

Sociology, Human Behavior, and Health

Sociology 242

Fall 2014

2:00-3:20

MRF 340

08/25/014

Professors:	<i>Dr. Lynne M. Casper</i>	<i>Dr. Karen Sternheimer</i>
E-mail:	lcasper@usc.edu	sternhei@usc.edu
Phone:	213-740-8847	213-740-3541
Office Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday 5:00-6:30pm and by appointment	Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:30 pm and by appointment
Office:	HSH, Room 313	HSH, Room 214

TAs: April Hovav OH: Tuesday 12-2 and by appointment Office: HSH, Room 221 apriljoh@usc.edu Sections: M 12:00-12:50, THH 110 W 3:00-3:50, THH 106	Chelsea Johnson OH: Tuesday 12-2 and by appointment Office: HSH, Room 220 chelseamej@gmail.com Sections: W 12:00-12:50, THH 110 Th 4:00-4:50, THH 215
---	---

Course Website:

Announcements, links to readings, assignments, class notes, and all other information will be posted to our course website. The site is <https://blackboard.usc.edu> and can be accessed with your USC username and password.

Introduction:

This course is structured to help us understand the sociological concepts and approaches that are important in explaining human behaviors and interactions and why they vary by race, class, gender, and geographical location. Throughout the course, we use these concepts and approaches to gain insights to the sociological causes of disease, health and wellness. Social factors such as race, class, social connections, and stressful environments play a critical role in the health of individuals and groups. This course was specifically designed for students planning on careers in the health industry and/or considering taking the MCAT exam for medical school admission.

This course will be team taught by two instructors; part one will focus on demographic composition and the population processes that set the stage for population health, taught by Dr. Casper. Dr. Casper's lectures will be posted on blackboard by 12:00 PM the day of class. Please print them and bring them with you for note taking. Part two will focus on sociological approaches to understanding health and health care, taught by Dr. Sternheimer.

Sociological, socio-cultural, and demographic factors influence the way we think about ourselves and others and the decisions we make and actions we take on a day-to-day basis. Important factors influencing human behavior and social interaction include culture, group processes, socialization, social structure, stratification, and demographic composition and processes. In this class we will investigate how these factors influence our behaviors.

Humans are social beings by nature. Though the sentiment is simple, the actions and processes underlying and shaping our behavior and social interactions are not. The elements of social interaction are important for understanding the mechanisms and processes through which people interact with each other, both individually and within groups. A variety of factors affect how we present ourselves to others and how we treat them. Our notion of self develops over time and is shaped by a variety of factors, including society, culture, individuals and groups, agents of socialization and our unique experiences. How we view ourselves influences our perceptions of others, and by extension, our interactions with them. For example, perceptions of prejudice and stereotypes can lead to acts of discrimination, whereas positive attitudes about others can lead to the provision of help and social support.

Social structure organizes all societies. Social institutions and culture interact in a variety of ways to shape our experiences and interactions with others—a process that is reciprocal. In this class, we discuss the components of social structure and present several theoretical approaches sociologists use to explain how social structure is created and maintained. We analyze specific social institutions such as education, family, and health and medicine to ascertain how they encourage certain behaviors and discourage other behaviors.

Stratification or social inequality is the hierarchical ordering of people in a society or group based in part on class, status, power, prestige, and privilege. Barriers to the access of institutional resources exist for the segment of the population that is disenfranchised, and/or lacks power within a given society. Barriers to access might include: language, geographic location, socio-economic status, immigration status, and racial/ethnic identity. Institutionalized racism and discrimination are also factors which prevent some groups from obtaining equal access to resources. Stratification affects how we present ourselves, the types of people we are likely to come in contact with, and how we interact with them. It shapes the opportunities and constraints for human action and interaction.

Health disparities are inequalities in health behaviors and outcomes that are socially patterned and rooted in social stratification by class, race/ethnicity, gender and geographic location. Disparities in healthcare also exist and help to explain health inequalities among various populations, across neighborhoods, between rural and urban populations and across nations and regions of the world.

Demographic composition and the processes defining it are key to understanding the macro-level contexts in which human behavior and social interaction occur and help us to understand why societies are structured the way they are. Age, gender, race, ethnicity, and immigration status are among the most important stratifying variables defining population composition. Fertility, mortality, and migration are the three population processes that influence population size and its growth or decline.

Course Objectives:

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

1. Identify the social and cultural *causes* and *effects* of human behavior and interaction.
2. Comprehend how and why human behavior and interaction vary by race, class, and gender and across neighborhoods, urban and rural areas, countries, and regions of the world.
3. Apply sociological concepts and approaches to better understand health behaviors, population health, and health disparities.

Special Accommodations:

If you need any special accommodations to complete the course requirements, please talk to us or your TA right away.

Required Course Materials:

We will be reading a book, select chapters from the *Population* text book by Weeks and a few supplemental readings compiled from academic journals, government reports, scholarly books, and the popular press. The required books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and will be placed on reserve at Leavey library:

1. Weeks, John R. 2012. *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues*. Eleventh Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
2. Sternheimer, Karen. 2010. *Everyday Sociology Reader*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. (Referred to as ESR below)

Additional required readings will be posted on our class website. These readings are labeled “Blackboard” on the syllabus.

Course Requirements:

1. Midterm and Final Examinations

The midterm will be an in-class, closed-book exam. The midterm comprises multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final will be a take home essay exam. Both exams will

cover material from lectures, your essays and/or assignments, discussion sections, and the readings.

2. Attendance and Participation

This course is designed to foster dialogue about issues and ideas that come up in lectures, readings, and group discussion over the course of the semester. For this reason, students are expected to attend lecture and discussion *regularly* and *punctually*, do all required reading on time, and come to class prepared to participate in class discussions. Students are expected to welcome differing viewpoints and to respect the thoughts and ideas of all class participants, listen quietly while others are speaking, and arrive and leave on time. Note that information covered in lectures and discussion sections may not be in the readings, and vice versa.

Students often overlook how important participation and attendance are in their education. In this course, your grade for participation and attendance is based on the percentage of class meetings you attend (you can't participate if you're not here!), and will be increased or decreased based on your participation.

It is your responsibility to sign in on the class roster sheet every lecture and discussion section; attendance will be taken at the beginning of each meeting. To receive full attendance credit you must attend the entire class session. The sign-in sheet will provide proof of attendance. Signing in for a previous day is not possible, so be sure to sign in. **Signing in for another student is not permitted and is a form of academic dishonesty.**

3. Empirical Assignments (Topic 1)

For material covered under Topic 1, you will complete a six-part assignment designed to provide you with practical experience working with and analyzing demographic data. When linked together, these assignments, accompanied by a short introduction and conclusion (extra credit), result in a "County Demographic Profile." The CDP is worth **30%** of your final grade (each assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. Throughout the semester, you will prepare a demographic profile of one of California's many diverse Counties. I will conduct a parallel analysis of Los Angeles County for the purposes of comparison. Your demographic profile will include the following components:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Population change
- 3) Age, sex, and race composition
- 4) Fertility
- 5) Mortality
- 6) Migration trends

You will use data from two primary demographic resources to complete your project: (1) The U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov), and (2) The California Department of Health Service's

Center for Health Statistics Research (www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs). The ability to perform mathematical calculations is required as is a working knowledge of Excel. Details of the assignments and their requirements will be discussed in class. Assignments will be posted on blackboard. Your TA will assign you your county on the first day of discussion section.

4. Essays (Topics 2-4)

For material covered under Topics 2-4 each Thursday between October 23 and November 20 we will assign a brief essay question via blackboard to help us ascertain the extent to which you are engaged in the course (i.e., comprehending lectures, discussion sections, and completing reading assignments). The assignment will provide you an opportunity to reflect on the material and will help you to focus in on what is important for the exams. You are required to turn in both a hard copy of the assignment each Tuesday at the beginning of the class **and** upload it onto blackboard before class as well.

We will choose an essay topic from a central theme of the previous week's readings, lecture, and class discussion. There are 5 assignments each worth 1 percentage point of your overall grade. Do not assume that simply filling a page with words will earn you credit; your writing must reflect awareness of central issues and ideas expressed in the readings, lectures and discussion sections. It is possible to receive an extra point to those who receive credit on all 5 essays. **No late essays will be accepted unless you have an excused absence.** You must notify your TA of your absence **before** lecture or discussion section via e-mail of your absence. Be aware that we may require written documentation explaining your absence.

Grading Summary:

The majority of your grade will be based on evidence of your knowledge, comprehension, and critical analysis of course materials; however, the quality of your writing (including grammar, spelling, and clarity) will also affect your grades.

8%	Lecture attendance and class participation
8%	Discussion and active learning activities
4%	Essays
25%	Mid-term exam
30%	CDP assignments
25%	Final exam

JEP Extra Credit:

Earn up to another **3%** toward your final grade by participating in service learning supervised by the Joint Educational Project (JEP). One option may be to work with a team of 3-5 USC students in the "Health for Life Program" to design and implement a seven-week course on health that will give children important health information and strategies for staying healthy. For this option,

you will submit lessons plans to a JEP Program Assistant each week for approval and have the chance to observe the classroom and meet the teacher before teaching. The “Health for Life” mini-course teaches local school children about various health topics, such as nutrition, exercise, body systems, and bullying. A second option may be to serve as a Teaching Assistant, where you would be provided a reflective curriculum to guide you through observing and analyzing K-12 schools, classrooms, youth, and health.

You will be overseen by and provide reports of your activities to JEP and its staff. Evidence of the successful completion of your placement will be provided to me by JEP. Placements are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Details will be announced in class.

General Guidelines and Policies:

No make-up exams will be given and no late assignments will be accepted unless you can provide clear evidence that circumstances beyond your control prevented your timely performance. Written assignments must be double-spaced in 12-point font and stapled, and you must keep a copy of all work that you turn in. ***As the course progresses, it may be necessary to make some adjustments to the schedule of readings, topics, assignments, and due dates printed in this syllabus.*** You should check the course website on a regular basis for updates and changes. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.

Please do not leave and re-enter the classroom during class unless you are ill. Such behavior interrupts the lecture and is inconsiderate to us, your TAs and your fellow students.

Each student must hand in his or her own writing assignments and respect USC’s standards for academic integrity. Authors and researchers work hard on their papers and books; plagiarism will not be tolerated!

Technology Etiquette:

E-mail is a great resource but never takes the place of a conversation. Please put “**SOCI 242**” in the subject line of any message. Your **TA** should be your **primary** contact for this class. Lengthy questions or concerns should be addressed during office hours or in a special appointment. Keep in mind that your professor is quite busy and probably cannot check e-mail as often as you may. **Absolutely no assignments will be accepted via e-mail.** We will be using Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu>) to post announcements, most handouts, and some articles, so check this site periodically.

The use of electronic devices in this class is strictly prohibited unless you are using them for note taking or presentation purposes. The use of computers, cell phones, blackberries, etc. for other purposes will result in dismissal from that lecture. After three lecture dismissals you will be asked to drop the class.

Schedule of Topics and Readings:

(This schedule may change as appropriate)

Topic 1 The Demographic Approach to Human Behavior and Health

Week 1: 8/28 **4A: Demography Is Destiny: What Is It? How Did It Begin? Why Is It Important?**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 1
2. Poston, "Malthus" (Blackboard)
3. Poston, "Graunt" (Blackboard)

Week 2: 9/2 & 9/4 **4B: The Sources and Materials of Demography**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 4
2. Casper and Jayasundera "Socioeconomic and Demographic Context, Child Wellbeing and Child Development" (Blackboard)

Assignment 1: "Introduction" due 9/9

Week 3: 9/9 & 9/11 **4C: Population Increase/Decrease and the Demographic Transition**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapters 2 and 3

Assignment 2: "Population Change" Due Tuesday 9/16

Week 4: 9/16 & 9/18 **4D: Population Composition: Broken Down by Age and Sex**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 8
2. Weeks, part of chapter 10 pp. to be announced
(Covers race/ethnicity and immigrant status)

Assignment 3: "Population Composition" Due Tuesday 9/23

Week 5: 9/23 & 9/25 **4F: Fertility**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 6.
2. Terrell, "Fertility Trends in China" (Blackboard)

Assignment 4: "Fertility" Due Tuesday 9/30

Week 6: 9/30 & 10/2 **4G: Mortality**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 5

Assignment 5: "Mortality" Due Tuesday 11/25

Week 7: 10/7 & 10/9 **4E: Migration**

Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 7

Assignment 6: "Migration" Due Tuesday 10/14

Extra Credit: "Conclusion" due on Tuesday 10/21

Week 8: 10/14 **4H: Population Distribution and Urbanization**
Readings: 1. Weeks, chapter 9

Week 8: 10/16 **MIDTERM**

Topic 2 **Sociology, Social Interaction, and the Self**

Week 9 10/21 **2A: The Sociological Perspective**
Readings: 1. ESR, ch 1 introduction, Mills, "The Promise" ESR 1,
2. ESR ch1, Raskoff, "Fractals, Theories, and Patterns"
3. Rosich and Hankin, "Key Findings from 50 years of Medical
Sociology (Blackboard)

Week 9 10/23 **2B: Thinking Sociologically: Policy, Health, and Context**
Readings: 1. Mnookin, "The Panic Virus" (Blackboard)
2. ESR ch 1, Inniss, "Matching Research Methods to Research
Questions"
3. ESR ch 1, Wright, "Where to Sit: Doing Qualitative Research"
4. ESR ch 1, Best, "Scary Numbers"

Week 10 10/28 **2C: Socialization, Social Interaction, and the Social
Construction of Mental Illness**
Readings: 1. ESR 3 intro
2. ESR 3 Goffman, "Impression Management"
3. ESR 3 Wright, "Grocery Shopping, Ordering Whoppers and Borat"
4. Conrad and Schneider, "From Badness to Sickness: Changing
Designations of Deviance and Social Control" in *Deviance and
Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness*. Pp.17-35 (Blackboard)

Week 10 10/30 **2D: Identity and Health**
Readings: 1. ESR 3, Loe & Cuttino, "Grappling with the Medicated Self"
2. Lindner, "Epilepsy, Personally and Socially" (Blackboard)
<http://thesocietypages.org/thickculture/2013/10/31/epilepsy-personally-and-sociologically/>

Topic 3 **Social Structure, Social Institutions, and Health**

Week 11 11/4 **3A: What is Social Structure?**
Readings: 1. ESR 4 intro, ESR 9 intro
2. ESR 4 Putnam, "Civic Participation"
3. ESR 4 Raskoff, "Beyond Bowling Alone"
4. ESR 9 Hochschild, "The Overextended Family"
5. ESR 9 Inniss, "Who Cares for America's Children?"

Week 11 11/6 **3B: Medicine as a Social Institution**
Readings: 1. ESR 4 intro
 2. ESR 4 Weber, "Bureaucracy"
 3. ESR 4 Inniss, "Bureaucracy: Resistance to Change and Adaptation"

Topic 4 **Social Inequalities and Health**

Week 12 11/11 **4A: Gender and Health**
Readings: 1. ESR 7 (all selections)
 2. Ehrenreich, "Smile or Die: The Bright Side of Cancer" (Blackboard)

Week 12 11/13 **4A: Gender and Health**
Readings: 1. Marsiglio, "Healthy Dads, Healthy Kids" (Blackboard)

Week 13 11/18 **4B: Social Class and Spatial Inequality**
Readings: 1. ESR 6 (all selections)

Week 13 11/20 **4B: Social Class, Health, and Health Care**
Readings: 1. Serad, Susan Starr and Fernandopulle, Rushika. "Sick Out of Luck." (Blackboard)
 2. Berkman, Lisa F. 2004. "The Health Divide." (Blackboard)

Week 14 11/22 **4C: Race and Ethnicity**
Readings: 1. ESR 8 (all selections)

NO CLASS 11/27: Thanksgiving -- HAPPY TURKEY DAY!

Week 15 12/2 **4C: Race, Ethnicity, and Health Disparities**
Readings: 1. Sue et al., "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life" (Blackboard)
 2. Carr. "Black Death, White Death." (Blackboard)

Week 15 12/4 **4D: Social Movements and Social Change**
Readings: 1. ESR 10 (all selections); ESR 4, "Social Movements and Your Attention Span"

FINAL: THURSDAY DECEMBER 11 2-4 PM