



Sociology 3673-090: Social Epidemiology
Sociology Department
Spring 2025

Instructor: Maia Roberson
Email: maia.roberson@soc.utah.edu (preferred)
Phone Number: 703-581-7766
Office Hours: Upon request

Email via Canvas is the best way to communicate with me. Emails will be responded to within 48 hours except on weekends or public holidays.

Required Materials

Text: Gordis Epidemiology (7th edition). ISBN 9780323877756
Available on Canvas via the Inclusive Access program

Course Description

Social Epidemiology is the study of the impact of social determinants on health and on the spread of disease. This course will provide an analysis of some of the social variables that are studied within the realm of social epidemiology such as inequality, socioeconomic status, and race. An introduction to the research methods and tools of statistical analysis as they are applied to real-life data will be provided in this course. This course fulfills the Quantitative Reasoning (QB) or Quantitative Intensive (QI) requirement of the University of Utah. You need to have a basic knowledge and understanding of algebra and elementary statistics before taking this course.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge about the significance of social factors and social interactions in creating, spreading, and perpetuating disease
- Discuss and analyze the strategies used to study health outcomes and health disparities
- Apply epidemiological research methods to evaluate health services and policies
- Use principles of epidemiology to identify the cause and spread of disease
- Analyze data from epidemiological studies and investigations

Evaluation Methods and Criteria

Evaluation of course outcomes will be assessed using the following methods:

- Quizzes
 - Quizzes are administered intermittently and will cover the basic terminology and history of epidemiology as well as mathematical concepts (See schedule below for due dates)
 - All quizzes will be administered and turned in online via canvas
 - Do not open the quiz if you do not plan on taking it; the quiz cannot be closed and reopened. It needs to be taken in one sitting
- Homework
 - These assignments will predominantly cover the mathematical and quantitative elements of social epidemiology
 - Homework is graded on completion; a detailed answer key will be posted after the due date
 - Homework can be submitted as a .jpeg if you did your work by hand or as a .docx if you type out your work and answers in a Word Document
- Exams
 - There will be 3 exams this semester that cover both terminology, history, and mathematics covered in class up to the point the exam is administered
 - For exams 1 and 2 students can turn in test corrections to receive half points back
- Online Discussion
 - Online discussions will be based on documentaries and assigned articles
 - Students should make 2 posts
 - The first will include meaningful analysis discussing the main takeaways, connections between the film and article, thoughts, comments, and 2 **discussion questions** posed to your classmates.
 - The second will be a response to one of your classmates
- Final Paper
 - Your final paper will be approximately 1000 words.
 - In this paper you will introduce the disease topic, address the treatments available, social variables that impact the spread of disease, and what programs & measures would need to be taken to slow the spread of disease and increase access to treatment
- Extra Credit
 - At the end of each week students can submit up to 2 peer reviewed articles that apply to topics that have been covered in class
 - Submit the paper abstract and a paragraph about how it applies to class content
 - Each article represents 1 point that will be added to the final exam
 - Because of the opportunity to submit extra credit throughout the semester, I will not approve any requests for extra credit at the end of the semester

- Late Assignment/missed assignments policy
 - Please note that due dates and times are based on **Utah Time**
 - Late Homework and Discussion submissions submitted after the due date will receive a 10% grade deduction
 - Contact me **in advance** if you are going to be late or miss an assignment; this gives me time to discuss alternative schedules.
 - I will review late requests and circumstances on a case by case basis, and I will make decisions accordingly. If an emergency arises let me know as soon as possible. Emergencies include things like car accidents and serious health crises of you the student or an immediate family member. Non-emergencies are things like vacations, conferences, or other events that can be planned and scheduled around.

Grade Breakdown

- Homework - 10%
- Discussions - 15%
- Quizzes - 15%
- Exams 1 and 2 - 25%
- Final exam - 25%
- Final Paper - 10

Grading Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
84-89	B+
80-83	B
74-79	C+
70-73	C
64-69	D+
60-63	D
Below 60	F

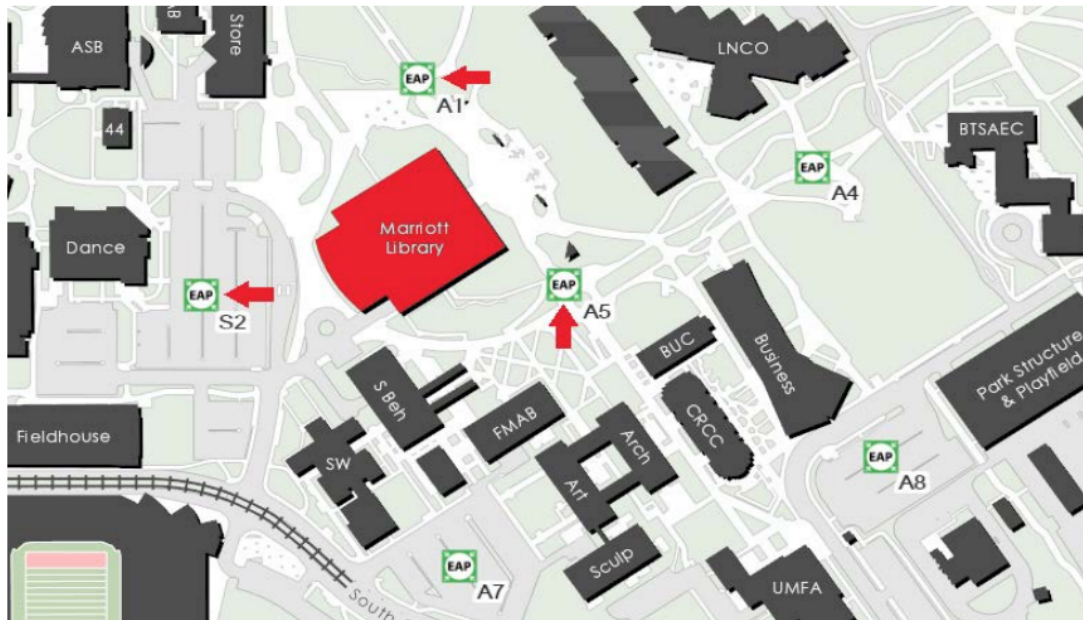
Teaching and Learning Methods

Textbook and course lectures will be utilized to teach the basic terminology, foundational theories, and mathematical/statistical tools used to perform research within social epidemiology. Example data and real life data will be used to teach mathematical and statistical methods of epidemiology. Films and peer reviewed articles will be the primary basis of class discussions as they provide in-depth knowledge about the applications of the theories learned during lectures.

University Policies

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act.** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access (<https://disability.utah.edu/>), 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.
 - All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.
- **Academic Misconduct Statement.** Per University of Utah regulations (Policy # 6-400). “A student who engages in academic misconduct,” as defined in Part I.B. and including, but not limited to, cheating, falsification, or plagiarism, “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.” Please refer to the Student Code for full elaboration of student academic and behavioral misconduct policies (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).
- **Sexual Misconduct Statement.** *Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).*
- **University Safety Statement.** *The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit utah.edu*

CSBS EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



BUILDING EVACUATION

EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) – When you receive a notification to evacuate a building either by campus text alert system or by building fire alarm, please proceed in an orderly fashion to the EAP designated for that building. Once everyone is at the EAP, you will receive further instructions from Emergency Management personnel. You can look up the EAP for any building you may be in on campus at <http://emergencymanagement.utah.edu/eap>.



CAMPUS RESOURCES

U Heads Up App: There's an app for that. Download the app on your smartphone at alert.utah.edu/headsup to access the following resources:

- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus.
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus. If you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911!

Safety Escorts: For students who are on campus at night or past business hours and would like an escort to your car, please call **801-585-2677**. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will be sent to walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location.

Course Schedule

Schedule	Materials	Assignments
Week 1 (1/6)	Chapter 1: Introduction	
	Chapter 2: Dynamics of Disease Transmission	Quiz 1 Due 1/12 11:59 PM
Week 2 (1/13)	Film: Living Old https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/livingold/	
	Grundy E, Glaser K. 2000. Socio-demographic differences in the onset and progression of disability in early old age: A longitudinal study. Age and Ageing 29:149-157.	Reflection Essay Due 1/19 11:59 PM
Week 3 (1/20)	Chapter 3: The Occurrence of Disease Part 1	
	Chapter 4: The Occurrence of Disease Part 2	Homework 1 Due 1/28 11:59 PM
Week 4 (1/27)	Chapter 5: Assessing the Validity and Reliability of Diagnostic and Screening Tests	
	Chapter 6: The Natural History of Disease: Ways of Expressing Prognosis	Quiz 2 Due 2/2 11:59 PM
Week 5 (2/3)	Review For Exam 1	
		Exam 1 Due 2/9 11:59 PM
Week 6 (2/10)	Chapters 7 & 8: Observational and Cohort Studies	
	Chapter 9: Comparing Cohort and Case-Control Studies	Homework 2 Due 2/16 11:59 PM

Week 7 (2/17)	Chapter 10: Assessing preventative and therapeutic interventions: Randomized Trials	
	Chapter 11: Randomized Trials, Some further issues	Quiz Due 2/23 11:59 PM
Week 8 (2/24)	Film: Living Old https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/livingold/	
	Grundy E, Glaser K. 2000. Socio-demographic differences in the onset and progression of disability in early old age: A longitudinal study. Age and Ageing 29:149-157.	Reflection Essay Due 3/2 11:59 PM
Week 9 (3/3)	Review For Exam 2	
		Exam 2 Due 3/9 11:59 PM
Week 10 (3/10)	Spring Break	Nothing Due
Week 11 (3/17)	Chapter 12: Estimating Risk - Is There an Association?	
	Chapter 13: More on Risk - Estimating the Potential for Prevention	Quiz Due 3/23 11:59 PM
Week 12 (3/24)	Rx For Survival	
	Discussion Board	Reflection Essay Due 3/30 11:59 PM
Week 13 (3/31)	Chap 14 & 15: Association and Causal Inference	
	Chap 14 & 15: Association and Causal Inference	Homework Due 4/6 11:59 PM

Week 14 (4/7)	Film: PBS - Corona Virus Pandemic https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/coronavirus-pandemic/	
	Film: Deadliest Plague of the 20th Century	Reflection Essay Due 4/13 11:59 PM
Week 15 (4/14)	Final Exam Review	
		Final Paper Due 4/20 11:59 PM
Week 16 (4/21)	Final Exam Period	Final Exam opens 4/21 and closes 4/30 11:59 PM

Note: This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course. Please note that I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. I may also modify the Course Schedule to accommodate the needs of our class. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.