HSOC 301
Determinants of Health

Instructors:
Prof. Lindsay McLaren, lmclaren@ucalgary.ca

Office Hours/Policy on Answering Student Emails
Office hours: By appointment; please arrange via e-mail. I am also usually available immediately after class.
Email from students: All course communications must occur through @ucalgary email. Please allow 24 hours for a response. Please note that we may not respond to email during evenings, weekends, or statutory holidays.

Teaching Assistant:
Temitayo (Temi) Famuyide, temi.famuyide2@ucalgary.ca
PhD Candidate (Population & Public Health), Dept Community Health Sciences

Time and Location:
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:15pm

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 shape the health of populations. Students will first learn foundational content – the conceptual and empirical bases of the social determinants of health framework – including population-level thinking, social inequities in health, and socio-structural perspectives on health. Building on that foundational material, students will then 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; intersecting identities such as gender and race; employment and working conditions; housing and neighbourhood; food 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.
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 complex and nuanced 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 application of critical perspectives 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; socio-structural perspectives)
- 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, and demonstrate an ability to draw connections;
- Demonstrate understanding of and ability to apply critical perspectives, which includes identifying and questioning dominant narratives about heath and what shapes it.

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 (Lifetime or 180-day [less expensive] e-book versions are available).

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.

Learning Technology Requirements

Brightspace (by D2L) is located on the University of Calgary server and will be used 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.

A laptop, desktop, tablet or mobile device is required for D2L access. If you need help accessing or using D2L, please visit the Desire2Learn resource page for students: http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/d2l-student/.

Evaluation
The University policy on grading and related matters is described in section F of the 2025-2026 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. More details will be provided during the semester.

Description	Due date	Percent of grade
Exam – foundational content In-class, closed book exam covering all course material to date, 75 minutes	Tuesday September 23, 2025	20%
Small group assignment part 1 – journal club session In small groups (assigned), students will select, present, and lead class discussion on one peer-reviewed journal article on an assigned topic corresponding to one course theme (30 minutes per group). Students will also, independently, prepare a written document (1 page). Selected articles must align with a socio-structural orientation and with public policy. Both the journal club session and the written document must 1) demonstrate understanding of the selected article and 2) draw connections between the selected article, the corresponding textbook chapter/s, and foundational course content.	Presentation dates (assigned): Oct 21, Oct 23, Nov 4, Nov 20, Nov 27 2025 Written assignments are due by 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. <u>Prior to this</u>, groups must arrange to discuss their article selection and secure approval from the Professor and TA.	20%*
Small group assignment part 2 – civil society activism poster presentation Continuing from the journal club assignment (same small groups, same topic), students will identify a civil society organization that aims to strengthen the assigned social determinant of health through activism. Groups will prepare a poster for display and discussion. The poster must introduce and situate the organization and give a sense of its activities and how or why they are important, by drawing connections to course materials (thematic and foundational content).	Poster session dates (assigned): December 2 and December 4, 2025	20%*
Class participation Students are expected to attend class, arrive on time, and engage actively and respectfully in all interactions. This includes active listening. Quality of participation is more important than quantity.	Throughout semester	15%
Final exam – 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.	*TBC*	25%

* Note: peer evaluation will count for 2% of the grade for each group assignment

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 2025-26 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 to complete each assessment must be properly documented, unless otherwise noted by the instructor. 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
A+	Outstanding performance	96-100
A	Excellent performance	90-95.99
A-	Approaching excellent performance	85-89
B+	Exceeding good performance	80-84
B	Good performance	75-79
B-	Approaching good performance	70-74
C+	Exceeding satisfactory performance	65-69
C	Satisfactory performance	60-64
C-	Approaching satisfactory performance	57-59
D+	Marginal pass	54-56
D	Minimal pass	50-53
F	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 48 hours of the posted deadline will receive a mark of zero.
As per University Calendar Section G.2.3, **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://calendar.ucalgary.ca/pages/02ffccb6b1a541db880fe4223d122b5e

Course Evaluations and Student Feedback
Student feedback will be sought at the end of the course through the new UCalgary Course Experience Survey 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 (feaparic@ucalgary.ca).

Attendance
Regular attendance is advised in order to succeed in HSOC 301. You must 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 take notes during class and should not rely solely on material supplied by the instructors. Instructors may or may not post lectures notes to D2L, at their individual discretion.
Students are expected to demonstrative 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://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-conduct/policy

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

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools
Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), and specifically foundational models that can create writing, computer code, and /or images using minimal human prompting includes not only GPT-4 (and its siblings ChatGPT and Bing), but many writing assistants that are built on this or similar AI technologies.
The use of generative artificial intelligence tools and apps **is strictly prohibited** in all course assignments unless explicitly stated otherwise by the instructor in this course. This includes ChatGPT and other AI writing and coding assistants. Use of generative AI in this course may be considered use of an unauthorized aid, which is a form of cheating and a breach of academic integrity subject to Academic Misconduct procedures. You could be asked to provide evidence of your own work.
Students **are not allowed** to upload class slides, assignment instructions, or other course materials to AI tools or platforms. These are the intellectual property of the course instructor (IP); uploading these to and AI platform may breech IP rules since some of these sites may use these as training/output data.

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/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-non-academic-misconduct-policy

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).
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 (feaparic@ucalgary.ca), Associate Dean (Undergraduate Health and Science Education).

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 having been 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 of 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) by students 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, academic matter or a grade, first communicate with the instructor. If these 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://calendar.ucalgary.ca/pages/e31a7115dca740ec83579e946d4a4193

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/university-policies-procedures/sexual-and-gender-based-violence-policy

Resources for Support of Student Learning, Success, Safety and Wellness
Student Success Centre   http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/
Student Wellness Centre   http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/
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 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 (http://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/ or email 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; the SU representatives for the Cumming School of Medicine can be reached at medrep1@su.ucalgary.ca or 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/risk/emergency-management/drills/assembly-points-and-evacuation-maps

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 http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/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.