

WST 2322
Introduction to Health Disparities
Spring 2026
Canvas Online

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Joanna Neville (She/her)

Office: See Canvas for Office Location **Office Phone:** 352 273 0390

Email: jnevile@ufl.edu

Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:45 am to 10:45 am via Zoom or by appointment if needed. See Canvas for Zoom link.

Graduate Teaching Assistant: TBD

Office: See Canvas for Location

Email: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Office location and Zoom link for instructor (and parallel info for graduate TA) are provided on the course Canvas page.

Undergraduate Teaching Assistants: TBD

Note: For questions about the class, course content, or other personal issues, use the Canvas mail tool. Expect a response within 24 hours. To resolve technical issues, please visit the helpdesk website (<https://it.ufl.edu/helpdesk/>) or call 352-392-4357).

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Course Description

This course examines the multifaceted issue of health disparities and social science scholarship related to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, education, sexuality, disability, physical and mental health, geography and other factors. Related issues include social determinants of health, cultural competency, health literacy, and improving health and health care.

NOTE: This course covers a variety of ideas and views about the topics of focus, taught as objects of analysis within the larger course of instruction. Emphasis is on critical thinking, examination of evidence, and evaluation of arguments. No lesson is intended to compel a particular feeling or belief. Endorsing or agreeing with a particular view is not expected or required.

Prerequisites

None.

COURSE MATERIALS

- **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:** *Smalley, K. B., Warren, J. C., & Fernández, M. I. (2020). Health equity: A solutions-focused approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.*
- Materials and Supplies Fees: None

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Describe multiple aspects of the social environment for health and identify the ways they may contribute to health disparities.
- Critically evaluate evidence for social determinants of health and identify key gaps in knowledge.
- Apply theoretical frameworks to understand social determinants of health through research and data.
- Analyze scholarship on people's experiences of age, ability, class, gender, ethnicity, and race in relation to health and health care.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADES

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Graded Course Activities

Note: Additional assignment details are provided on the course Canvas page.

These assignments will assess the student learning outcomes (SLO) described above.

Examinations (60 points)

Each exam will assess the basic understanding of three sections, which are the foundation for the course. There are three exams. The exams are NOT cumulative, and each will consist of multiple-choice questions pertaining to lecture, in-class discussion, and course material from the three sections. They will be on Canvas. No additional software is needed.

Case Studies (4x20=80 points)

These 5 case-study reflection papers help students identify and develop an understanding of health disparities and develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. I will drop the lowest or you can choose to skip one. See the assignment page on Canvas for rubric and more information.

Learning Activities (20 points)

Active learning activities aim to show students real-world explanations of health disparities using an active learning framework. More specifically, these in-class activities introduce students to health disparities, critically analyze health disparities and creatively develop solutions. See Canvas for more details.

Participation Total (40 points)

A) Participation Reflections Discussion Posts (10x2=20 pts): These discussion posts will prompt students to think critically about the chapter material that week. See Canvas for more details.

B) Participation Discussion Post REPLIES (10x2=20 pts)

These responses allow students to interact with each other and learn others' perspectives.

A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected.

Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior are not acceptable. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. In this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of the topics and issues covered in the course.

Grading Scale and Policies

More information about grade scale and UF grading policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Letter Grade	Points
A	200-185
A-	184-179
B+	178-173
B	172-165
B-	164-159
C+	158-153
C	152-145
C-	144-139
D+	138-133
D	132-125
D-	124-119
E	<119

COURSE CALENDAR

This calendar is subject to change for pedagogical or logistical reasons. To the extent possible, students will be notified in advance of any such changes. See Canvas for more detailed calendar.

The class is divided into three sections 1) Overview, Key Concepts, and Theoretical Frameworks 2) Population Perspectives on Health 3) Health Within Society and

Theoretical Frameworks Moving Forward

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
January 12-16, 2026	Course Overview and Introduction		Introduction Posts and Course Overview Quiz
Part One: Key Concepts, Overview, Theoretical Frameworks			
January 20-23, 2026 *January 19: MLK, Jr Day Observed	Overview, History, and Key Concepts	Chapter One	Discussion post
January 26-30, 2026	Social Science Perspectives within Health	Chapter Two	Discussion post and Learning Activity
February 2-6, 2026	Health Equity Frameworks and Research Approaches	Chapters Three and Four	Discussion Post and Exam One on Part One
Part Two: Population Perspectives on Health			
February 9-13, 2026	African American Health	Chapter Five	Case Study #1
February 16-20, 2026	Health in U.S. Latinx Populations	Chapter Six	Discussion post
February 23-27, 2026	Asian American Health	Chapter Seven	Case Study #2
March 2-6, 2026	American Indian and Alaska Native Health and Health within the Kānaka 'Ōiwi, People of Hawaii	Chapters Eight and Nine	Discussion post
March 9-13, 2026	Women's and Men's Health	Chapters Ten and Eleven	Case Study #3
March 16-20, 2026	Spring Break		
March 23-27, 2026	LGBTQ+ Health	Chapter Twelve	Discussion post and Exam Two on Part Two
Part Three: Health Within Society and Theoretical Frameworks Moving Forward			
March 30-April 3, 2026	Health in Rural Areas and Health in Veteran Populations	Chapters Thirteen and Fifteen	Case Study #4
April 6-10, 2026	Health in Global Perspectives	Chapter Fourteen	Discussion post
April 13-17, 2026	Health within Populations with Disabilities and Children's Health	Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen	Case Study #5

Date	Topic	Readings/Preparation	Work Due
April 20-22, 2026	Theoretical Frameworks Moving Forward	Chapter Eighteen	Discussion post and learning activity
Finals Week: April 27-, May 1	Concluding Thoughts: Discussion post due April 27 th	Exam Three on Part Three on April 28 th	

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

This course complies with all UF academic policies.

For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see:
<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>