for the proper formatting. And for all assignments, you must give credit when you cite another author’s ideas. This can be as simple as saying, “Erich Fromm argues . . .” Please do provide page numbers when using direct quotes.

- If you need help with formatting, you are welcome to ask me, though a quick Google search can often answer the more basic questions.
- Finally, it is essential that you proofread your work before turning it in. Do whatever you have to do—read it out loud, ask a friend to look it over, visit the [University Writing Center](#)—but by all means, review your work before submitting it. While the content of your writing *should* matter more than formatting, consistently poor grammar and spelling can be very distracting, and I may lower your grade on an assignment if it shows a lack of proper attention to these details. On the other hand, an essay with impeccable formatting allows me to focus on your argument. Study after study indicates that these trivial details—including the font in which your essay is written—can have a serious impact on your grade, even if the instructor does not realize it! So do yourself a favor by attending to spelling, grammar, and other formatting conventions.

The University Writing Center:

Located in the Marriott Library in room 2701, the [University Writing Center](#) is designed to help students become more confident writers. They can help students understand assignments, develop ideas, organize thoughts, form arguments, improve the clarity of writing, improve continuity and flow, consider the audience, polish and improve style, document sources correctly, avoid plagiarism, and learn about common grammar errors. This is a free service that is available to all students. You can make an appointment [online](#).

**I understand that learning a new formatting style can be time-consuming, but it is worth the trouble if you plan to take other sociology courses. However, if you'd strongly prefer to use a format you know already, such as MLA, APA, or Chicago style, you are welcome to do so. All I ask is that you stay consistent (i.e., don't mix styles).*