

## **SOC 3525: URBAN HEALTH**

*TuTh 2:00pm - 3:20pm*

*\*Scheduled for in-person but first part of semester will be held remotely\**  
*\*\*Syllabus subject to change with evolving pandemic\*\**

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**Classroom:** 203 Mazur  
**Office Hours:** TuTh 3:30-4:30pm  
**Zoom room:** <https://temple.zoom.us/j/5284508968>  
**Email:** [lauren.olsen@temple.edu](mailto:lauren.olsen@temple.edu)

### **WELCOME TO THE COURSE!**

In our present moment where longstanding, durable, and egregious social inequalities are magnified by an unprecedented global infectious disease crisis, the study of urban health takes on a heightened significance. What is the sociological study of urban health? To start we must understand a little bit about urban spaces. Cities impact the lives urban dwellers lead, through the social and physical environments that are created. These environments are not accidents: they reflect institutional arrangements and relationships between capital, state, corporations, and the public. They also reflect how knowledge is produced in the first place.

From the fundamental building blocks of urban inequality (e.g., class and race based material scarcity/abundance and social (dis)advantage); to environmental racism, pollution, asbestos, and gentrification; to police brutality, bullets, tear gas, and emergency medicine; to recessions, heat waves, hurricanes, and pandemics—there is simply *\*too much\** to know but we are going to try to tackle as much as possible—the immediate goal for this course is that you all have a mental map of the depth and breadth of the social problems that contribute to and are exacerbated by the distribution of risks and resources shaping urban health. The ultimate goal for this course is for all of us to gain a much more comprehensive appreciation for how knowledge informs policy, so that we may be more reflexive, responsible, and equitable academics and practitioners as we go forth.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Situate and interrogate knowledge production and application within socio-historical context of power relations.
2. Recognize and describe the major features and inequalities within an urban environment and their subsequent impact on health and healthcare.
3. Understand, extend, and critique the central topics, theories, and methods utilized by scholars studying urban health.
4. Engage self and others in the learning process through discussion, research, and writing.
5. Identify applications of theoretical and empirical knowledge for improving urban health.
6. Conceptualize how urban health intersects with foundational areas of sociology, such as class, gender, race, knowledge, education, organizations, and social movements.
7. Prioritize supporting ourselves and each other as humans / cultivate our species-beings.

### **COURSE LOGISTICS**

All required readings are posted in the “Files” folder in Canvas.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The course requirements are designed to help you develop professional and sociological skills as well as master the substantive content that comprises the study of urban health. I want you to get the most out of this course and am happy to discuss how to make these requirements work for you.

Participation: 20%

Midterm #1: 10%

Midterm #2: 20%

Assignment #1: 10%

Assignment #2: 10%

Assignment #3: 10%

Final Creative Project: 20%

### **Participation: 20%**

Discussion is our pathway to intellectual nourishment. We are amidst a pandemic and life happens, so the central way in which discussion will occur in this class is in an asynchronous fashion via the Discussion boards. I will post a question once per week; these questions are aimed at making the material relatable to your lived experience or the news you consume. You will respond to 10 of these questions over the course of the semester. In addition to responding to a discussion post once per week, I also ask that you respond to a fellow student's post, so as to mimic (albeit less interactionally) a conversation. What this looks like, more concretely: 10 original posts over the course of the semester (each 3-4 sentences, written in an informal or colloquial style, as if you were speaking to a classmate or to the class writ large about something) and 10 responses to peers' posts over the course of the semester (each 1-2 sentences, similarly colloquial if you so please). 20 posts, in that sense, total. A great way to participate is to come to class (and to the Discussion boards) with your impressions of the readings: what you have learned, what you find unsatisfying, what you find exciting, where you might have questions, etc. You are *\*strongly\** encouraged to keep up with these each week but they are all due by **May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm.**

### **Midterms: 30% (10% Midterm #1, 20% Midterm #2)**

Each midterm will contain a mixture of multiple choice, short answer (explanation of concepts), and long answer (application of concepts) – they will be capturing the material in the four weeks preceding it. The first midterm exam will be held online and be open-note (via Canvas) on **February 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm.** The second midterm exam will be held in-person without notes on **March 24<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm.**

### **Assignments: 30% (10% each)**

With these 3 assignments, my goal is for you to tap into a few different modalities of thinking and creating that we utilize as we learn. Please note that while there is a due date attached to each of them, they may also be turned in at any point earlier than that due date, if that is something that helps you plan your work with your other courses.

*[Assignment #1 – 10%] Map Activity – due January 31<sup>st</sup> by 11:59pm via Canvas*

I love maps. Creating a map is a way to capture how you move throughout the city, how you feel in particular spaces, and what you observe (e.g., see, smell, hear). Make a map of Temple. How do you understand the boundaries of Temple? How do you think the broader Temple university understands these boundaries? Have your conceptions changed at all since you've been a student? Since the pandemic?

These maps do not need to be masterpieces; we will use these as a point of departure in our discussion of urban spaces to consider what is space, what is place, and whom is it for? (See also: <https://urbandisplacement.org> maps, research, policies on gentrification.) Please upload a picture of your map, whether you draw it by hand or do something fancy with computers, with your name on it.

*[Assignment #2 – 10%] Study Guide – due March 24<sup>th</sup> by 1:59pm via Canvas*

I will be creating a study guide for both midterms. Filling out the study guide is an excellent first step in studying. Research on learning shows that even filling out study guides by hand helps people consolidate and remember knowledge better than typing up answers.

I understand that some people prefer to crowdsource knowledge and create google doc study guides. Please note that if you do this, that is fine, but when you turn in the assignment I'd like you to attribute credit to your collaborators. That is, specify *who* contributed *what* to the document. This measure is in place to both maintain the integrity of the study practice as well as give credit where credit is due. Please upload either a document or a picture of your study guide, with your name on it.

*[Assignment #3 – 10%] Hospital / Health Care Org Analysis – due April 11<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm via Canvas*

Research a hospital or healthcare organization in Philadelphia. Once you select your hospital or org, you will have some googling ahead of you to try to learn more about it. While you might not be able to find answers to all of the following questions, do your best to find what is publicly available about: When was it founded? How has it grown/expanded? How much space does it take up? Who owns it? How many people does it employ? Who is served there? What public health initiatives or programs does it have? What kinds of priorities does it signal through its online presence?

In addition to writing up what you learn about the hospital or org, make sure to also write about what struck you as most interesting / fascinating / odd / surprising as you did your research. Please upload this assignment to Canvas, with your name on it – and while this type of research could yield pages upon pages of documents, please limit yourself to just 1 page (2-4 paragraphs).

### **Final Creative Project: 20%**

The final project for this course is designed to be fun, creative, holistic, and informative. You will have to (1) select a topic covered in the course, (2) either write a poem or draw a comic capturing something about that topic, and (3) explain what you wrote or drew, what it represents, and how the depicted scene is indicative of broader social forces—and how art (or what you represent) can be marshalled for change.

At its essence, this poem-writing and comic-making practice encapsulates the intersection of multiple disciplines (e.g., the humanities, social sciences, and biomedical sciences); multiple actors in the health care system (e.g., physicians, nurses, social workers, administrators, public health officials, caregivers, and

patients); and, multiple urban health and health care issues (e.g., experiences of health, illness, death, caregiving, training to become a healthcare professional, uncertain diagnoses and prognoses, difficult treatments, disrespect or discrimination, hopelessness in the face of urban problems, frustrations with bureaucratic rules, among other issues)—all of which are occurring in the context of an urban environment.

In many ways, writing a poem or drawing a comic is a process of incorporating sociological insights about urban health and health care to achieve some end. These ends are manifold: to show the complexity of urban health and health care issues, highlight the social dimensions of misunderstandings that occur during interactions between various actors in the urban health care system, offer helpful critiques to healthcare and city professionals, provide socially-informed, realistic learning aids for people or even cathartically process an intense experience.

*Part 1: Select a Topic (20% of final project grade)*

You may select any topic covered in any of the weeks of the course. In the paragraph above, there are many such topics listed. Each lecture will cover at least one topic, too.

*Part 2: Write a Poem or Draw a Comic (30% of final project grade)*

Through the act of visual representation and storytelling, one conveys emotion and visceral understandings of urban health and health care issues. You DO NOT need to be a professional poet nor artist to craft a poem or draw a comic. Stick figures will work just fine. The poem or comic may contain a single panel or multiple panels, but should not be much larger than about a half a page. This is the part of the assignment where I urge you to have fun, experiment, doodle, etc.

Check out other poems and comics for ideas about different styles. When you draw your comic for the final project, you may hand draw it or use a computer program – the most important aspect of this is that you must submit original work. Think through whether you want to incorporate the following parts:

- Narrator      - Context      - Dialogue      - Image

*Part 3: Explain your Poem or Comic (50% of final project grade)*

The description and explanation of the poem or comic is where you have the opportunity to connect all of the dots for the person evaluating it: me. While the poem or comic may focus on an individual or interpersonal experience, as budding sociologists you know that snapshot you capture is shaped by broader social forces that may or may not be “beyond the frame” of the art.

**Please write around 2 pages, single-spaced, to explain your work, and use the following questions to guide this write-up (about 1 paragraph per question).**

1. What urban health or health care issue does your poem or comic capture? Who is/are the character/s?
2. Why is your verbal or graphic representation important? Does it offer helpful social critique of the medical profession? Urban renewal? The university? Does it offer helpful understandings of an illness experience that could be additional material for educating patients and caregivers?

3. In what way could you critique your poem or comic? What doesn't it capture? What do you think the role of art is in making social change?
4. How is the scene you depicted indicative of broader social forces – what are the macro- and meso-level conditions that have shaped this scene?
5. How did this exercise impact your learning on this issue? What decisions did you make about narrator, context, dialogue, and image?

This written part is the most important part of the prompt, and therefore is weighted most heavily. Think of each of the five paragraphs as worth roughly 10% of the project grade. **You must cite at least 3 readings from the course in addition to one of the following readings:**

Zilberstein, Shira. 2019. "Space Making as Artistic Practice: The Relationship between Grassroots Art Organizations and the Political Economy of Urban Development." *City and Community* 18(4):1142-1161.

Candipan, Jennifer. 2019. "'Change Agents' on Two Wheels: Claiming Community and Contesting Spatial Inequalities Through Cycling in Los Angeles." *City and Community* 18(3):965-982.

Widener, Daniel. 2008. "Writing Watts: Budd Schulberg, Black Poetry, and the Cultural War on Poverty." *Journal of Urban History* 34(4):665-687.

This final project is due by **May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm**.

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

(letter grade / numerical grade / grade points)

A	92.5-100%	4.0
A-	90-92.49%	3.67
B+	87.5-89.99%	3.33
B	82.5-87.49%	3.00
B-	80-82.49%	2.67
C+	77.5-79.99%	2.33
C	72.5-77.49%	2.00
C-	70-72.49%	1.67
D+	67.5-69.99%	1.33
D	62.5-67.49%	1.00
D-	60-62.49%	0.67
F	0-59.99%	0.00

## **Important Course Policies**

### *Respect*

The study of urban health covers topics that are particularly sensitive. As such, participation in this course requires that you respect your peers and the subjects discussed in the course. Please act with interest, humility, and empathy—our readings are based on the lives of real humans.

### *Disability Accommodation*

Temple University is committed to the inclusion of students with disabilities and provides accessible instruction, including accessible technology and instructional materials. The process for requesting access and accommodations for this course is: (1) Advise me of the need for access or accommodations; (2) Contact Disability Resources and Services to request accommodations (215-204-1280); (3) DRS will consult with me as needed about essential components of the program; (4) Present me with a DRS accommodation letter. If you have any questions or concerns about the process above, please do not hesitate to ask me.

### *Technology*

Learning in a virtual environment is extra difficult and just plain bizarre. I am cognizant of a variety of reasons why our virtual foci might be strained—let us all try to do our best to be as “present” as possible considering all of the (very real) constraints. If you have limited resources with regard to educational technology (e.g., computer, wifi) please let me know and I can help you submit a request for the Student Emergency Aid Fund. (*Also, please do not record the class without first discussing it with the group—distribution without permission may be a violation of the educational privacy law, known as FERPA, as well as certain copyright laws. Because the course is happening at Temple University, any recordings made of this course are the property of Temple University.*)

### *Email*

I love working with students, troubleshooting problems, and doing whatever I can to help you succeed. Please email me ([lauren.olsen@temple.edu](mailto:lauren.olsen@temple.edu)) so we can set up a time that we can “meet”. Please allow me a 24-hour period to return your emails. I usually respond before then, but it is important to keep in mind, particularly if you have a time-sensitive question.

### *Temple and COVID-19*

Temple University’s motto is Perseverance Conquers, and we will meet the challenges of the COVID pandemic with flexibility and resilience. The university has made plans for multiple eventualities. Working together as a community to deliver a meaningful learning experience is a responsibility we all share: we’re in this together so we can be together.

### *Academic Integrity*

If you have any questions about how to paraphrase, cite, or work with integrity, please do not hesitate to ask me. For the policy, please refer to the verbatim policy from the university below:

Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Essential to intellectual growth and the university's core educational mission is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. Academic honesty fosters this independence and respect. Academic dishonesty undermines the university's mission and purpose and devalues the work of all members of the Temple community. Every member of the university community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are responsible for adhering to the principles of academic honesty and integrity.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or distribution of term papers or other academic materials. Normally, all work done for courses — papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations — is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources — journals, books, or other media — these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of

citation. Everything used from other sources — suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language — must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff; (4) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus, assignment, or class discussion; (5) or otherwise engaging in behavior that gives the student an unfair academic advantage including, but not limited to, fabrication of data or sources, resubmitting work already submitted for another academic requirement without prior authorization, or other similar behavior. Refer to the [Student Conduct Code \(policy # 03.70.12\)](#) for more specific definitions of cheating and plagiarism.

The penalty for academic dishonesty can vary from receiving a reprimand and a failing grade for a particular assignment, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or expulsion from the university. The penalty varies with the nature of the offense, the individual instructor, the department, the school or college, and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Students who believe that they have been unfairly accused may appeal through the school or college's academic grievance procedure. For more information see [Grievances](#).

## **Further Resources**

### **Cherry Food Pantry**

<https://studentaffairs.temple.edu/cherry-pantry>

### **Student Health Services (215-204-7500)**

<https://www.temple.edu/studenthealth/>

### **Tuttleman Counseling Services (215-204-7276)**

<https://counseling.temple.edu>

### **Wellness Resource Center (215-204-8436)**

<https://wellness.temple.edu>

### **Philadelphia Sexual Assault Response Center (215-425-1625)**

<https://sexualmisconduct.temple.edu/resources/community-resources/philadelphia-sexual-assault-response-center>

### **Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (215-832-0636)**

<https://paimmigrant.org/toolbox/education-access-toolkit-for-undocumented-students/>

### **IDEAL Space**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe5J5wn8qaQLuOT2U4E8BhZ7PHkf9t593yEhEkVNJDkxaFFDQ/viewform> (to reserve space)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **Part 1: Situating People in an Urban Environment**

#### **<<ONLINE>> Week 1 (January 11<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>): Introduction to the Course**

1/11: Syllabus

1/13: *Half-Vaxxed: The Rise and Fall of Philly Fighting COVID* (Podcast <https://whyy.org/programs/half-vaxxed/>) – please choose one of the episodes (note: you can read the transcripts in lieu of listening)

#### **<<ONLINE>> Week 2 (January 18<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>): Understanding Philadelphia**

1/18: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/mar/22/story-of-cities-7-philadelphia-grid-pennsylvania-william-penn-america-urban-dream> AND Anderson, Elijah. *Introduction to W.E.B. DuBois' Philadelphia Negro*

1/20: Philadelphia's Community Health Assessment. 2018. "Health of the City."

#### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 3 (January 25<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>): How Did We Get Here – Power in Creating the Urban Environment**

1/25: Hwang, Jackelyn. 2016. "The Social Construction of a Gentrifying Neighborhood: Reifying and Redefining Identity and Boundaries in Inequality." *Urban Affairs Review* 52(1): 98-128.

1/27: Hunter, Marcus Anthony, Kevin Loughran, and Gary Alan Fine. 2018. "Memory Politics: Growth Coalitions, Urban Pasts, and the Creation of 'Historic' Philadelphia

<i>DUE on January 31<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm: [Assignment #1] Map Activity</i>
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#### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 4 (February 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>): How Do People See / Utilize / Take Up Space – Understanding Neighborhoods**

2/1: Centner, Ryan. 2008. "Places of Privileged Consumption Practices: Spatial Capital, the Dot-Com Habitus, and San Francisco's Internet Boom." *City and Community* 7(3): 193-223.

2/3: Hunter, Marcus Anthony. 2010. "The Nightly Round: Space, Social Capital, and Urban Black Nightlife." *City and Community* 9(2):165-186.

#### **<<IN-PERSON/ONLINE>> Week 5 (February 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>): Catch Up, Review & Midterm #1**

2/8: Catch Up & Review

2/10: Open Note Midterm #1 (Online, Via Canvas)
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## **Part 2: Urban Health and Health Care Problems**

### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 6 (February 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>): Health & Health Care Inequalities**

2/15: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/power-health/episodes/power-health>

(note: some images of violence around min 28-30; acts of racism and grief min 42-46)

2/17: Reynolds, Megan M. 2021. "Health Power Resources Theory: A Relational Approach to the Study of Health Inequalities." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(4): 493-511.

### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 7 (February 22<sup>nd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>): Environment & Nourishment**

2/22: Fitzpatrick, Kevin M. and Mark LaGory. 2003. "'Placing' Health in an Urban Sociology: Cities as Mosaics of Risk and Protection." *City and Community*: 1-26.

2/24: Romero, Rachel and Deborah A. Harris. 2019. "Who Speaks for (and Feeds) the Community? Competing Definitions of 'Community' in the Austin, TX, Urban Farm Debate." *City and Community* 18(4):1162-1180.

SPRING BREAK
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### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 8 (March 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>): Neighborhoods & Health**

3/9: Hong, Seunghye, Wei Zhang, and Emily Walton. 2014. "Neighborhoods and Mental Health: Exploring Ethnic Density, Poverty, and Social Cohesion Among Asian Americans and Latinos." *Social Science and Medicine* 111:117-124.

3/11: Sewell, Abigail A. 2017. "The Illness Associations of Police Violence: Differential Relationships by Ethnoracial Composition." *Sociological Forum* 32(S1):976-997.

### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 9 (March 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>): Managing Pain & Substance Use**

3/15: Rubin, Sara, Nancy Burke, Meredith Van Natta, Irene Yen, and Janet K. Shim. 2018. "Like a Fish out of Water: Managing Chronic Pain in the Urban Safety Net." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59(4):487-500.

3/17: Orrico, Laura. 2017. "Let People Be People: Everyday Substance Use in a Public Work Site." *Qualitative Sociology* 40(2): 311-330.

### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 10 (March 22<sup>nd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>): Catch-Up, Review & Midterm #2**

3/22: Catch-Up & Review

<i>DUE on Mar 24<sup>th</sup>: [Assignment #2] Study Guide</i>
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3/24: Midterm #2
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### **Part 3: Understanding Health and Human Services**

#### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 11 (March 29<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>): Ideas and Policy**

3/29: Gowan, Teresa. 2010. *Hobos, Hustlers and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco*, Chapter 2

3/31: Cooper, Hannah L.F. 2015. “War on Drugs Policing and Police Brutality.” *Substance Use & Misuse* 50:1188-1194.

#### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 12 (April 5<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>): The Hospital**

4/5: McKee, Guian A. 2016. “The Hospital City in an Ethnic Enclave: Tufts-New England Medical Center, Boston’s Chinatown, and the Urban Political Economy of Health Care.” *Journal of Urban History* 42(2):259-283.

4/7: Tiako, Max Jordan. 2020. Flip the Script Podcast “The Space We Occupy: Academic Medical Centers and their Neighboring Communities” <https://soundcloud.com/yaleuniversity/the-space-we-occupy-academic-medical-centers-and-their-neighboring-communities?in=yaleuniversity/sets/flip-the-script>

*DUE on April 11<sup>th</sup>: [Assignment #3] Hospital / Health Care Org Analysis*

#### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 13 (April 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>): The Intersecting Systems Governing Urban Health**

4/12: Seim, Josh. 2020. *Bandage, Sort, and Hustle: Ambulance Crews on the Front Lines of Urban Suffering*, Introduction (and skim Part I)

4/14: Lara-Millan, Armando. 2014. “Public Emergency Room Overcrowding in the Era of Mass Imprisonment.” *American Sociological Review* 79(5):866-887.

#### **<<IN-PERSON>> Week 14 (April 19<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>): Healthcare Access, Use, and Strategies**

4/19: Raudenbush, Danielle. 2021. *Health Care Off the Books*, Introduction & Chapter 2

4/21: Nelson, Alondra. *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*, Chapter 3: “The People’s Free Medical Clinics.”

*DUE on (May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm): Final Creative Project*