SOCY 75: NEIGHBORHOODS AND HEALTH  
Fall 2022

Professor: Gregory Sharp  
Email: gregory.k.sharp@dartmouth.edu  
Office Hours: MW 1-3pm by appointment: https://calendly.com/gregorysharp

Location: 007 Blunt  
Time: MWF 11:30am-12:35pm  
X-hour: T 12:15-1:05pm

Course Description

Just as conditions within our homes have important implications for our health, conditions in the neighborhoods surrounding our homes also can have major health effects. Social, economic, and environmental features of neighborhoods have been linked with mortality, general health status, disability, birth outcomes, chronic conditions, obesity, depression, injuries, violence, health behaviors, and more. In this course, we consider whether, how, and why the characteristics of neighborhoods where people live, work, and play shape their health and well-being. Special attention will be devoted to conceptual and methodological challenges to detecting the prevalence and magnitude of ‘neighborhood effects’ on individual health.

The course has two principal objectives. The first is to survey the burgeoning body of scholarship devoted to uncovering whether and how neighborhoods shape our health and well-being. Readings are drawn mainly from interdisciplinary journals across several social scientific fields, including sociology, demography, public health, epidemiology, and geography, as well as chapters taken from prominent books on the topic. All have been selected with an eye toward capturing the diverse conceptual, theoretical, and methodological strategies that characterize this impactful and exciting area of research. The second learning objective is for you to demonstrate your ability to conduct independent research by producing a paper on a topic related to neighborhoods and health.

Course Structure/Delivery

As you know, the class meets in person, whereas office hours are always on Zoom. The class format is a seminar consisting of different activities each day of the week. On Mondays, I will lecture on a couple of foundational pieces in the field to orient your thinking for the week’s topic. Wednesdays will be a “seminar” format where we discuss the articles of the day, using your discussion board posts to guide the conversation. Fridays will be student-led mini-lectures on one article in the first half of class, and then group-based discussions on the assigned article during the last half. Please see the schedule for more information. Note that we will not use our designated X-hour period unless it is absolutely necessary.

Course Readings

We will read and discuss articles and chapters from published scientific journals and books. These readings are the focus of our weekly lectures and discussions, and you should have read them before we are scheduled to cover them. All readings will be available on Canvas as PDFs. All readings are required, except those under the Optional section (though they are encouraged). Note that deadlines for discussion board posts are Wednesday mornings before class, so be sure to plan accordingly (more information below). In the first week, I will also provide some useful tips on reading academic (quantitative) journal articles.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation (25%): As a seminar member, you are expected to come to class regularly and participate fully in structured discussions, provide weekly discussion board posts, and present a mini-lecture with your fellow classmates once during the term. Your participation grade is based on the following:

- **Discussion Board Posts** (15%): Beginning in Week 2, you are required to post to the Canvas Discussion Board one insightful question, comment, or critique based on the assigned readings for Wednesday. You can post on one reading or multiple readings. Please do not submit an overly simplistic or vague question
(e.g., “What data did they use?”). Discussion posts should be submitted no later than 11am EST on Wednesdays. In the end, you will have to submit a discussion post for 7 weeks (Weeks 2-8; see syllabus for schedule). For these posts, you are graded on completion. So, if you submit your post by the deadline (assuming it is a thoughtful post), then you receive credit, if you do not then you do not receive credit—absolutely no late posts are accepted. These are low stakes points, so make sure to prioritize your readings and posts each week; post as early in the week as you like!

- **Group Mini-Lecture (10%)**: On Fridays, during Weeks 2-7, a group of 3 students will be responsible for presenting on one of the readings from that week’s Optional readings section. Students will present only once during the term. Student-led lectures should be roughly 15 minutes, and you should consider using any visual aids you prefer (e.g., Powerpoint slides). In your mini-lectures, groups should cover the following:
  1. Communicate the main points of the reading to your audience; for example, what is the author(s) asking/arguing, why is this study important, etc.?
  2. Convey how this article builds on, complicates, and/or challenges what we have learned so far on the week’s topic (and perhaps previously covered topics).
  3. Discuss the implications for policy and/or future neighborhoods and health research.

When presenting, you will need to do some summarizing and synthesizing. Be careful not spend too much time on one section of the paper. The Data and Methods section of these articles may be quantitative, complex, and dense, so it is not necessary to present every little methodological detail—if the study offers us an important methodological contribution, then just explain their contribution (note, the study’s authors will do so in their paper). Remember, you are essentially teaching new material to your fellow classmates, given that they may not have read the piece you selected for the day. After the lecture, we will have time for a brief discussion (approximately 15 minutes) where classmates can ask questions and provide comments/thoughts on the presented article.

**Mid-Term Exam (30%)**: The mid-term exam, distributed early in the semester, is of the take-home variety. The exam will consist of one essay question, which covers the material through Week 5. You will be free to use any of the course resources at your disposal (notes, readings), as well as outside resources (with proper citation). Students must not receive any outside assistance in preparing their answers, including from fellow classmates or otherwise. I will make the mid-term available during Week 4, and it should be submitted to Canvas or emailed to me by Weds, 10/26.

**Paper (45%)**: You are also tasked with writing a term paper (8-12 pages double-spaced) on any topic related to neighborhoods and health. Papers can take the form of empirical papers, research proposals, or critical review pieces. Whatever approach you take, the paper assignment is designed to give you experience conducting independent research, writing a paper geared toward academic audiences, and presenting the results to your peers. Detailed instructions and guidelines for the paper will be available on Canvas within the first few weeks of the term. To keep you on track during the term, below are the various components (% total 100 below) of the paper and their due dates.

- **Paper Topic Proposal (5%)**: A brief (1 page single-spaced) statement/proposal of your paper topic should be emailed to me or submitted to Canvas by Fri, 10/14. In this statement, you should discuss the type of paper you plan to write (e.g., critical literature review, research proposal, empirical paper), your research topic, why it is important, and what your paper plans to contribute to the issue. Note, if you plan to analyze data, you should have a good idea of data sources at this point. Please see me at office hours early in the term to discuss paper ideas and approaches.

- **Detailed Outline (10%)**: Your detailed outline should contain the main headings and subheadings of the paper, with bullet points containing the key points for each paragraph. This is designed to be as complete as possible, so that the final draft, in essence, “writes itself.” Your outline should be emailed to me or submitted to Canvas by Weds, 11/2.

- **Paper Presentation (15%)**: This is a brief (8-10 minutes) presentation of your research to the class. Presentations will take place over the course of **Week 9** (11/7-11/11).

- **Final Paper (70%)**: The final paper must be emailed to me or submitted to Canvas by Tues, 11/15.
Grading Scale: Below is the percentage breakdown on which your final grade will be based. Please note that I will not negotiate final grades, and there are no opportunities for extra credit.

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<td>A–</td>
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Relevant Policies and Resources

Attendance: While you are expected to come class on a regular basis, attendance does not explicitly figure into your final grade. I will, however, stress that in my experience teaching this class for many years at different universities, students who come to class perform significantly better than those who do not. For the health and safety of our class community, please: do not attend class when you are sick, nor when you have been instructed by Student Health Services to stay home. Lecture slides and readings will be posted to Canvas at the beginning of each week, so that students can conveniently work from home if necessary.

COVID Protocols: Masks are welcome at Dartmouth. All students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to wear a mask if they feel more comfortable doing so. Students, faculty, and staff are required to follow Dartmouth’s face-mask policy regardless of vaccination status. I am obligated to assure that the COVID-19 health and safety standards are followed; if you refuse to comply with Dartmouth’s COVID-19 safety protocols, you will be asked to leave the classroom. To ensure the health and safety of our community, I am also obligated to report you to the Office of Community Standards & Accountability for disciplinary action under Dartmouth’s Standards of Conduct. Additional COVID-19 protocols may emerge, so please pay attention to emails from the senior administrators at the College. I will communicate any changes and their resulting implications for our class community.

Accommodations: Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; Getting Started with SAS webpage; student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Late Policy: I am willing to grant one 24-hour extension on an assignment (NOT discussion posts), no questions asked. But after that, the grade for a late assignment will be reduced by 7 percentage points for each day late (e.g., 1 day late a grade of 100 would be reduced to a 93; 2 days, 86; and so on). Given the circumstances, I am willing to be flexible with this policy, within reason. Remember to please meet with me if you are having difficulty keeping up with the coursework.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner and all members of the Dartmouth community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the Dartmouth community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. As such, dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and
students found in violation of the Dartmouth Academic Honor Principle will be notified and reported to the appropriate authorities (http://student-affairs.dartmouth.edu/policy/academic-honor-principle). For additional resources on the Academic Honor Code, plagiarizing, and proper citation of sources, please see the following link: http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth

**Religious Observance Policy:** Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

**Basic Needs:** Your safety and well-being are more important than anything going on in class. Please feel free to reach out to me if you need to talk and feel comfortable doing so. Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or personal safety is urged to contact the Dean of the College for support.

**Mental Health and Wellness:** The academic environment at Dartmouth is challenging, our terms are intensive, and classes are not the only demanding part of your life. There are a number of resources available to you on campus to support your wellness, including your undergraduate Dean, the Counseling Center, and the Student Wellness Center. The student-led Dartmouth Student Mental Health Union and their peer support program may be helpful if you would like to speak to a trained fellow student support listener. If you need immediate assistance, please contact the counselor on-call at (603) 646-9442 at any time. Please make me aware of anything that will hinder your success in this course.

**Title IX:** At Dartmouth, we value integrity, responsibility, and respect for the rights and interests of others, all central to our Principles of Community. We are dedicated to establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus where all have equal access to the educational and employment opportunities Dartmouth offers. We strive to promote an environment of sexual respect, safety, and well-being. In its policies and standards, Dartmouth demonstrates unequivocally that sexual assault, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking are not tolerated in our community. The Sexual Respect website at Dartmouth provides a wealth of information on your rights with regard to sexual respect and resources that are available to all in our community. Please note that, as a faculty member, I am obligated to share disclosures regarding conduct under Title IX with Dartmouth’s Title IX Coordinator. Confidential resources are also available, and include licensed medical or counseling professionals (e.g., a licensed psychologist), staff members of organizations recognized as rape crisis centers under state law (such as WISE), and ordained clergy (see https://dartgo.org/titleix_resources). Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dartmouth’s Title IX Coordinator. Their contact information can be found on the Sexual Respect website.

**Consent to Record:** Please see the following language regarding your consent to recordings.

1. Consent to recording of course and group office hours:
   a) I affirm my understanding that this course and any associated group meetings involving students and the instructor, including but not limited to scheduled and ad hoc office hours and other consultations, may be recorded within any digital platform used to offer remote instruction for this course;
   b) I further affirm that the instructor owns the copyright to their instructional materials, of which these recordings constitute a part, and distribution of any of these recordings in whole or in part without prior written consent of the instructor may be subject to discipline by Dartmouth up to and including expulsion;

2. Requirement of consent to one-on-one recordings:
   a) By enrolling in this course, I hereby affirm that I will not under any circumstance make a recording in any medium of any one-on-one meeting with the instructor without obtaining the prior written consent of all those participating, and I understand that if I violate this prohibition, I will be subject to discipline by Dartmouth up to and including expulsion, as well as any other civil or criminal penalties under applicable law.
Course Schedule, Topics, Readings, and Due Dates
(Syllabus is subject to change with advanced notice)

Week 1: (9/12 – 9/16): Introduction; Thinking about Neighborhoods and Health

Monday:
- Introduction to the Course

Wednesday:
- “Tips on Reading Academic Journal Articles” (see slides and handout)

Friday:

Optional:

Week 2 (9/19 – 9/23): Race, Space, and Health

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:


**Week 3 (9/26 – 9/30): Neighborhood Stressors: Disadvantage, Disorder, Crime, Violence**

**Monday:**


**Wednesday:**


**Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):**


**Optional:**


**Week 4 (10/3 – 10/7): The Built (Physical) Environment: Environmental Hazards, Foreclosures**

**Monday:**


**Wednesday:**


Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:

**Week 5 (10/10 – 10/14): The Built (Physical) Environment: Retail Stores, Public Spaces, Gentrification**

**Paper Proposal Due (Fri, 10/14 by 11:59pm EST)**

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:

**Monday:**

**Wednesday:**

**Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):**

**Optional:**

**Week 7 (10/24 – 10/28): Methodological Challenges & New Directions for Neighborhoods and Health Research**

**Mid-Term Exam Due (Weds, 10/26 by 11:59pm EST)**

**Monday:**

**Wednesday:**

**Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):**
Optional:

Week 8 (10/31 – 11/4): Breaking Away from Residential Neighborhoods: Activity Spaces and Health

Detailed Paper Outline Due (Wed, 11/2 by 11:59pm EST)

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday:

Optional:

Week 9 (11/7 – 11/11): Paper Presentations
- Student presentations will take place during each class this week.

Week 10: Final Paper Due (Tues, 11/15 by 11:59pm EST)
- Papers can be submitted to Canvas or emailed to Prof Sharp.