

HHS 305: Social Determinants of Health: Social Inequities**Faculty:** Health & Human Services**Credits:** 3**Contact Hours:** 42 hours of classroom lectures / coursework

With respectful acknowledgement that Vancouver Island University students, staff, faculty and administration live, work, and play on the traditional territories of Snuneymuxw First Nation, Tla'amin / Sliammon First Nation, and Cowichan Tribes.

COURSE INFORMATION**Course Description**

This intensive interprofessional course provides participants with opportunities to develop and strengthen their understanding of the social determinants of health using local, regional, national and global perspectives. Participants critically examine social inequities, root causes, and subsequent health consequences in diverse populations, particularly indigenous and/or marginalized populations.

Course Summary

What makes people healthy or unhealthy? The health of individuals is not only shaped by lifestyle choices or medical treatments, but also, to a large extent, by social conditions. This course offers an introduction to the social determinants of health and the social advantages and disadvantages that people experience based on their social position and social circumstances and how these influence their health and wellbeing. This course is designed to provide participants with an introduction to and appreciation of theoretical perspectives and empirical research on the social determinants of health.

Prerequisite

Second year standing in an undergraduate degree program.

Program Learning Outcomes for Health & Human Services (HHS)

Upon successful completion of HHS Programs, graduates will be able to:

1. Engage in the profession and discipline of Health & Human Services (HHS) Programs by utilizing a foundation of caring, health, and healing, and by integrating and applying the theory and practice of HHS within a variety of contexts and diverse populations.
2. Provide safe, competent, compassionate, accountable and ethical care in all contexts and practice environments.
3. Make safe and competent decisions based on knowledge, evidence, multiple ways of knowing, principles of relational practice/therapeutic communication, professional relationships and responsibilities, and person-centered care.
4. Lead current and future professional practice and through partnerships with others influence care at the economic, technological, political, social, environmental, and professional levels.
5. Implement changes that benefit the needs of individuals, families, groups, and populations, advocating for changes to address issues of social justice, health equity, and other disparities.

6. Be self-directed, inquiry focused, critically reflective, and collaborative practitioners dedicated to self-regulation and lifelong learning.
7. As well as discipline specific knowledge, graduates of HHS programs have cultivated skills, literacies and qualities that enable them to be flexible, adaptable, educated citizens, lifelong learners, and leaders in their communities, society and the world:
https://ciel.viu.ca/sites/default/files/overview_of_viu_graduate_attributes.pdf

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze and apply theoretical perspectives and empirical research on the social determinants of health.
2. Critically analyze how the social determinants of health influence the health and wellbeing of individuals.
3. Describe multiple aspects of the social environment that impact health and contribute to health inequities.
4. Articulate the potential mechanisms and pathways through which social factors can influence the health of individuals, families, communities, and nations.
5. Critically examine social inequities, their root causes, and the subsequent health consequences in diverse populations, particularly indigenous and/or marginalized populations.
6. Critically examine social inequities and the health consequences in diverse populations.
7. Identify strategies that will help reduce health inequities, particularly in relationship to Indigenous and marginalized populations.
8. Critically reflect on one's own role in advocacy and social responsibility in order to help achieve health equity

Course Concepts

- Social determinants of health and social inequities
- Interprofessional collaboration
 - Partnerships for effective teaching and learning in diverse settings
 - Scope of practice
 - Codes of Ethics
 - Professionalism
 - Interprofessional practice
 - Interprofessional education
- Cultural humility and safety:
 - Cultural privilege; being 'other'
 - Cultural influences on teaching and learning
 - Culturally relevant models of learning and teaching
 - Culture, health beliefs, and health promotion
 - Intercultural communication
 - Trauma informed practice
 - Diversity
 - Global village
- Ways of knowing
 - 'coming to know'
 - Indigenous ways of knowing

- Community driven practice
 - Collaboration and co-creation with community
 - Grass roots; building from the ground up
 - Capacity building and sustainability
 - Health promotion
 - Primary Health care
 - Globalization
 - Mutuality
- Strength-based approach
 - Empowerment
 - Power/power relations
 - Advocacy and social justice
 - Leadership development
 - Capacity building and sustainability
 - Hardiness and resilience
 - Social equity
- Self-reflection and critical thinking
 - Self as culturally constructed
 - Self as learner and teacher

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Group work

Case studies

Pre-reading

Site Visits to community agencies

Guest speakers

Discussion

Presentations

Video/YouTube

Student Workload

This seminar-based course consists of a combination of key readings, small group activities, films, and interactive instructor- and student-led 'mini-lectures' and discussions. It is expected that students will complete pre-readings prior to class, attend and actively participate in all class activities, and complete assignments as per the course schedule. Students will also attend site visits to local agencies that focus on the social determinants of health.

Much of our time together will be spent discussing key topics and critically engaging with the course readings. The class attendance grade as well as in-class presentation and exam grades will reflect your regular participation in class activities, the quality of your contributions to class discussions and debates, and the degree to which you engage with the subject matter over the course of the term. You are welcome and encouraged to share interesting anecdotes, case studies, and other relevant materials that you feel will complement the class discussion. Quizzes may be held randomly at the discretion of the course instructor to

ensure that students are reading assigned material. Quiz marks would then be incorporated into the midterm exam mark.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION COMPONENTS

Assessment

Ongoing formative assessment will occur during all classes, including site visits. There is an expectation that students will interact in a professional manner, adhere to all VIU and program policies/procedures, and adhere to their Code of Ethics.

Evaluation

Evaluation Item	Details	Percentage of Final Grade
Attendance	Students are expected to attend all seminar classes and participate in site visits.	5%
Midterm Exam	Short answer and essay questions.	30%
In-Class Presentations	In groups of two, students will choose and present on a topic from the seminar lectures.	25%
Take-home Essay		40%

Midterm exam: the midterm consists of multiple choice and open-ended short/long answer questions that cover the material in course readings, lectures, and in-class discussion. The goal of this assessment is to test students' understanding of definitions, core concepts, and important research findings learned in this course. Please bring your student # and pen/pencil. Students will have a half of the class to complete the midterm exam. If you are sick on the day of the midterm, you are required to present a doctor's note.

In-class group presentation: Pairing up with 1 other student in class, you will present on one of the course topics of your choice that clearly addresses one of the social determinants of health we discussed. There will be a list of topics handed around to the class and you will be asked to select the topic you would like.

Presentations are 25 minutes (of which 5 minutes are discussion). As a group, you choose a broader topic (i.e., one of the SDOH)

1. Find new (not part of the course readings) research papers that were published in a peer-reviewed journal, presents original data, and is relevant to your topic.
2. Have the topic approved by the instructor in person or by email.

To seek topic approval, please send a very brief one-page paragraph summary to me about the topic you are going to present and the research paper you selected.

During your presentation, you are expected to:

1. Present and discuss the social determinants of health you're focusing on.
2. Discuss two relevant pathways of the social determinants to health outcomes.
3. Present and discuss the findings of the research paper you chose
4. Articulate a desired population health outcome (i.e., how can the cycle be broken/ inequality be overcome → intervention possibilities)
5. Engage the class in a 5-minute discussion in the end of your presentation

General presentation tips (note that your presentation is part of the evaluation):

- Briefly clarify what is the objective of your presentation in the beginning; what would you like your audience to learn? What are the main takeaways?
- Provide a clear statement of the problem/issue and context, and identification of the population affected
- Present freely rather than reading the slides
- Keep text on slides to a minimum
- Both presenters in a group have to participate actively in the presentation and contribute to its preparation. At the end of the presentation list resources used (APA style). Please send your final presentation slides to the instructor at the latest 5pm the day before your presentation. Late submissions are subject to 3% penalty.

Final group composition, topics, and research article used as supporting material need to be approved by email by the instructor!). It is the responsibility of each student to form a presentation group with one other student. Presentation topics will be filled first come first serve.

Final assignment: You will be writing a 2500-3000 word take home essay exam (double spaced, size 12 Times New Roman font, excluding cover page, abstract and references) discussing 1 question provided to you about the social determinants of health. For this assignment, you are expected to integrate course material and readings of several topics discussed in class. You may but do not have to incorporate new literature. Guidelines regarding which sub-themes should be incorporated will be provided. **Failure to upload the assignment on time results in a reduction of the final essay grade by 5% per late day. Assignments will not be accepted if they are submitted more than 1 week late (i.e., student will receive zero points for this part of the course evaluation).** Please review the guidelines for academic integrity and plagiarism carefully as they do apply to your professional conduct in this class. Evidence of plagiarism will lead to receiving zero on the final assignment.

Tips for writing

<https://services.viu.ca/writing-centre/links-and-resources>

This is an excellent link with a variety of information on writing and the resources available to you when engaging in writing. This link will also provide resources to help you with APA.

VIU Grade Scale: University, Career/Technical, Adult Basic Education Programs

Grade	Percentage (%)	Grade Value	Point Description
A+	90-100	4.33	Excellent
A	85-89	4.00	
A-	80-84	3.67	
B+	76-79	3.33	Good
B	72-75	3.00	
B-	68-71	2.67	
C+	64-67	2.33	Satisfactory
C	60-63	2.00	
C-	55-59	1.67	
D	50-54	1.00	Poor
F	0-49	0.00	Failing Work Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements
CR	N/A	0.00	Course Passed Requirements completed, but not calculated in GPA

LEARNING MATERIALS

Required

Fadiman, Anne. (2012). *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Greenwood, M., de Leeuw, S., & Lindsay, N.M. (2018). *Determinants of indigenous people's health: Beyond the Social (2nd Ed.)*. Canadian Scholars.

All article readings are accessible online through the VIU library. It is expected that students read the assigned articles in preparation for class. Guiding questions for each of the readings are provided to the students.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Additional Information
Class #1	Introduction to the Canada's Healthcare System	This first class will involve an introduction to the Canadian Healthcare System with emphasis on the social determinants of health (SDOH) and the way it has gained increasing prominence as a foundational concept for population and public health in academic literature and policy documents over the last several decades. In Canadian policy circles, the SDOH concept has been increasingly incorporated into Population and Public Health (PPH) literature and policies since it first gained
		recognition in the 1970s and 1980s alongside health promotion. This introductory lecture will focus on the importance of shifting the PPH focus on the individual-level factors that influence health, towards factors at the community and societal levels.
Class #2	Theoretical underpinnings informing the determinants of health.	Foundational knowledge on the theoretical underpinning informing the determinants of health in a Canadian Public Healthcare System will be the focus of this lecture. The social determinants of health (SDOH) are rooted in the recognition that the determinants of illness and disease transcend the individual. The focus of the SDOH is on the contexts in which individuals and communities "are born, grow, live, work and age" Canada demonstrates leadership in the field of population health. However, Canada has experienced few successes in reducing the country's health inequities. There is an increasing recognition that regardless of the progress made to date, significant gaps remain in comprehending fully the root causes of inequities, including the complex ways in which the determinants of health relate, intersect and mutually reinforce one another. Calls are being made to draw on the theoretical insights of critical social science perspectives to rethink the current framing of health determinants. We will spend time exploring intersectionality and the determinants of health and although the emphasis will be on Canadian systems its applicability in other developed countries, such as Australia will be clearly evident.
Class #3	Race and Racism as Factors in Population Health	Racism can take on different forms, all of which will have impacts on health. Institutionalized racism is concerned with the structures of society and may be codified in institutions of practice, law, and governmental inaction in the face of need. Personally mediated racism is defined as prejudice and discrimination, and can manifest itself as lack of respect, suspicion, devaluation, scapegoating, and dehumanization. Internalized racism is when those who are stigmatized accept these messages about their own abilities and intrinsic lack of worth. The many forms of racism can ultimately lead to resignation, helplessness, and lack of hope. These concepts are clearly applicable to Canadian society and will be explored in this class. Learning about the existence of racism in Canada will help to raise your awareness and understanding of the adverse effects of racism.

Class #4	Gender as a Factor in Population Health	<p>This class will focus on the connection between gender and population health. In Canada women experience more adverse social determinants of health than men. The main reason for this is that women carry more responsibilities for raising children and taking care of housework. Women are also less likely to be working full-time and are less likely to be eligible for unemployment benefits.</p> <p>Unfortunately, almost every public policy decision that weakens the social safety net has a greater impact on women than on men. The class will explore the value of improving and enforcing pay equity legislation and its value in improving the employment and economic situation of Canadian women. In addition, what is the value in providing a national affordable high-quality childcare program? Would an affordable childcare program influence in a positive direction the opportunities for women to engage in the workplace and improve their financial situation?</p>
Class #5	Mental Health and Social Economic Status	<p>This class will focus on mental health and its connection to the Social Determinants of Health. Emerging evidence suggests that with strategic action targeted at people's social, economic and environmental circumstances and the utilization of different interventions at different stages of the life course the potential exists to improve mental health and prevent as well as alleviate mental disorders on a local, international and global scale regardless of a country's stage of economic development. This class will touch on the growing research interest concerning the interaction between certain adverse social conditions and their detrimental effect on an individual's mental and/or physical health by acting as chronic stressors. The chronic arousal of stress systems as a risk factor for mental health is empirically well-founded but questions remain about how and why</p>
		psychological exposure to certain kinds of proximal social conditions might contribute to such arousal.
Class #6	Social Determinants of Health and Agency and Structure	<p>The class will focus on the social determinants of health and its connection to agency and structure. Max Weber's role in seeing the dialectical relationship between life choices and life chances will be discussed. Once again, we will see the influence of SES on health lifestyle and the fact that it is not (in many instances) an individual choice but rather a reflection of an individual's social and material environment. The readings for this class will assist us in recognizing that SES can be linked to high risk behaviors including illicit drug use. Unfortunately, data describing SES among addicted drug users is sparse. The recent history of opioid use in the community and prevention and promotion programs to reduce the negative effects will also be brought forward in the class.</p>
Class #7	Adverse Childhood Events and Social Determinants of Health	<p>What is the cost to health when an individual has experienced significant childhood trauma? In recent years, society has developed a greater appreciation of how widespread adverse childhood experiences are. During the past twenty years intense research has been done on adverse childhood experiences (ACE) particularly some of the studies by CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE). The CDC study offered a lot of information on ACE including the fact most of us have at least one ACE. Individuals with a lot of ACE have seven times the risk of becoming an alcoholic, twelve times the risk of attempted suicide, twice the risk of cancer and heart attacks, tend to be more violent, more likely to be victims of violence, more marriages and more likely to use prescription drugs more often than people with minimal ACE. When children suffer from ACE, harm/damage is done to the developing brain, the immune system and negatively influences how individuals respond to stress. This class will explore ACE and its role in creating adult life adversities.</p>

Class #8	Health Consequences of Toxic Stress and Indigenous Peoples	The health consequences of toxic stress caused by adverse childhood events including that which is associated with multigenerational trauma affects both short and long-term health. Historical and generational trauma (epigenetic consequences of stress can alter how the DNA functions) and how this can be passed on from generation to generation will be thoroughly explored in this class. In the Indigenous population there are surging rates of diabetes, especially Type II diabetes (TD2) and it is occurring earlier and earlier in the life trajectory. Indigenous children and youth will be discussed in connection with increasing rates of diabetes and its link to epigenetics. The Link and Phalen article from earlier readings will be foundational in exploring some of the critical reasons why social conditions can be linked to the fundamental cause of disease.
Class #9	How Social Ties affect Health Behavior	This class will focus on understanding how social ties affect health behavior and what strategies are needed for improving the health of North Americans, particularly middle age and older adults. House et al., (1988) stated that <i>Social relationships, or the relative lack thereof, constitute a major risk factor for health (p. 541)</i> . Since making this claim, the link between social ties and health has become a veritable social fact, with an explosion of research and theory aimed at identifying the underlying mechanisms. Yet health behavior remains something of a black box.
Class #10	Intersectionality and the Determinants of Health	This class will familiarize students with key concepts that form the basis of intersectionality and the determinants of health including healthcare literacy from a social and behavioural context. Intersectionality is an approach or lens that recognizes that health is shaped by a multi-dimensional overlapping of factors such as race, class, income, education, age, ability, sexual orientation, immigration status, ethnicity, indigeneity, and geography. Within this class we will delve into colonialism as a broader social determinant of health and utilizes some key articles to assist us with this.

Class #11	Review of Key Determinants of Health	Reviewing and taking stock of the key determinants of health as it relates to Canada with an emphasis on global health. There will be a continued emphasis on Indigenous populations not only in Canada but throughout the world. We will speak about WHO and their role in reducing health inequities particularly in relationship to Indigenous people. Exploring the intersection of education and indigenous status from the social determinants of health will be included.
Class #12 & #13	Group Presentations	The last two closing classes will involve group presentations on a chosen topic from the course outline. Pairing up with other students in class, you will present on one of the course topics of your choice that clearly addresses one of the social determinants of health we discussed. There will be a list of topics handed around to the class and you will be asked to select the topic you would like. Presentations are 25 minutes (of which 5 minutes are discussion).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Integrity is a central element in learning and forms the foundation of intellectual pursuits in an academic community. All members of the University Community share responsibility for adhering to the academic and ethical principles of the University. This involves honesty in the representation of one's knowledge and learning, and open and accurate acknowledgement in one's academic work of any indebtedness to the work of others. A breach of these standards will be treated seriously and not be tolerated. Students are expected to learn and embrace academic integrity as an essential part of their education.

Academic integrity includes:

- independently producing work submitted under one's own name;
- properly and appropriately referencing all work;
- identifying all collaborators in work;
- completing examinations without giving or receiving assistance, excepting those students requiring assistance due to a documented disability;
- respecting the integrity of examination materials and/or the examination process; and
- respecting the integrity of computer security systems, software copyrights and file privacy of others.

Academic Misconduct involves any violations of academic integrity which includes dishonesty in assignments, examinations and any other academic performances or endeavors. Academic misconduct includes:

- **Cheating:** Cheating is an act of deception by which students misrepresent that they or others have mastered information for an academic exercise
- **Fabrication:** Fabrication is the intentional use of false information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the intentional unacknowledged use of someone else's words, ideas or data. When a student submits work for credit that includes other's words, ideas or data the source must be acknowledged and referenced appropriately, using the convention of the discipline of study.
- **Facilitation of Misconduct:** Facilitation of misconduct is helping or attempting to help someone else commit academic misconduct as identified above.

- **Non-attendance:** Non-attendance, where attendance is deemed to be mandatory, is not acceptable. Absences due to personal illness, family illness, death of an immediate family member, religious ceremonies, or sports events in which the student represents Vancouver Island University are allowed and must be approved by the appropriate instructor or coordinator. Non-attendance must be for valid reasons and not falsified. Some departments have specific attendance requirements, and details of this may be obtained from the instructor, department chair, or program coordinator.

The full **Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure** can be found at: <https://employees.viu.ca/faculty-help/student-academic-code-conduct>

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Standards of Behaviour: Vancouver Island University students are expected to behave in a responsible manner, respectful of the learning environment inside the classroom and throughout the campus. As students in the Faculty of Health and Human Services, standards of behaviours include professional and ethical suitability. This policy applies to all Vancouver Island University campus and off-campus locations where Vancouver Island University sponsored activity is occurring.

Students enrolled at Vancouver Island University are expected to meet standards of conduct, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Accepting responsibility for their behaviour on Vancouver Island University property and/or at institutionally sponsored events;
- Complying with University policy and federal, provincial and local laws and/or regulations;
- Respecting the rights of all students and employees to have a positive and safe learning and working environment; and,
- Respecting the property of others.

The policy includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- Endangering the safety of any individual
- Violence or threats of violence
- Personal harassment
- Disruption of the learning and work environment
- Theft or Vandalism
- Alcohol and other drug related offences
- Providing false information
- Refusing reasonable requests of authorized employees
- The posting of obscene, libelous and copyright material
- Misuse of the University name

This policy is intended to work in concert with a number of Vancouver Island University policies governing student behaviour. For a full list of these additional policies the **Full Standards of Behavior** can be found at: <https://services.viu.ca/student-support-and-intervention/student-code-conduct-non-academic>.

Faculty of Health and Humans Services: Social Media Issues

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Digital Technology as a Learning Tool: Faculty and students within the Faculty of in Health and Human Services (HHS) at VIU have access to a wide variety of digital tools (personal computers; tablets; phones) that can be used as part of the learning and environment. HHS welcomes the use of such devices within the classroom, but they must be used as learning tools. Students found using Social Media Apps such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram during class time will be asked to switch off their devices and not allowed to use them for the duration of the lesson. Students who are found to regularly breach this directive will not be allowed to use their digital tools during classroom time. From time to time Faculty may request that you switch off your devices until the end of the session, or until a media break is provided.

SOCIAL MEDIA & AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Any social media content posted by a student or group of students that is reasonably considered to be:

- Bullying;
- Harassing;
- Inciting hatred or violence and/or
- Abusive to, or demeaning of others, including H&HS/VIU students, faculty members, or the institution is reported for action under the Academic Code of Conduct Policy #96.01.00
<https://employees.viu.ca/faculty-help/student-academic-code-conduct> and/or the

LEARNER SUPPORTS

- Advising Centre (<https://services.viu.ca/advising>)
- Counselling Services (<https://services.viu.ca/counselling>)
- Disability Access Services: Students with a disability who require academic accommodation are encouraged to contact Disability Access Services in Building 200 as soon as possible.
(<https://services.viu.ca/disability-access-services>)
- Elders at VIU (<https://aboriginal.viu.ca/elders-viu>)
- Library (<https://library.viu.ca/>)
- Writing Centre (<https://services.viu.ca/writing-centre>)