

**HSOC 301**  
**Determinants of Health**

**Instructors:**

Prof. Lindsay McLaren, [lmclaren@ucalgary.ca](mailto:lmclaren@ucalgary.ca)

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**Office Hours/Policy on Answering Student Emails**

Office hours: By appointment; please arrange via e-mail.

Email from students: Allow 48 hours for a response. Please note that we do not respond to email on evenings, weekends, or statutory holidays.

**Teaching Assistant:**

Shelly Yin, [shelly.yin@ucalgary.ca](mailto:shelly.yin@ucalgary.ca)

MSc student (Population & Public Health), Dept Community Health Sciences

**Time and Location:**

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:20pm

Room – Check D2L, Foothills Campus

**Prerequisite/Co-Requisite:**

HSOC 201 or consent of Professor

**Course Description:**

A broad-based, interdisciplinary overview of models of the determinants of health. Includes an analysis of evidence of the relative influence of environmental factors, health services, lifestyles and health behaviours, social and economic factors, biological predispositions, and the mechanisms involved in the societal uptake of various conceptions.

**Overarching Theme**

This course is designed to foster understanding and critical thinking around the factors that influence the health of populations, building on content covered in HSOC 201: Introduction to Health and Society. Students will first learn the conceptual and empirical bases of the social determinants of health framework, including population-level thinking, social inequities in health, and the political economy of health.

Building on that foundational content, students will learn and apply knowledge from research and scholarship on key thematic areas in the social determinants of health such as: income and income inequality; childhood and transition to adulthood; gender; social support, social capital, social exclusion, and racism; health of Indigenous peoples; employment and working conditions; housing and neighbourhood; food, nutrition, and food insecurity; and environment and ecosystems.

The politics of population health and health equity is an important thread that runs throughout the course.

The course will focus primarily on Canada. As students will see, much of the research and scholarship in this field comes from other settings including the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, etc.

Students are advised that this course addresses complex content and a mixture of theory, empirics, and values. There is not necessarily a clear-cut answer to every question. Developing a comfort level with “messy” material is therefore an important skill to be developed in this course and throughout the program.

Class format will include a combination of didactic lecture and in-class activities that allow students to engage directly with the materials and their relevance to real-world problems.

### **Global Objectives**

The overall objectives of this course are to:

- Introduce, and provide a forum for discussion and critical thinking around key concepts, theories, and research pertaining to the social determinants of health in populations.
- Inspire and generate enthusiasm for the study of the social determinants of health.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

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

- Describe what is meant by the social determinants of health as a framework, including its conceptual underpinnings (e.g., population-level thinking; health equity; political economy of health);
- Locate, appraise, and summarize research and scholarship pertaining to key thematic areas within the social determinants of health (e.g., income and income inequality; housing; environments and ecosystems);
- Apply course materials, including foundational content and thematic topics, to new problems and settings;
- Demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply a critical perspective, which includes identifying and questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about health and its determinants.

### **Transferable Skill Development:**

Many of the skills and abilities that you are developing in your coursework are transferable to other facets of life including future study, volunteer contributions, and paid work.

The work that you will do in HSOC 301 will help you build the following transferable skills:

- **Collaboration:** Work respectfully with others from different backgrounds.
- **Verbal Communication:** Learn and share information by presenting, listening, and interacting.
- **Creativity:** Find and respect different ways to do things, demonstrate curiosity.
- **Critical Thinking:** Actively and thoughtfully conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate information to make a judgement or support an argument.
- **Digital Skills:** Use digital technologies like computers, virtual meeting platforms, internet.
- **Information Literacy:** Find, understand, and use information.
- **Problem solving:** Identify an issue; think carefully and critically towards identifying and implementing a way to address the issue.
- **Organization and time management:** Conceptualize, plan, initiate and execute an approach to achieve a goal (e.g., a project) by prioritizing activities and meeting deadlines.
- **Written Communication:** Share ideas and information by using words, images, and symbols.

### Required textbook:

Davidson A. *Social Determinants of Health: A Comparative Approach*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, Second Edition, 2019. Print ISBN: 9780199032204; eText ISBN: 9780199032242.

This book is available for purchase at the University of Calgary bookstore in hard copy or as an e-book.

### A Note regarding readings

Required readings are indicated in the schedule below. **Students are REQUIRED to complete assigned readings BEFORE each lecture.** The Professor will proceed in class on the assumption that students have read completely the assigned readings.

Students should be aware that many of the assigned readings may be of an unfamiliar nature and style. Students should therefore allot sufficient time to allow for several reads of the assigned material.

### Learning Technology Requirements

Brightspace (by D2L) is located on the University of Calgary server and will be used extensively for communication with students. **It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they receive all posted communications and documents and that they receive emails sent by instructors or fellow students through D2L.** Only your @ucalgary.ca email address may be linked to D2L. Please ensure that you regularly check your @ucalgary.ca account.

### Evaluation

The University policy on grading and related matters is described in section F of the 2023-2024 Calendar. A student's final grade for this course is the sum of the separate assignments. It is not necessary to pass each assignment separately to pass the course.

There is a Registrar-scheduled, closed-book final exam for this course.

A brief description of evaluation activities is provided below.

Description	Due date	Percent of grade
<b>Exam</b> – foundational content In-class, closed book exam covering all course material to date, 75 minutes	Thurs Sept 28, 2023	25%
<b>Journal club</b> In small groups, students will select, present, and lead class discussion on one peer-reviewed journal article on an assigned topic (30 minutes per group). Students will also, independently, prepare a written reflection (1 page) that connects the selected article to the textbook chapter of the same topic as well as the foundational course content. <u>Groups must arrange to discuss their article selection with the Professor and TA prior to finalizing.</u>	Presentation dates: Oct 17; Oct 19; Nov 7; Nov 9; Dec 5. Written assignments are due at 3pm on the day of the journal club session. Groups must submit selected article <u>one week in advance</u> of the scheduled journal club session, for distribution to the class.	25%
<b>Class participation</b> Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, and engage actively and respectfully in all	Throughout semester	15%

interactions. This includes active listening. Quality of participation is more important than quantity.		
<b>Final exam</b> – cumulative Registrar-scheduled, closed-book exam that covers all course content (cumulative) but with slightly greater emphasis on the materials covered following the first exam, 90 minutes.	<b>TBC</b>	35%

**A Note regarding Writing Assignments:**

Writing skills are important to academic study in all disciplines. In keeping with the University of Calgary’s emphasis on the importance of academic writing in student assignments (section E.2 of 2023-24 Calendar), writing is emphasized, and the grading thereof in determining a student’s mark in this course. The Bachelor of Health Sciences values excellence in writing. Competence in writing entails skills in crafting logical, clear, coherent, non-redundant sentences, paragraphs and broader arguments, as well as skills with the mechanics of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation). Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. The University of Calgary offers instructional services through the Students’ Success Centre’s Writing Support Services (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/writingsupport/>) for students seeking feedback on assignments or seeking to improve their general writing skills. Students are **strongly encouraged** to take advantage of these programs.

**Grading Scheme:**

Letter Grade	Description	Percentage
<b>A+</b>	Outstanding performance	96-100
<b>A</b>	Excellent performance	90-95
<b>A-</b>	Approaching excellent performance	85-89
<b>B+</b>	Exceeding good performance	80-84
<b>B</b>	Good performance	75-79
<b>B-</b>	Approaching good performance	70-74
<b>C+</b>	Exceeding satisfactory performance	65-69
<b>C</b>	Satisfactory performance	60-64
<b>C-</b>	Approaching satisfactory performance	57-59
<b>D+</b>	Marginal pass	54-56
<b>D</b>	Minimal pass	50-53
<b>F</b>	Does not meet course requirements	0-49

**Missed Components of Term Work:**

Late assignments will lose 25% per day late (or part thereof). Students who fail to submit an assignment within 72 hours of the posted deadline will receive a mark of zero.

As per University Calendar Section G.1.2, **students who are absent from an in-class assessment will receive a mark of zero on the missed component.** Students who are absent are responsible for contacting their instructor to discuss the impact of their missed assessment. Students who are identified as falsifying information related to missed assessments will be subject to investigation for academic misconduct.

**Extensions will NOT be granted** on any assignment or quizzes in HSOC 301. The only exceptions to this are those in keeping with the University Calendar (debilitating illness, religious conviction, or severe domestic affliction) that are received in writing and with supporting documentation. Traffic jams and late or full buses are common events in Calgary and are NOT acceptable reasons for late arrivals to class, meetings and examinations. Please note that while absences are permitted for religious reasons, students are responsible for providing advance notice and adhering to other guidelines on this matter, as outlined in the University Calendar (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-4.html>).

### **Course Evaluations and Student Feedback**

Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the Universal Student Rating of Instruction (USRI) and a qualitative student evaluation. Students are welcome to discuss the process and content of the course at any time with the instructor. Students may also address any concerns they may have with Dr. Fabiola Aparicio-Ting, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) in the Cumming School of Medicine ([feapartic@ucalgary.ca](mailto:feapartic@ucalgary.ca)).

### **Attendance**

It is important that you make every effort to attend all scheduled sessions. Important learning in this course will occur during class through lecture and in-class discussion and application of materials. There will be material covered in class that is not fully covered by the textbook or lecture slides, for which students are responsible.

Students are expected to demonstrate active and respectful engagement in class, and participation will constitute 15% of the final grade in this course.

### **Conduct During Lectures**

The classroom should be respected as a safe place to share ideas without judgement - a community in which we can all learn from one another. Students are expected to frame their comments and questions to lecturers in respectful and appropriate language, always maintaining sensitivity towards the topic. Students, employees, and academic staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment.

As members of the University community, students, employees and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

**Students are expected to take notes during class and should not rely solely on material supplied by the instructors. Instructors may or may not post lecture notes to D2L, at their individual discretion. Instructors may cover concepts or examples in class that may not be posted to D2L but may be assessed.**

### **Use of Internet and Electronic Communication Devices in Class**

The Bachelor of Health Sciences program aims to create a supportive and respectful learning environment for all students. The use of laptop and mobile devices is acceptable when used in a manner appropriate to the course and classroom activities. However, research studies have found that inappropriate/off-topic use of electronic devices in the classroom negatively affects the learning of others during class time.

Students are responsible for being aware of the University's Internet and email use policy, which can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-electronic-resources-and-information-policy>.

## UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY POLICIES AND SUPPORTS

### Copyright

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the Copyright Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>.

### Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may **NOT** be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. **The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited.** Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course **at the same time** may be allowed under fair dealing.

### Academic Accommodations

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations according to the University policies and procedures listed below. The Student Accommodations policy is available at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/access/prospective-students/academic-accommodations>. Students needing an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Accommodation-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Procedure.pdf>). SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodations to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to Dr. Fabiola Aparicio-Ting, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education) ([feaparc@ucalgary.ca](mailto:feaparc@ucalgary.ca)).

### Academic Misconduct

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. The University of Calgary has created rules to govern all its members regarding the creation of knowledge and the demonstration of knowledge learned.

Academic Misconduct refers to student behaviour that compromises proper assessment of a student's academic activities and includes (but is not limited to): cheating, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance, failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses, and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar. **It also includes using third party websites/services to access past/current course material, essay/assignment writing services, or real-time assistance in completing assessments, seeking answers to assessment questions and similar, whether paid, bartered or unpaid.**

For information of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures, please visit;

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-policy>.

Additional information is available on the Academic Integrity website at: <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>.

### **Recording of Lectures**

Audio or video recording of lectures (or similar) is prohibited except where explicit permission has been received from the instructor.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **Appeals**

If there is a concern with the course, an academic matter, or a grade, first communicate with the instructor. If the concerns cannot be resolved, students can proceed with an academic appeal, as per Section I of the University Calendar. Students must follow the official reappraisal/appeal process and may contact the Student Ombuds' Office (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds>) for assistance with this and with any other academic concerns, including academic and non-academic misconduct. Students should be aware that concerns about graded term work may only be initiated **within 10 business days** of first being notified of the grade.

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

### **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy**

The University recognizes that all members of the University Community should be able to learn, work, teach and live in an environment where they are free from harassment, discrimination, and violence. The University of Calgary's sexual violence policy guides us in how we respond to incidents of sexual violence, including supports available to those who have experienced or witnessed sexual violence, or those who are alleged to have committed sexual violence. It provides clear response procedures and timelines, defines complex concepts, and addresses incidents that occur off-campus in certain circumstances. Please see the policy available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Sexual-and-Gender-Based-Violence-Policy.pdf>.

### **Resources for Support of Student Learning, Success, Safety and Wellness**

Student Success Centre <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/>

Student Wellness Centre <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services>

Student Advocacy and Wellness Hub (CSM)

<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/mdprogram/current-students/student-advising-wellness>

Distress Centre <http://www.distresscentre.com/>

Library Resources <http://library.ucalgary.ca>

### **Wellness and Mental Health Resources**

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and it aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university

community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the SU Wellness Centre (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth>)

### **Student Ombuds' Office**

The Student Ombuds' Office supports and provides a safe, neutral space for students. For more information, please visit [www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds/) or email [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

### **BHSc Student Faculty Liaison Committee (SFLC)**

The BHSc SFLC, with elected representatives from all majors, serves to raise issues of interest to BHSc students to the program administration, including items pertaining to curriculum, scheduling and events. A list of current representatives can be found on the BHSc website.

### **Student Union (SU) Information**

The SU Vice-President Academic can be reached at (403) 220-3911 or [suvpaca@ucalgary.ca](mailto:suvpaca@ucalgary.ca); the SU representatives for the Cumming School of Medicine can be reached at [medrep1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:medrep1@su.ucalgary.ca) or [medrep2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:medrep2@su.ucalgary.ca).

### **Student Success Centre**

The Student Success Centre provides services and programs to ensure students can make the most of their time at the University of Calgary. Our advisors, learning support staff, and writing support staff assist students in enhancing their skills and achieving their academic goals. They provide tailored learning support and advising programs, as well as one-on-one services, free of charge to all undergraduate and graduate students. For more information visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>

### **Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points**

As part of the University of Calgary Emergency Evacuation plan, students, faculty, and staff should locate the closest Assembly Point in case of Fire Alarm. Safety signage is posted throughout the campus showing the locations and the possible route to these locations. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to promptly make their way to the nearest Assembly Point if the Fire Alarm is activated. No one is to return into campus facilities until an all clear is given to the warden in charge of the Assembly Area. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/building-evacuation/assembly-points>

### **Safewalk**

Campus security will escort individuals, day or night, anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences Centre, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). Call 403-220-5333 or visit <https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/campus-security/your-safety/safewalk>. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths. Please ensure your personal safety by taking advantage of this service.



## Class Schedule

The following is a list of topics for class, associated readings, and assignment / exam due dates. Please note that changes to the schedule, with respect to the timing of topics and readings, may occur. Students will be notified of changes as needed by way of email and/or D2L announcements. The exam dates are firm.

**Assigned readings must be completed prior to class.**

Week	Dates	Topic(s) and evaluation activities	Readings and other preparatory work
1	Tues. Sept 5 <i>(First class)</i>	Introduction; course overview; preparation for Sept 7	1) Course outline 2) <a href="#">Death Panel podcast: Social Determinants of Health.</a>
	Thurs Sept 7	<i>The Last Straw</i> board game	
2	Tues Sept 12	Conventional and alternative ways of understanding health	Davidson, Introduction chapter Davidson, Chapter 14
	Thurs Sept 14	Thinking about health at the population level	Davidson, Chapter 1
3	Tues Sept 19	Health care and health research methods	Davidson, Chapter 2
	Thurs Sept 21	Population health and social epidemiology	Davidson, Chapter 3
4	Tues Sept 26	Income & wealth inequality	Davidson, Chapter 4
	Thurs Sept 28	<b><i>In-class, closed book exam</i></b>	
5	Tues Oct 3	Childhood and transition to adulthood	Davidson, Chapter 5
	Thurs Oct 5	Gender and health	Davidson, Chapter 6
6	Tues Oct 10	Social support, social capital, social exclusion, and racism	Davidson, Chapter 7
	Thurs Oct 12	Health of Indigenous Peoples	Davidson, Chapter 8
7	Tues Oct 17	<b><i>Journal club</i></b>	<b><i>Student selected pre-readings</i></b>
	Thurs Oct 19	<b><i>Journal club</i></b>	<b><i>Student selected pre-readings</i></b>

8	Tues Oct 24	Employment, working conditions & health	Davidson, Chapter 9
	Thurs Oct 26	No class – instructor away	
9	Tues Oct 31	Housing and neighbourhood	Davidson, Chapter 10
	Thurs Nov 2	Food, food insecurity & health	Davidson, Chapter 11
10	Tues Nov 7	<b>Journal club</b>	<b>Student selected pre-readings</b>
	Thurs Nov 9	<b>Journal club</b>	<b>Student selected pre-readings</b>
Fall Term Break	Tues Nov 14	N/A	N/A
	Thurs Nov 16	N/A	N/A
11	Tues Nov 21	Environment and health	Davidson, Chapter 12
	Thurs Nov 23	Environment and health	Davidson, Chapter 12
12	Tues Nov 28	Social patterning of behaviour	Davidson, Chapter 13
	Thurs Nov 30	Social patterning of behaviour	Davidson, Chapter 13
13	Tues Dec 5 <i>(Last class)</i>	<b>Journal club</b>	<b>Student selected pre-readings</b>
	<b>TBC</b>	<b>Registrar-scheduled final exam (closed-book, cumulative)</b>	