

WST 2322: Introduction to Health Disparities  
Canvas Online  
Spring 2024  
Syllabus

**Instructor: Dr. Joanna Neville**

- **Office Hours:** Virtual office hours via Zoom on Mondays from 10:30-11:30 am or by appointment. Meeting Zoom Room: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3446796557?pwd=R1NrNXNWa2pjUUMxVExzTU5reE1xQT09>
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**Office Hours:**  
**Office: 102A Ustler Hall**

### **GETTING HELP**

If you encounter a technical issue, please contact [UF Computing Help Desk](#)[Links to an external site.](#), or utilize the one of the following self-help resources:

- [Video: Canvas Student Overview](#)[Links to an external site.](#) [7:04]
- [Which Browsers Does Canvas Support?](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- [How Can I Use Canvas on My Mobile Device?](#)
- [Canvas Student Guide](#)
- [Canvas Video Guide](#)[Links to an external site.](#)
- [Mediasite Viewing Requirements](#)[Links to an external site.](#) - technical requirements for watching lecture videos.
- [Zoom Conferences Student Step-by-Step Guides](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Any questions or concerns due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the UF Computing Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST message your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty and notify them of the problem you are facing.

### **Learning Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Describe multiple aspects of the social environment that matter for health and identify the ways they contribute to health disparities.
- Critically evaluate evidence for social determinants of health and identify key gaps in knowledge.
- Apply a theoretical framework to understand one social determinant of health through research experience in a specific topic area.

### **Course Description**

The goal of this course is to examine the multifaceted issue of health disparities based upon 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, advocacy, social justice and health equity. The course will overview examples of health disparities captured from different geographies, including the United States. Furthermore, the course will examine historical issues, theories on race, gender, sexuality, immigration status, and empirical data. The course will shed light on how intermingled inequalities are reflected in health and healthcare. The field of health equity focuses on ensuring that all populations— regardless of age, class, disability status, ethnicity, geographic origin, gender, gender identity, immigration status, race, sexual orientation and so on—have equal opportunity to achieve and maintain a healthy life. This course is designed to provide an overview of the field, including the origins and context in which health inequities occur, an in-depth look at multiple populations impacted by health inequities, and training in culturally informed methods to improve health equity. Course assignments are intended to advance student skills in a manner that provides them with the tools necessary to make a meaningful difference in achieving health equity.

Finally, this course is a social and behavioral sciences (S) subject area course in the UF General Education Program. (It also satisfies a Diversity (D) requirement.) Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences and beyond. See more information below

**Course Aims, Objectives, and Outcomes:** With this course, the participants will develop a deeper understanding of health disparities, their connection, and their intersection with social categories of hierarchy. As a sociologist, I will often utilize the social perspective in understanding these concepts. This course will offer empirical, analytical, and theoretical tools to promote health equity through a combination of readings, lectures, reflection, and audio-visual materials.

**Diversity (D)** – In Diversity courses, students examine the historical processes and contemporary experiences characterizing social and cultural differences within the United States. Students will engage with diversity as a dynamic concept related to human differences and their intersections, such as (but not limited to) race, gender identity, class, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, and (dis)abilities. Students critically analyze and evaluate how social inequities are constructed and affect the opportunities and constraints across the US population. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultures and beliefs mediate their own and other people’s understandings of themselves and an increasingly diverse US society.

**Social and Behavioral Sciences (S)** – Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe, and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes, or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions. Social sciences courses are designed so that -- if you complete all assignments satisfactorily -- you will achieve the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking. More specifically, at the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes concerning content, communication, and critical thinking: **Content:** Demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories, and

methodologies used within the discipline. **Communication:** Communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. **Critical Thinking:** Analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems

**Specific Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the course, students can expect to:

- Describe multiple aspects of the social environment that matter for health and identify the ways they contribute to health disparities.
- Critically evaluate evidence for social determinants of health and identify key gaps in knowledge.
- Apply a theoretical framework to understand one social determinant of health through research experience in a specific topic area.
- Examine the ways in which gender, along with race, ethnicity, and social class, can shape the distribution of resources, power, and privilege.

This course is divided into three parts:

Module One: These first four chapters set up the basic foundations for examining health disparities. The chapters introduce key concepts of the field as well as frameworks and research methods, and lastly, we look at discrimination, prejudice, and health.

Modules Two: This section presents community-specific chapters that summarize current needs and applied solutions for groups ranging from indigenous Hawaiians to individuals with disabilities, each authored or co-authored by one or more members of the community being discussed.

Module Three: This section finishes its previous discussions on population perspectives. It also presents a discussion of the importance of cultural humility and a summary of where the field of health equity is poised to go from here. An intersectionality perspective is interwoven throughout the section (and overall text) to examine ways in which all people experience an assemblage of multiple social categories, each of which may be subject to health equity concerns.

Other Case Studies: There are five case studies. The case study method is **a learning technique in which the student is faced with a particular problem, the case**. The case study facilitates the exploration of a real issue within a defined context, using a variety of data sources (Baxter et al., 2008). For each of these "case study" papers, you will be examining a particular population, current event, situation, or other issues that correspond to the chapter material that week.

### Course Structure

This course is fully online and it does not have specific meeting times. However, this course is not self-paced which means that students must follow specified deadlines throughout the course. Thus, students must complete all module tasks and assignments by their due dates.

The course is based in Canvas. Instructions for using Canvas and the programs that will be accessed for this course are available upon logging into the course Canvas site. Students may log in to [CanvasLinks to an external site.](#) using their GatorLink username and password.

This course is organized into a number of modules. For each module, the required activities include reading assigned chapters, viewing online course content, completing quizzes, and completing additional assignments and activities. This variety of required activities is designed to introduce students to theory

and research in each topic domain, to encourage students to think critically and in an integrative way about this information, and to help students connect this knowledge with real-life experiences. The course is structured for students to experience a combination of individual and group learning. Many of the class activities will have a component that must be completed individually as well as a component that must be completed in a group format such as discussion boards. Students will engage in interactive discussions throughout the semester.

#### Class Materials and Requirements

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:** *Smalley, K. B., Warren, J. C., & Fernández, M. I. (2020). Health equity: A solutions-focused approach. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.*

#### Computer and Internet

This course is fully online and therefore requires a computer and high-speed internet access, and access to e-Learning. Students are responsible for maintaining access to e-Learning. Please review the information on [system setup for use of e-Learning](#) and the [minimum UF computer requirements](#).

#### Course Required Activities

A careful reading of the textbook is essential for success in this course. All of the assessments are based on your understanding of the material presented in the text. Class will be structured around readings from the text and other outside sources. We will structure our discussion posts around a sociological perspective, and students are expected to participate in a mature and responsible manner and respect the rights of others and their opinions.

#### **Assessments: These assignments will assess the student learning outcomes (SLO) described above.**

1. **Examinations** (100 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.
2. **Case Studies** (5 x 10 = 50 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. They are due no later than the listed time/day. Each response needs to have a minimum of 300 words and maximum of 500. See the assignment page on Canvas for rubric. Submit via Canvas. You may receive points off for late submissions. See late policies.
3. **Learning Activity** (10 points): Health disparities continue to be a pressing problem in American society. 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 policy solutions. See Canvas for more details.
4. **Participation Total:** (40 points)
  - A) Participation Reflections Discussion Posts (10x2=20 pts): These discussion posts will help students prepare for discussions. These questions will prompt students to think critically about the chapter material that week. You are required to answer at least one of the questions that correspond to each chapter by posting on the discussion thread. Your post must be at least 75 words. The reflections must critically analyze the MATERIAL. Tie it back to the material for that week. They must be posted from the author's account and must be original. All posts will be via

Canvas.

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

These responses allow students to interact with each other and learn others' perspectives. You are to comment on the discussion posts for the week. A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, especially in a course that focuses on pressing and controversial social and political issues. 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 is 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. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom. Tie your arguments back to the chapter material.

**Grade Point Totals:**

200-185 = A

184-179 = A-

178-173 = B+

172-165 = B

164-159 = B-

158-153 = C+

152-145 = C

144-139 = C-

138-133 = D+

132-125 = D

124-119 = D-

<119 = E

\* A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. There MAY be opportunities for bonus points.

\*\*More information about grades and UF's grading policies is available in the Undergraduate Catalog <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies>[Links to an external site.](#)

Class Policies

Late Work and Make-Ups

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at the [UF Attendance Policies website](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

UF Policies

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#)[Links to an external site.](#) (352-392-8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

The instructor should be notified of any special accommodations required by the student when they begin their course.

#### UF Counseling Services

Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking a clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

- [UF Counseling & Wellness CenterLinks to an external site.](#), 301 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1575, personal and career counseling
- [UF Student Health Care CenterLinks to an external site.](#)
  - Student Mental Health, 352-392-1171, personal counseling
  - Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), 352-392-1161, sexual counseling
- [U Matter We CareLinks to an external site.](#)
- [UF Career Resource CenterLinks to an external site.](#), Reitz Union, 352-392-1601, career development assistance and counseling

#### Gator Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

#### University Policy on Academic Misconduct

UF students are bound by [The Honor PledgeLinks to an external site.](#) which states:

"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'"

The [Honor CodeLinks to an external site.](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

From [Regulations of the University of Florida, 4.041 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code: Scope and ViolationsLinks to an external site.](#):

**Plagiarism.** A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

From [Regulations of the University of Florida, 6C1-4.047 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code: SanctionsLinks to an external site.](#):

For a violation or violations of the Honor Code, a student may receive any of the sanctions that can be imposed for Student Conduct Code violations, including but not limited to conduct probation, suspension and expulsion as well as any educational sanctions. In addition, students may receive the following:

1. Assignment grade penalty. The student is assigned a grade penalty on an assignment including but not limited to a zero.
2. Course grade penalty. The student is assigned a grade penalty in the entire course including but not limited to an 'E'."

### Netiquette

It is important to recognize that the online classroom is in fact a classroom, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.

### Security

Remember that your password is the only thing protecting you from pranks or more serious harm.

- Don't share your password with anyone.
- Change your password if you think someone else might know it.
- Always logout when you are finished using the system.

### General Guidelines

When communicating online, you should always:

- Treat your instructor (and everyone!) with respect, even in email or in any other online communication.
- Always use your instructors' proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if in doubt use Mr. or Ms. Unless specifically invited, don't refer to them by first name.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Remember that all college-level communication should have correct spelling and grammar.
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you".
- Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman and use a 12 or 14 pt. font size.
- Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS YELLING.
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :).
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm, as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or offensively.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and others').
- Do not send confidential patient information via email.

### Email Netiquette

When you send an email to your instructor, teaching assistant, or classmates, you should:

- Use a descriptive subject line.
- Be brief.
- Avoid attachments unless you are sure your recipients can open them.
- Avoid HTML in favor of plain text.
- Sign your message with your name and return email address.
- Think before you send an email to more than one person. Does everyone really need to see your message?
- Be sure you REALLY want everyone to receive your response when you click "reply all".
- Be sure that the message author intended for the information to be passed along before you click the "forward" button.

### Message Board Netiquette and Guidelines

When posting on the Discussion Board in your online course, you should:

- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material.
- Take your posts seriously and review and edit them before sending.
- Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment.
- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source.
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying.
- Don't repeat someone else's post without adding something of your own to it.
- Avoid short, generic replies such as, "I agree." You should include why you agree or add to the previous point.
- Always be respectful of others' opinions even when they differ from your own.
- When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way.
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks
- Be open-minded

Disclaimer

Except for changes that substantially affect the implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change.

**Consider Adding a (second) Major in Women’s Studies!**

Do you want to learn about issues of diversity, power, equity, and justice and gain the scholarly knowledge and skills to change the world? Adding the Women’s Studies major can deepen your critical thinking, analysis, and skills in intersectional feminist approaches to studying and transforming gender, race, class, sexualities and other systems of power. The Women’s Studies major shows graduate schools and employers that you bring advanced knowledge and skills about diversity and equity issues. The 30-credit Women’s Studies major consists of four core courses and six electives. It’s simple to combine with another major, and up to 15 credits can double count with another degree (English, Psychology, and Sociology in particular have many courses that can double count). It’s also the perfect complement to pre-health studies. Contact undergraduate coordinator Dr. Alyssa Zucker (azucker@ufl.edu) to make an appointment to discuss adding the major.

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Course Summary: \*Subject to change with advance notice by instructor

Date	Details	Due
Fri Jan 12, 2024	Discussion Topic Introductory Posts	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jan 19, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #1: What is Health Equity and Health Disparities?	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jan 26, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #2: Health Equity and Discrimination, Prejudice, and Health	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jan 31, 2024	Assignment Learning Activity: Social Determinants of Health	due by 11:59pm



<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Due</b>
Fri Feb 2, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #3: Health Equity Research and Collaborative Approaches	due by 11:59pm
Wed Feb 7, 2024	Quiz Exam One: Section One: Chapters 1-4	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 9, 2024	Assignment Case Study #1	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 16, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #4: Health Equity in U.S. Latinx Populations	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 23, 2024	Assignment Case Study # 2	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 1, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #5: American Indian and Alaska Native Health Equity and Health Equity for Indigenous People of Hawaii	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 8, 2024	Assignment Case Study # 3	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 20, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #6: LGBTQ+ Health Equity	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 22, 2024	Quiz Exam Two: Section Two: 5-12	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 29, 2024	Assignment Case Study # 4	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 5, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #7: Health Equity in Immigrant and Refugee Populations	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 12, 2024	Assignment Case Study # 5	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 19, 2024	Discussion Topic Discussion Post #8: The Path Forward	due by 11:59pm
Mon Apr 22, 2024	Discussion Topic Take-Away Posts	due by 11:59pm
Wed Apr 24, 2024	Quiz Exam Three: Section Three: Chapters 13-18	due by 11:59pm