This module is designed to facilitate student understanding of the ways in which social structures might impact opportunities, lived experiences and choices related to health. Course readings and discussions will cover: 1) mechanisms of social stratification; 2) influence of stratification on distribution of resources, exposure to stressors, and expectations for beliefs and behavior; and 3) aspects of the social environment currently under exploration in public health and health behavior research and practice, including physical and social spaces, socioeconomic distributions, and social identity/experiences of discrimination.

Participation and Preparation (35% of module grade)
The primary function of class time is to discuss the readings, and their application to the HBHE field, in depth. In advance of class, the instructor will provide a set of comprehension and discussion questions related to the readings that students can use as guides during the preparation for discussion, but students should take an active role in the classroom discussion. Participation grades will be based on three criteria: 1) preparation, 2) quality of comments, and 3) respectful and productive engagement with other students. In addition to completing the readings in advance, arriving at class on time, and being attentive to discussion throughout the class period, you should aim to a) apply course readings to relevant discussion points, b) compare and contrast ideas from different authors, c) draw on readings from earlier in the module (or previous modules), d) offer evidence or theory-based critiques of the claims made by authors, and/or e) build on the comments of your classmates. Attention to the group dynamic, including being sure to offer your perspective without over-dominating conversation, is also important.

Discussion Leading (15% of module grade)
Although the instructor will provide a brief introduction to the material at the start of the class, provide clarifications about course material, and ensure that key points are covered in the discussion, the primary discussion will be facilitated by students. Each week 2-3 students will create a class plan that guides discussion and interpretation of the readings. Each class should include a variety of discussion techniques (e.g. large group discussion, small group discussion, application activity, individual reflection). Students should plan a timetable for discussion that incorporates 5-10 minutes for instructor introduction of the material, a 15 minute break toward the middle of class time and 10 minutes for instructor wrap-up.

Social Determinants Paper (35% of module grade)
Using a health behavior or outcome of your choice, write a 3-5 page (single spaced) paper in which you:

- Introduce the health behavior or outcome, and provide evidence for a disparity in that behavior or outcome along a single dimension of social status (e.g., gender, income, education, neighborhood, race etc.) within a specified population (e.g., women in Pakistan, North Carolinians, young adults etc.). So you might be interested in gender disparities in smoking among high school students, or racial differences in cervical cancer screening among women, etc.

- Propose a conceptual model that would explain the identified disparity within the population of interest. To do this you likely need to:
Define and describe 1-2 potential social determinants of the health behavior/outcome and/or disparities in it within your population. Describe how and why those determinants might be related to the behavior/outcome, and how/why those determinants predict/explain observed disparities. Rely on theoretical concepts from the course or other readings, as well as empirical evidence, as possible. Draw your conceptual framework (using boxes and arrows) that connects your determinants and behaviors/outcomes, as well as any key mechanisms/pathways you describe. Be sure to include the disparity dimension in the model, as either a precursor to a social determinant, a mediating factor or a moderator. (Note: it’s ok to do this first if that makes more sense to you.) Identify 1-2 research questions that would be helpful to further explore or test the model you’ve developed.

Peer feedback on paper (15% of module grade)
Because peer feedback (giving and receiving) is a necessary and useful skill in academia, you will exchange your paper with another student for feedback, and provide a response with constructive criticism (target length <= 1 single spaced page). During the final class, we will dedicate ~30 minutes for pairs to meet and share feedback. In your feedback, I suggest you do the following:

- Start with a few sentences that summarize the paper (or what you, as the reader, think the paper is about).
- Comment on the things the author did particularly well. This can be pretty brief, and can focus on both the ideas/approach of the paper and writing style.
- Note things you do not understand or that were confusing, present suggestions for what could be done differently, and/or pose questions for the author to consider. As possible and appropriate, indicate why you are making the suggestions you are. Remember to keep the tone constructive and respectful. This section can be in bullet form if you prefer.

Papers will be assessed based on 1) clear description of a health issue and disparity; 2) clarity of the conceptual model; 3) quality of logical argument in support of conceptual model; 4) relevance and importance of the identified research questions; and 3) general writing clarity and style. Peer feedback will be assessed based on the quality and clarity of the constructive comments.

Due dates:
- Email the health behavior, population and disparity to me by Friday, January 29. Though not required, you’re welcome to send me your initial thoughts about the social determinants of interest or the conceptual model.
- Email the completed paper to your peer feedback partner(s) before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 15.
- Send an electronic copy of the peer review paragraph to your reviewee and the teaching assistant before class on Wednesday, February 17. Be sure to indicate both your name and the original author’s name on each paragraph.
- Upload your final paper into Sakai by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 19.

January 13, 2015: Background and General Theories of the Social Determinants of Health
Objectives for the class: 1) Define social determinants of health; 2) Explore tensions among individual, social and intersectional perceptions of health; 3) Understand two overarching theories focused on social determinants of health.


Optional:

January 20, 2015: Stratification and its Tools

Objectives for the class: 1) Describe processes of social categorization and stratification; 2) Describe potential mechanisms through with social stratification could influence health.

- Gee GC, Walsemann KM & Brondolo E. (2012). A life course perspective on how racism may be related to health inequities. *American Journal of Public Health*. 102(5): 967-974. [Note: this article focuses on racism, but please consider various dimensions of social categorization when you read it.]

Optional:
Wizdom assigns this in her module, which is the only reason it is not required here. If you do not read it in module 4, I recommend this for people interested in stress mechanisms.]


**January 27, 2014: Social class**

*Objectives for the class:* 1) Identify multiple dimensions of socioeconomic status; 2) Identify potential causal pathways explaining correlations between socioeconomic status and health


**Optional:**


**February 3, 2014: Constructions of Identity**

*Objectives for the class:* 1) Consider definitions and measures of non-economic measures of social status, including race, gender and sexual orientation; 2) Explore processes of resource distribution, stigmatization and role assumption that may result in identity-based disparities in health and behavior.


• We should all be feminists. TED talk by Chimamnda Ngozi Adichie. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Optional (Note: many of the below provide applications of the ideas in the required reading, so I strongly recommend you read applications of those theories that most interest you):


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**February 10, 2014: Place and social space**

**Objectives for the class:** 1) Identify key physical and social components of place with importance for health and health behavior; 2) Consider appropriate aggregation of space as meaningful place.


Optional:

February 17, 2014: Modifications to Social Structures to Enhance Health

Objectives for the class: 1) Identify strategies for addressing social determinants of health; 2) Consider practical strength and limitations of such strategies; 3) Be exposed to terms from political science theory related to policy development and implementation.


Optional:
- Golden SD et al. (2015). Upending the social ecological model to guide health promotion efforts toward policy and environmental change. Health education & Behavior. 42(1S): 85-14S.