Social Epidemiology: Concepts and Measures
EPID 826, Spring 2008

Days: Tuesday and Thursday
Time: 3:30-4:45 pm
Location: 1304 McGavran-Greenberg Building
Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: An introductory epidemiology course (e.g., EPID 600)

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Course Objectives:

The course aims to:

- Provide an overview of the social determinants of health.
- Describe and evaluate measures used in social epidemiology studies.
- Introduce students to key theorists, schools of thought, and debates in social epidemiology.
- Examine the relationship between ethics and the social forces contributing to the distribution of diseases.
- Describe interventions targeting social forces affecting disease occurrence.
Required Readings:

♦ Readings available through UNC Blackboard.

Assignments:

1. Assigned readings are to be read *prior to* their respective session. The class discussions will refer to the assigned readings, thus the student’s participation in discussions will depend on reading the material.

2. Three essays will be required during the course in which students apply the lecture content to the content of the Klinenberg book, *Heat Wave*.

3. A paper, no more than 12 pages double-spaced, is due on the last day of the course. In this paper you will discuss the concepts, theories, and epidemiologic measures needed to assess a health outcome of your choice within a social context. In addition, you will describe any interventions that have been implemented to address this issue and suggest possible next steps. If no intervention has been implemented, you will speculate on actions that could be taken.

Evaluation:

1. Participation in class discussions (15%)
2. Three essays (15% each = 45% total)
3. Final paper (40%)
Jan 10: **Course introduction** (Thomas, Aytur)

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 1 - Introduction: Advancing methods in social epidemiology.

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 2 – The history of methods of social epidemiology

Jan 15: **Debates over social epidemiology** (Setel)

Debate in Lancet, 1998


Debate in International Journal of Epidemiology, 2001


Jan 17: **Proximal and distal** (Thomas)


Jan 22: **Social ethics and social epidemiology** (Thomas)

Jan 24: Causality (Aytur)

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 16 – Using causal diagrams to understand common problems in social epidemiology


Jan 29: Social policy (Aytur)


Jan 31: The built environment (Aytur)


Feb 5: Network analysis (Thomas)

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 11 – Network methods in social epidemiology

Feb 7: Geographical analysis (Emch)

Feb 12: Mapping (Emch)

Readings to be determined by Dr. Emch.

Feb 14: Place Method (Weir)

**Feb 19: Income and SES (Rose)**

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 3 – Indicators of socioeconomic position

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 5 – Measuring poverty

**Feb 21: Income inequality (Nielsen)**

Readings to be determined by Dr. Nielson.

**Feb 26: Neighborhood effects: theory (Aytur)**

Macintyre S. Deprivation amplification revisited; or, is it always true that poorer places have poorer access to resources for healthy diets and physical activity? International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity 2007; 4:32.


Recommended:


**Feb 28: Neighborhood effects: measurement (Aytur)**

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 8 – Measures of residential community contexts


**Mar 4: Disparities research (Thomas)**

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 6 – Measuring health inequalities

**Mar 6: Health care access (Ricketts)**

Readings to be determined by Dr. Ricketts.

**Mar 11/13 Spring break**
Mar 18: Cross-national comparative research (Siddiqi)


Mar 20: Interventions (Thomas)


Mar 25: Race and racism (Jones?)

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 4 – Measuring and analyzing “race,” racism, and racial discrimination.

Mar 27: Sex and gender (Pettifor)


Apr 1: Introduction to modeling (Messer)

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 13 – Multilevel studies.

Apr 3: Qualitative methods (Setel)

Apr 8: Mixed methods (Setel)


Apr 10: Migration and incarceration (Thomas)

Kark SL. The social pathology of syphilis in Africans. South African Medical Journal 1949;23:77-84.


Apr 15: Data sources (Thomas)

Oakes & Kaufman, Chapter 9 – Using census data to approximate neighborhood effects.

Apr 17: Verbal autopsy (Setel)


Apr 22: Life course studies (Rose)


Apr 24: Open lecture (topic to be requested by the students)