SOCY 75: NEIGHBORHOODS AND HEALTH
Fall 2023

Professor: Gregory Sharp
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Office Hours: 306A Blunt – Mon/Weds 1-2pm

Location: 371 Berry Library
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 and medical 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
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” circle 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 strongly 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 class participation grade is based on the following:

- Discussion Board Posts (10%): 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?”). Demonstrate that you have put some thought into your question or comment. Note that discussion posts must be submitted by 11am EST on Wednesdays (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 for any reason. 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%):** Each Friday, 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). Mini-lecture guidelines and tips are posted to Canvas.

- **Seminar Participation (5%):** On Wednesdays, students are required to attend and participate in discussions on the readings. It is imperative to come to class with a couple of questions related to the assigned readings of the day. Remember, you have already submitted a discussion post on the readings, so you can always elaborate on your post if needed. So, in order to receive credit, students must attend and participate in class on Wednesdays. Therefore, students are permitted to miss no more than one class (for any reason) on Wednesdays.

**Mid-Term Exam (30%):** The mid-term exam 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 by Thurs, 10/26 by noon EST.

**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 critical review pieces, empirical papers, or research proposals. 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 by Week 2. To keep you on track during the term, below are the various components of the paper and their due dates. I encourage you to meet with me early in the term to discuss your paper ideas!

- **Paper Topic Proposal (1%):** A brief (1 page single-spaced) statement/proposal of your paper topic should be submitted to Canvas by Tues, 10/10 by noon EST. 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 any other relevant information you would like to include about your topic and proposed paper. Note, if you plan to analyze data, you must identify your data source(s) at this point. Please see me at office hours early in the term to discuss paper ideas and approaches.

- **Detailed Outline (2%):** 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 Thurs, 11/2 by noon EST.

- **Paper Presentation (7%):** This is a brief (8-10 minutes) presentation of your research to the class. Presentations will take place over the course of Week 9 (11/6-11/10).

- **Final Paper (35%):** The final paper must be submitted to Canvas by Tues, 11/14 by noon EST.

**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.* Please note that my grading corresponds to the [Dartmouth Scholarship Guidelines](#).

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<th>Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<td>90-93.9</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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Relevant Policies and Resources

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend class regularly, as it figures into your class participation grade. I will 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.

**Accommodations:** Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Apply for Services webpage](mailto:student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 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 Assignment Policy:** Extensions on assignments will only be granted under extraordinary circumstances. There is a maximum of one extension granted (for any reason) during the term. Remember there are no extensions for discussion posts, as they are graded on completion. The grade for a late assignment is 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). **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](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](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 at the latest to discuss appropriate course adjustments.

**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](mailto:undergraduate.dean@dartmouth.edu), the [Counseling Center](mailto:student.counseling@dartmouth.edu), and the [Student Wellness Center](mailto:student.wellness@dartmouth.edu). The student-led [Dartmouth Student Mental Health Union](mailto:dsmh@dartmouth.edu) 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.
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.

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.

Additional Learning Resources:

- **Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology (RWIT):** At RWIT, you can meet one-on-one with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multimedia assignment.
- **Academic Skills Center (ASC):** The mission of Dartmouth's Academic Skills Center is to assist students in achieving academic success through a wide variety of services and programs. The Center is available to all students who wish to improve their academic skills and ability to learn, thereby maximizing their academic experience and allowing them to achieve greater academic performance and personal fulfillment.

Use of Generative AI Tools: Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT and similar technologies are rapidly becoming part of our professional lives. Used properly, these tools can enhance our work; used improperly, they can result in plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and false information.

The use of these tools is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and refining your ideas.
- Fine tuning your research questions.
- Finding information on your topic.
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts.
- Formatting references in ASA style.
- Checking grammar, style, and clarity when revising drafts.

The use of these tools is **NOT** permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments and exams. You are expected to compose your written assignments yourself.
- Composing discussion board posts.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.

If you use Generative AI tools on anything you submit for SOCY 75, **you must provide sufficient documentation or attribution**, just as you would for any other source or reference. In an appendix to your assignment, please include an explanation as to (a) your original prompt to the chatbot; (b) some examples of incorrect data that the chatbot provided to you; and (c) how you reworked and revised so that your final document was both factually accurate and reflected your writing voice and style. Please exercise caution in using AI for research assistance, as all existing AI apps ‘hallucinate’ and supply false information. Do not rely on AI for accurate information, but always fact-check. **Any violation of this policy is a violation of the Dartmouth Academic Honor Principle and will be reported to the Committee on Standards.**
Course Schedule, Topics, Readings, and Due Dates
(Syllabus is subject to change with advanced notice)

Week 1 (9/11 – 9/15): 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 (9/18 – 9/22): Race, Space, and Health

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:


Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:

Week 4 (10/2 – 10/6): Physical Environments: Environmental Hazards, Housing Instability

Monday:

Wednesday:
Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:

**Week 5 (10/9 – 10/13): Physical Environments: Retail Stores, Public Spaces, Gentrification**

**Paper Proposal Due (Tues, 10/10 by noon EST)**

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):
  • Agbai, Chinyere O. 2021. “Shifting Neighborhoods, Shifting Health: A Longitudinal Analysis of Gentrification and Health in Los Angeles County.” *Social Science Research* 100:102603.

Optional:


**NOTE: NO CLASS on 10/16 and 10/18 (Professor Sharp at the NIH)**

**Mid-Term Exam Due (Thurs, 10/26 by noon EST)**

Friday (10/20):
Monday (10/23):

Wednesday (10/25):

Friday (10/27) (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:

Week 8 (10/30 – 11/3): New Directions in Neighborhoods and Health Research: Experiments, Activity Spaces

Detailed Paper Outline Due (Thurs, 11/2 by noon EST)

Monday:

Wednesday:

Friday (Group Mini-Lecture):

Optional:

**Week 9 (11/6 – 11/10): Paper Presentations**

• Paper presentations will take place during each class this week. Schedule TBD.

**Week 10: Final Paper Due (Tues, 11/14 by noon EST)**

• Monday (11/13): No class