SSCI 600: The Geography of Life and Death

Units: 4

Term—Day—Time: Fall, 2021, Mondays, 9:00-11:50 a.m.

Location: SOS B50
Office Hours: Mondays, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. and Fridays, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., or by appointment
Contact Info: jpwilson@usc.edu, 213-740-1908

Library Help: Andy Rutkowski
Office: VKC 36B
Office Hours: Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Contact Info: arutkows@usc.edu, see contact page on Blackboard for Zoom Room
Course Description
This course explores the various ways place and space have been invoked and used to improve our understanding of human well-being and the social and environmental determinants of human health during the past several decades. The class will explore these topics from a variety of perspectives, including: (1) examples of exemplary works that connect population, health and place; (2) the theoretical, quantitative, qualitative and spatial approaches used for this type of scientific inquiry; (3) the ways in which place-based human, environmental, and behavioral factors may mediate health-related exposures and human wellbeing; and (5) the role of place in shaping and perpetuating inequality. The class introduces the current state-of-the-art using an assortment of weekly readings and discussions, and a series of individual projects will allow class participants to develop their own proposals for more detailed research.

Learning Objectives
On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the various ways place (or space) has been invoked and used to assess human well-being and describe the social and environmental determinants of human health.
- Describe the theoretical, quantitative, qualitative, and spatial approaches that are now used for this type of scientific inquiry.
- Discuss some of the ways in which place-based human, environmental, and behavioral factors mediate health-related exposures.
- Discuss the various ways in which we can resolve individual-level exposures and place-based information.
- Discuss how place affects different groups of people in different ways and why place may need to be handled carefully in plans and programs which aim to accomplish meaningful social change.
- Discuss the current approaches, methodological issues, and enduring challenges in works connecting population, health and place.

Students may vary in their competency levels on these abilities. You can expect to acquire these abilities only if you honor all course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of you as a student.

Prerequisite(s): None
Co-Requisite(s): None
Concurrent Enrollment: None
Recommended Preparation: Students must be enrolled in an existing USC Ph.D. program

Class Conduct
Harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, and stalking are not tolerated by the university. All faculty and most staff are considered Responsible Employees by the university and must forward all information they receive about these types of situations to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for assisting students with supportive accommodations, including academic accommodations, as well as investigating these incidents if the reporting student wants an investigation. The Title IX office is also responsible for coordinating supportive measures for transgender and nonbinary students such as faculty notifications, and more. If you need supportive accommodations you may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly.
COVID-19 policy – Students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC’s COVID-19 policy including, but not limited to, vaccination, indoor mask mandate, and daily TrojanCheck. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards. Students are recommended to keep safe physical distancing, whenever possible, to prevent any possible transmission. Please contact your instructor if you have any safety concerns.

Diversity and Inclusion – It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful to everyone, and you are also expected to respect of others regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity and expressions, cultural beliefs, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, abilities, ideas and perspectives, or socioeconomic status. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Feel free to let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

Course Notes
The course will be taught as a seminar and class meetings will be used to discuss the assigned readings and any questions and related topics that arise from the readings. The learning and teaching strategies are student-centered. They aim to encourage a deep-learning approach by using reflection and self-evaluation. The individual class sessions will be organized around a series of class readings that are designed to provide the essential background and framework for study. Students will be required to reflect on their learning through in-class discussions and weekly briefs.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials
The weekly readings will be accessed via the USC Library’s electronic collections and/or provided by the instructor via Blackboard.

Description and Assessment of Assignments
Students must prepare a seminar, a research paper and presentation, a series of weekly briefs, and participate in class discussion on a regular basis.

Class Participation (10%): A class participation grade will be assigned based upon how actively students engage in the course. Students will be required to read all material outlined for each week of the course, and be prepared to lead and participate in group discussions about the readings in class. Failure to attend, or not be adequately prepared to discuss the readings will lead to the assignment of a lower grade for that week.

Weekly Briefs (36%): Each week students will use the Blackboard Discussion Forum to provide a critique of an article from the class reading list for that week of their own choosing. These electronic commentaries will be shared among the class, and graded based on the overall quality of the contribution. To help simulate discussion, each student will comment on at least one other student’s critique each week.
Class Presentations (14%): Each student will present on two of the articles included in this syllabus in consultation with the instructor. The student will prepare a one-page summary that will be distributed in advance of the class itself and make a short 20-minute presentation summarizing the work at hand and its strengths and weaknesses.

Final Project (40%): In the second half of the course, each student will work on a project determined in consultation with the instructor. These projects will focus on a specific health problem or challenge and the final report (25%) and class presentation (15%) will summarize the current understanding of the problem or challenge and the kinds of solutions that have been attempted thus far, as reported in the published literature.

Grading Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>No. of Assignments</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Projects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Briefs</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
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Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments will be submitted for grading via Blackboard using the due dates specified in the Course Schedule below.

Additional Policies

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class session and to complete and upload all assignments before the deadlines noted in the Course Schedule below. Late work will be assessed a penalty of 10% per day and zero grades will be assigned for work more than one week late.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1 8/22</th>
<th>Topics/Daily Activities</th>
<th>Readings and Homework</th>
<th>Deliverables/Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 8/29</td>
<td>Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>The first part of a two-part discussion exploring the various ways in which place has been conceptualized and used to better understand human health determinants and outcomes, with a special focus on the chapters in a recent and influential book.</td>
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**Kemp (2011)**. Place, history, memory: Thinking time within place. In Burton et al. (Eds.) *Communities, Neighborhoods and Health: Expanding the Boundaries of Place*. Berlin, Springer: 3-19.


Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 8/25.

Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 8/29.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3 9/5</th>
<th>Labor Day Holiday</th>
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<td>No class.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4 9/12</th>
<th>Population, Health, and Place</th>
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<tr>
<td>The second part of a two-part discussion exploring the various ways in which geographers have used place to help frame and clarify the key relationships linking people, health and place in recent decades.</td>
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**Wilson (2019)**. Connecting population, health and place with geospatial tools and data. In D. Berrigan and N. A. Berger (Eds.), *Geospatial approaches to energy balance and breast cancer* (pp. 3-28). Berlin, Germany: Springer.

**Xu et al. (2020)**. FHIR PIT: An open software application for spatiotemporal integration of

Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 9/8.

Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 9/12.
### Week 5
#### 9/19
**Theory, Methods, and Data**
An introduction to the various ways in which theory, methods and data are woven together to construct study designs in projects that explore the connections between population, health and place.

**Daniel et al. (2008).** Framing the biosocial pathways underlying associations between place and cardio-metabolic disease. *Health & Place* 14: 117-132.

**Drewnowski et al. (2019).** The Moving to Health (M2H) approach to natural experiment research: A paradigm shift for studies on built environment and health. *SSM – Population Health* 7: 100345.


**Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 9/15.**

**Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 9/19.**

**Submit class presentation proposals on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday, 9/19.**

### Week 6
#### 9/26
**Quantitative Methods**
An introduction to the various ways in which quantitative methods are used to explore the connections between population, health and place, and a discussion of some of the outstanding methodological challenges and issues.

**Boeing et al. (2022).** Using open data and open-source software to develop spatial indicators of urban design and transport features for achieving healthy and sustainable cities. *Lancet Global Health*, 10: e907-e918.

**Bozigar et al. (2020).** A geographic identifier assignment algorithm with Bayesian variable selection to identify neighborhood factors associated with emergency department visit disparities for asthma. *International Journal of Health Geographics* 19: 9.

**Garcia et al. (2019).** Effects of policy-driven hypothetical air pollutant interventions on childhood asthma incidence in southern...
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Spatial Analysis and Modeling Methods</td>
<td>Breen et al. (2014). GPS-based microenvironment tracker (MicroTrac) model to estimate time–location of individuals for air pollution exposure assessments: Model evaluation in central</td>
<td>Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 9/29. Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 10/3.</td>
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Week 7 10/3  
Qualitative Methods  
An introduction to the various ways in which qualitative methods are used to explore the connections between population, health, and place, and a discussion of some of the outstanding methodological challenges and issues.

Week 8 10/10  
Spatial Analysis and Modeling Methods  
An introduction to the various ways in which spatial analysis and
Models are used to explore the connections between population, health and place, and a discussion of some of the outstanding methodological challenges and issues.

### Human Environments

**Week 9**  
**10/17**

**Ajayakumar et al. (2019).** Addressing the data guardian and geospatial scientist collaborator dilemma: How to share health records for spatial analysis while maintaining patient confidentiality. *International Journal of Health Geographics* 18: 30.


**Higgs et al. (2019).** The Urban Liveability Index: Developing a policy-relevant urban liveability composite measure and

### Literature Review

- **Dennis et al. (2020).** Relationships between health outcomes in older populations and urban green infrastructure size, quality and proximity. *BMC Public Health* 20: 626.
- **Mitchell et al. (2000).** *Inequalities in life and death: What if Britain were more equal?* Bristol, UK, The Policy Press.

### Submission Deadlines

- **Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 10/13.**
- **Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 10/17.**
- **Submit final project abstracts on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday, 10/17.**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10 10/24</th>
<th>Natural Environments</th>
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Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 10/20.  
Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 10/24.
| Week 11 | Human Behavior | Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 10/27.  
Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 10/31. |
|---|---|---|
| 10/31 | A discussion of the various ways in which the role of the human behavior has been conceptualized and measured in research projects exploring the connections between population, health and place.  
| | | |
| Week 12 | Role of Place in Shaping Inequalities | Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 11/3.  
Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 11/7. |
| 11/7 | A discussion of the ways in which place affects different groups of people in different ways, and how a deeper  
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<tr>
<th>Week 13 11/14</th>
<th>Big Ideas I</th>
<th>A discussion of some of the ways in which green infrastructure, health, and nature-based solutions may be intertwined.</th>
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*Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 11/10.*

*Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 11/14.*
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<tr>
<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Big Ideas II 11/21</th>
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<td><strong>Apparicio et al. (2021)</strong> Cycling in one of the most polluted cities in the world: Exposure to noise and air pollution and potential adverse health impacts in Delhi. <em>International Journal of Health Geographics</em> 20: 18.</td>
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<td><strong>Marek et al. (2021)</strong> The good, the bad, and the environment: Developing an area-based measure of access to health-promoting and health-constraining environments in New Zealand. <em>International Journal of Health Geographics</em> 20: 16.</td>
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<td><strong>Marselle et al. (2021)</strong> Biodiversity and health in the urban environment. <em>Current Environmental Health Reports</em> 8: 146-156.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Perello et al. (2021)</strong> Large-scale citizen science provides high-resolution nitrogen dioxide values and health impact while enhancing community knowledge and collective action. <em>Science of the Total Environment</em> 789: 147750.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><strong>Zhang et al. (2020)</strong> The changing PM2.5 dynamics of global megacities based on long-term remotely sensed observations. <em>Environment International</em> 142: 105862.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Submit briefs on Bb no later than 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, 11/17.</td>
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<td>Comment on at least one other brief on Bb no later than 8:00 a.m. on Monday, 11/21.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 15</th>
<th>Final Presentations 11/28</th>
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<td><strong>Students will present their final projects, summarizing the insights gathered from their research of the specific problem context they chose.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Students present their projects and answer questions from audience. Students may take up to 30 minutes for their presentations and an additional 15</strong></td>
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Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Students and Disability Accommodations
USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems
Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.
Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
eeotix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
uscd-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776
osas.usc.edu
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
ombuds.usc.edu
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or otfp@med.usc.edu
chan.usc.edu/otfp
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.