Political Economy of Health
UNI 411 - Fall 2014

“It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.”
- J. Krishnamurti

Course Instructor: Faraz Vahid Shahidi
E-mail: faraz.vahidshahidi@utoronto.ca
Class Hours: Tuesday, 5:00-8:00pm
Class Location: UC 376
Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:00-5:00pm
Office Location: D-302

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the social production and distribution of health and illness within and across populations through the lens of political economy. The course departs from a critical interrogation of marginality and its expression in the shape of social inequalities in health. A political economy approach is applied in order to better understand the fundamental causes of these inequalities, the political action that is required to tackle them, and the obstacles that hinder the possibility for such action. The course will equip students with theoretical and empirical insights from a range of disciplines, including epidemiology, political science, social policy, and sociology, in order to facilitate a critical examination of current developments in research on the social determinants of health.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course will advance an understanding of:
- the political economy of capitalism;
- the relationship between political economy and population health;
- the health of marginalized populations; and
- theoretical perspectives on social inequalities in health.

PREREQUISITES

Students enrolled in this course are required to have completed at least one of the following courses:
- UNI209: Introduction to Health; or
- HMB303: Global Health and Human Rights.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is organized as a series of twelve seminar sessions. Seminar sessions will address a designated set of assigned readings and will be principally comprised of facilitated discussions of topics and themes raised therein. Students will share facilitation responsibilities with the course instructor.
COURSE EVALUATION

PARTICIPATION (20%)

Students are expected to have read all of the assigned readings prior to each seminar session in order to be able to participate actively and critically in class discussions. Participation grades will depend both on the quality of the student’s contributions to those discussions as well as on their ability to promote a supportive pedagogical environment for their peers.

SEMINAR PAPER X 2 (40%)

Students will complete two 1500 word seminar papers in response to the assigned course readings. In each seminar paper, students should address a complete set of readings from any given week of their choice. Each seminar paper should present and support a thesis that provides a critical evaluation of the authors’ main arguments.

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (40%)

Students will prepare a final research paper related to one or more of the themes covered in the course. The final paper should be approximately 4000 words in length. This paper is expected to require a substantial amount of reading, research, and original thought. Students should aim to generate a paper of publishable quality and will be encouraged to submit their papers for publication.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All coursework submitted by a student should be the student’s own work except where otherwise indicated. Students should review the following guidelines pertaining to academic conduct carefully: www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm. Should a student have any questions or concerns regarding standards of academic conduct, they are expected to seek out additional information.

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Students should not hesitate to contact the course instructor if they have any questions or concerns. Students should make sure to use their University of Toronto e-mail address in all communications with the course instructor. Course updates and required readings will be posted on Portal.

COURSE DROP DATE

Please note that the final drop date for this course is Monday 3 November.

ACCESSIBILITY

A range of disability-related services and resources are available to students. If a student requires specific accommodations, they can contact the course instructor and/or the Accessibility Services Office. The St. George Campus Accessibility Services Office is located on the first floor of Robarts Library. Staff are available by appointment to help with assessing specific needs, providing referrals, and arranging for appropriate accommodations. The Accessibility Services Office can be contacted at (416) 978-8060 or through disability.services@utoronto.ca.
CURRICULUM

Part I: Theory
Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: Theorizing Marginalization
Week 3: Theorizing Health Inequalities
Week 4: Theorizing Political Economy
Week 5: Theorizing Welfare Capitalism (I)
Week 6: Theorizing Welfare Capitalism (II)

Part II: Application
Week 7: Political Economy of Health
Week 8: Income Inequality
Week 9: Social Capital
Week 10: Occupational Health
Week 11: Health Care Policy
Week 12: International Health

READINGS

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Theorizing Marginalization

Week 3: Theorizing Health Inequalities

Week 4: Theorizing Political Economy

Week 5: Theorizing Welfare Capitalism (I)

Week 6: Theorizing Welfare Capitalism (II)

**WEEK 7: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH**


**WEEK 8: INCOME INEQUALITY**


**WEEK 9: SOCIAL CAPITAL**


**WEEK 10: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**


**WEEK 11: HEALTH CARE POLICY**


**WEEK 12: INTERNATIONAL HEALTH**