

## **Sociology of Medicine: Perspectives Across the Social Sciences & Population Health**

Sociol 742 (Fall 2023 / Thurs 2:30-5:00p, Room TBD)

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How healthy you are depends on far more than your genes, or the decisions that you make about your health. Where you grow up, who your family are, where you live, and who you know also play important roles in your well-being. Yet many of these characteristics change throughout your life, and early events can have important effects later in your life. This course provides an overview of key ideas in medical sociology (and its close cousins across the social sciences, public health, and population health). Topics include social determinants of health and how they matter throughout the lifecourse, legitimacy and authority in medicine, effects of racism and discrimination on health, health disparities, intersectionality and measurement in health, social construction of illness and stigma, inequalities in health care systems and clinical settings, the importance of networks and social relationships to health, disability studies, and how social and biological mechanisms jointly shape health. You should leave the course with an ability to think critically about how one's health may be shaped by a mix of social and biological circumstances, and to question how one's health could be related to the health of others.

As with every graduate class I teach, there is intentionally a lot for you to absorb. I assign a heavy amount of reading. Some of you may look back at this material during various points of your graduate career for reference in order to go deeper and re-read something you didn't quite entirely grasp the first time. Or, you may reach back for a particular chapter/book/article when you teach your own courses, and so forth. Some of the pieces I've assigned may, at first, seem impenetrable, and there may be some technical details that you feel are over your head. I only ask that you try – with the knowledge that it's my goal to stretch your thinking to promote intellectual flexibility and to help you be a more critical scholar. The format of the course is partially discussion-based, and partially practical application to help you with your research.

- a) Discussion: I will spend <1/2hr each week in our face-to-face time giving points of historical background and context to how the work articulates with trends in our field, and each week a student or student(s) will lead a ~1h discussion based on a short list of questions you generate and circulate ahead of time intended to introduce key themes and tensions with the material. We'll spend the last hour engaging with questions raised by the discussants and previewing the following week's work. Discussion leaders should touch on conceptual and methodological contributions of the studies, how they articulate with prior approaches, and any challenging questions they raise. Based on enrollment, each person should prepare to lead discussion several times with a partner; we'll circulate a sign-up sheet on the first day. (*Graded: No check, Check-, Check, Check+*)
- b) Guided memos: if you are not presenting, you are required to write and submit a (max) 2-page memo (single-spaced, 12pt font) in response to prompts that will be distributed in class the week before. These will allow you to be systematic in engaging with material and training your ability to critique and expound upon aspects of the reading(s) that you found interesting, provocative, or problematic. Memos will be due to Canvas the

following week by Wednesday @ 12n. There are 12 sessions – you get one freebie and only have to complete 11 – [*n* times presenting] of them. (*Graded: No check, Check-, Check, Check+*)

- c) Practical application: one of the points of this course is prepare you to do research in this area. You should also draw upon the topical knowledge and skills you learn during the term to develop a research paper to inform a comps, dissertation chapter, independent manuscript, or grant proposal (2-page abstract of the idea due Friday October 6; interim outline Friday November 17). The final project (due 12/15) will be evaluated by me, but you will provide peer reviews of your classmates' outlines to help them advance their thinking should they decide to develop this idea further into a publication, thesis, or dissertation. (Weekly supplemental readings are intended to provide extra detail for those that wish to go deeper – they are not required!)

*Grading*: 40% class participation & engagement (including your weekly reflection memos and leading discussion, Check schema described below); 30% assignments (abstract, outline, and peer review of two peers' project directions, 0-100 scale); 30% final project (0-100 scale).

*Check+* : active participation and promotion of critical dialogue in class discussions; engaging in independent and self-motivated research and testing of ideas; expanding upon subject material presented in readings and proposing issues to enhance or challenge the research.

*Check* : active participation in group discussions and demonstration of enthusiasm of topics presented in readings; addresses and expands on issues presented in the readings; demonstration of understanding of issues

*Check-* : Occasional contributions to class discussions and occasional enthusiasm about assignments and class material.

*No Check* : Student not present for class discussion, repeatedly late to class, or exhibiting difficulty in demonstrating understanding of issues/concepts in a given week.

*Prerequisites*: None, but this course will prioritize SBS graduate students. Others from around the university may email me for permission (and if there is space I'm likely to say yes! This is a fairly interdisciplinary area of scholarship, and conversations are often richer with graduate students from different backgrounds).

*Required texts* (*I likely will reduce this to 3 core books TBD, will update July 2023*):

- Ansell, David. 2021. *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills*.
- Jenkins, Tania. 2021. *Doctors' Orders: The Making of Status Hierarchies in an Elite Profession*.
- Trotter, LaTonya. 2019. *More Than Medicine: Nurse Practitioners and the Problems They Solve for Patients, Health Care Organizations, and the State*.
- Washington, Harriet. 2008. *Medical Apartheid*

### **Week 1 - September 7, 2023**

#### ***Social Determinants of Population Health – Foundations***

- Bronfenbrenner, Urie. 2001. "Human Development, Bioecological Theory Of." Pp. 6963-70 in International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences, edited by N. S. B. Baltes.
- Clouston, S.A. and Link, B.G., 2021. "A Retrospective on Fundamental Cause Theory: State of the Literature and Goals for the Future." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 47.
- Kuh, Diana, Yoav Ben-Shlomo, John Lynch, Johan Hallqvist, and Chris Power. 2003. "Life course epidemiology." *Journal of epidemiology and community health* 57(10): 778.
- Link, B. G. and J. Phelan. 1995. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35:80-94.
- Rose, G. 1985. "Sick Individuals and Sick Populations." *International Journal of Epidemiology* 14(1):32-8.

### **Week 2 - September 14, 2023**

#### ***Social Determinants of Health – Social status***

- Braveman, P. A., C. Cubbin, S. Egerter, D. R. Williams and E. Pamuk. 2010. "Socioeconomic Disparities in Health in the United States: What the Patterns Tell Us." *American Journal of Public Health* 100 Suppl 1:S186-96.
- Galvan, M. J., Payne, K., Hannay, J., Georgeson, A., & Muscatell, K. (2022). What does the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status Measure? Separating Economic Circumstances and Social Status to Predict Health. arXiv.
- Marmot, Michael G., Stephen Stansfeld, Chandra Patel, Fiona North, Jenny Head, Ian White, Eric Brunner, Amanda Feeney, and G. Davey Smith. 1991. "Health inequalities among British civil servants: the Whitehall II study." *The Lancet* 337(8754): 1387-1393.
- Tan, Jacinth J., Kraus, Michael W., Carpenter, Nichelle C., & Adler, Nancy E. 2020. "The association between objective and subjective socioeconomic status and subjective well-being: A meta-analytic review." *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(11), 970.

### **Week 3 - September 21, 2023**

#### ***Legitimacy and Authority in Medicine, Part 1***

- Epstein, Steven and Stefan Timmermans. 2021. "From Medicine to Health: The Proliferation and Diversification of Cultural Authority." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):240-254.
- Trotter, LaTonya. 2019. *More Than Medicine: Nurse Practitioners and the Problems They Solve for Patients, Health Care Organizations, and the State.*

#### **Week 4 - September 28, 2023**

##### ***Racism, Discrimination, & Stress pathways, Part 1***

Washington, Harriet. 2008. *Medical Apartheid (Part 1 & 2)*.

Goosby, B.J., Cheadle, J.E. and Mitchell, C. 2018. "Stress-related biosocial mechanisms of discrimination and African American health inequities." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 44, pp.319-340.

Pearlin, Leonard I., Scott Schieman, Elena M. Fazio, and Stephen C. Meersman. 2005. "Stress, health, and the life course: Some conceptual perspectives." *Journal of health and Social Behavior* 46(2): 205-219.

Umberson, D., K. Williams, P. A. Thomas, H. Liu and M. B. Thomeer. 2014. "Race, Gender, and Chains of Disadvantage: Childhood Adversity, Social Relationships, and Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 55(1):20-38.

#### **Week 5 – October 5, 2023**

##### ***Racism, Discrimination, & Stress pathways, Part 2***

[No class – MCP away @ IAPHS conference – continue readings on race/racism/stress pathways & work on Assignment 1: final paper idea, due October 6]

Gee, G. C., Hing, A., Mohammed, S., Tabor, D. C., & Williams, D. R. 2019. "Racism and the Life Course: Taking Time Seriously." *Am J Public Health*, 109(S1), S43-S47.

Neblett Jr, Enrique W. 2023 "Racism measurement and influences, variations on scientific racism, and a vision." *Social Science & Medicine* 316: 115247.

Monk Jr, Ellis P. 2021. "Colorism and physical health: Evidence from a national survey." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(1): 37-52.

Williams, David R. 2018. "Stress and the mental health of populations of color: Advancing our understanding of race-related stressors." *Journal of health and social behavior* 59(4): 466-485.

#### **Week 6 – October 12, 2023**

##### ***Health Disparities, Part 1***

Adler, Nancy, Nicole R. Bush, and Matthew S. Pantell. 2012. "Rigor, vigor, and the study of health disparities." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(S2): 17154-17159.

Ansell, David. 2021. *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills*.

Boen, Courtney, Lisa Keister, and Brian Aronson. 2020. "Beyond net worth: Racial differences in wealth portfolios and black-white health inequality across the life course." *Journal of health and social behavior* 61(2): 153-169.

Colen, Cynthia G., David M. Ramey, Elizabeth C. Cooksey, and David R. Williams. 2018. "Racial disparities in health among nonpoor African Americans and Hispanics: The role of acute and chronic discrimination." *Social Science & Medicine* 199: 167-180.

##### *Supplemental:*

Braveman PA, Kumanyika S, Fielding J, LaVeist T, Borrell LN, Manderscheid R, Troutman A. 2011. "Health disparities and health equity: the issue is justice." *American journal of public health* 101(S1):S149-55.

Nuru-Jeter, A.M., Michaels, E.K., Thomas, M.D., Reeves, A.N., Thorpe Jr, R.J. and LaVeist, T.A., 2018. "Relative roles of race versus socioeconomic position in studies of health inequalities: a matter of interpretation." *Annual review of public health*, 39, pp.169-188.

## **Week 7 – October 19, 2023**

### ***Health Disparities, Part 2***

- Homan, Patricia, Tyson H. Brown and Brittany King. 2021. “Structural Intersectionality as a New Direction for Health Disparities Research.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):350-370.
- Harari, L. and C. Lee. 2021. “Intersectionality in Quantitative Health Disparities Research: A Systematic Review of Challenges and Limitations in Empirical Studies.” *Soc Sci Med* 277:113876..
- Link, Bruce G. and San Juanita Garcia. 2021. “Diversions: How the Underrepresentation of Research on Advantaged Groups Leaves Explanations for Health Inequalities Incomplete.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):334-349.
- Nardone, Anthony, Joan A. Casey, Rachel Morello-Frosch, Mahasin Mujahid, John R. Balmes, and Neeta Thakur. 2020. “Associations between historical residential redlining and current age-adjusted rates of emergency department visits due to asthma across eight cities in California: an ecological study.” *The Lancet Planetary Health* 4(1): e24-e31.
- Theall, Katherine P., Samantha Francois, Caryn N. Bell, Andrew Anderson, David Chae, and Thomas A. LaVeist. 2022. “Neighborhood Police Encounters, Health, And Violence In A Southern City: Study examines neighborhood police encounters, health, and violence in New Orleans, Louisiana.” *Health Affairs* 41(2): 228-236.

## **Week 8 – October 26, 2023**

### ***Social Construction of Illness, Stigma, & Health Care, Part 1***

- Conrad, Peter, and Kristin K. Barker. 2010. “The social construction of illness: Key insights and policy implications.” *Journal of health and social behavior* 51(S1): S67-S79.
- Perry, Brea. 2011. “The Labeling Paradox: Stigma, the Sick Role, and Social Networks in Mental Illness.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52(4):460–77.
- Reich, Jennifer A. 2020. “We are fierce, independent thinkers and intelligent”: Social capital and stigma management among mothers who refuse vaccines.” *Social Science & Medicine* 257: 112015.
- Shim, Janet K. 2010. “Cultural health capital: a theoretical approach to understanding health care interactions and the dynamics of unequal treatment” *Journal of health and social behavior* 51(1): 1-15.

## **Week 9 – November 2, 2023**

### ***Social Construction of Illness, Stigma, & Health Care, Part 2***

- Jenkins, Tania. 2021. *Doctors' Orders: The Making of Status Hierarchies in an Elite Profession*.
- Timmermans, Stefan. 2020. “The engaged patient: The relevance of patient–physician communication for twenty-first-century health.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 61(3): 259-273.
- Whooley, Owen and Kristin Kay Barker. 2021. “Uncertain and under Quarantine: Toward a Sociology of Medical Ignorance.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):271-285.

#### *Supplemental:*

- Bosk, Charles. 2003. *Forgive and Remember*.
- Wright, Eric R., and Brea L. Perry. 2010. “Medical sociology and health services research: past accomplishments and future policy challenges.” *Journal of health and social behavior* 51(S1): S107-S119.

## **Week 10 – November 9, 2023**

### ***Networks & social relationships – foundational statements***

- Berkman, Lisa F. and S. Leonard Syme. 1979. "Social Networks, Host Resistance, and Mortality: A Nine-Year Follow-up Study of Alameda County Residents." *American Journal of Epidemiology* 109(2):186-204.
- Coleman, James, Elihu Katz, and Herbert Menzel. 1957. "The diffusion of an innovation among physicians." *Sociometry* 20(4): 253-270.
- Cornwell, E. Y., & Waite, L. J. 2009. Social disconnectedness, perceived isolation, and health among older adults. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 50(1), 31-48.
- Thoits, Peggy A. 2011. "Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52(2), 145-161.
- Yang, Y. C., C. Boen, K. Gerken, T. Li, K. Schorpp and K. M. Harris. 2016. "Social Relationships and Physiological Determinants of Longevity across the Human Life Span." *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 113(3):578-83.

#### *Supplemental:*

- Christakis, Nicholas A., & Fowler, James H. (2007). The spread of obesity in a large social network over 32 years. *New England journal of medicine*, 357(4), 370-379.
- Holt-Lunstad, Julianne, Timothy B. Smith, Mark Baker, Tyler Harris and David Stephenson. 2015. "Loneliness and Social Isolation as Risk Factors for Mortality: A Meta-Analytic Review." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10(2):227-37.
- House, James S., Karl R. Landis, and Debra Umberson. 1988. "Social relationships and health." *Science* 241(4865): 540-545.
- Steeptoe, A., Shankar, A., Demakakos, P., & Wardle, J. 2013. "Social isolation, loneliness, and all-cause mortality in older men and women." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110(15), 5797–5801.

## **Week 11 – November 16, 2023**

### ***Networks & social relationships – contemporary extensions***

- Copeland, Molly. 2022. "Embedded Distress: Social Integration, Gender, and Adolescent Depression." *Social Forces* 101(3):1396-421
- Liu, Ka-Yuet, Marissa King, and Peter S. Bearman. 2010. "Social influence and the autism epidemic." *American journal of sociology* 115(5): 1387-1434.
- Umberson, D., 2017. "Black Deaths Matter: Race, Relationship Loss, and Effects on Survivors." *Journal of health and social behavior*, 58(4), pp.405-420.
- Villalonga-Olives, E., and Ichiro Kawachi. 2017. "The dark side of social capital: A systematic review of the negative health effects of social capital." *Social Science & Medicine* 194: 105-127.
- [\*\*\* also, work on Assignment 2: final paper idea, due Monday, November 20, 5p\*\*\*]

#### *Supplemental:*

- Moore, Spencer, and Richard M. Carpiano. 2020. "Measures of personal social capital over time: A path analysis assessing longitudinal associations among cognitive, structural, and network elements of social capital in women and men separately." *Social Science & Medicine* 257: 112172.
- Schaefer, David R., Olga Kornienko and Andrew M. Fox. 2011. "Misery Does Not Love Company: Network Selection Mechanisms and Depression Homophily." *American Sociological Review* 76(5):764-85.
- Song, Lijun, Philip J. Pettis, Yvonne Chen and Marva Goodson-Miller. 2021. "Social Cost and Health: The Downside of Social Relationships and Social Networks." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):371-387.
- Umberson, D., Thomeer, M.B., Reczek, C. and Donnelly, R., 2016. "Physical illness in gay, lesbian, and heterosexual marriages: Gendered dyadic experiences." *J Health & Social Behavior* 57(4), 517-531.

**Week 12 – November 23, 2023** [No class - thanksgiving week]

**Week 13 – November 30, 2023**

***Where Disability Studies & Medical Sociology Meet***

- Lee, J., Phillips, D., Wilkens, J., Chien, S., Lin, Y.C., Angrisani, M. and Crimmins, E., 2018. "Cross-country comparisons of disability and morbidity: Evidence from the gateway to global aging data." *The Journals of Gerontology: Series A*, 73(11), pp.1519-1524.
- Mauldin, L. and Brown, R.L., 2021. "Missing Pieces: Engaging Sociology of Disability in Medical Sociology." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(4):477-92.
- Stoll, L.C. and Egner, J., 2021. "We must do better: Ableism and fatphobia in sociology." *Sociology Compass* 15(4), p.e12869.
- Thomas, C., 2012. "Theorising disability and chronic illness: Where next for perspectives in medical sociology?" *Social Theory & Health* 10(3), pp.209-228.
- Zajacova, Anna, Hanna Grol-Prokopczyk and Zachary Zimmer. 2021. "Sociology of Chronic Pain." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):302-317.

**Week 14 – December 7, 2023**

***Social-biological interactions***

- Cole, Steven W. 2013. "Social regulation of human gene expression: mechanisms and implications for public health." *American journal of public health* 103(S1): S84-S92.
- Duncan, L, H Shen, B Gelaye, J Meijssen, K Ressler, M Feldman, R Peterson, and B Domingue. 2019. "Analysis of polygenic risk score usage and performance in diverse human populations." *Nature communications* 10(1):1-9.
- Freese, Jeremy. 2018. "The arrival of social science genomics." *Contemporary Sociology* 47(5): 524-536.
- Hertzman, C. and T. Boyce. 2010. "How Experience Gets under the Skin to Create Gradients in Developmental Health." *Annual Review of Public Health* 31:329-47
- Lee, James J, Robbee Wedow, Aysu Okbay, Edward Kong, Omeed Maghzian, Meghan Zacher, Tuan Anh Nguyen-Viet, Peter Bowers, Julia Sidorenko and Richard Karlsson Linnér. 2018. "Gene Discovery and Polygenic Prediction from a Genome-Wide Association Study of Educational Attainment in 1.1 Million Individuals." *Nature genetics* 50(8), 1112-1121.

***Supplemental:***

- Belsky, Jay, Paula L Ruttle, W Thomas Boyce, Jeffrey M Armstrong and Marilyn J Essex. 2015. "Early Adversity, Elevated Stress Physiology, Accelerated Sexual Maturation, and Poor Health in Females." *Developmental Psychology* 51(6):816-22.
- Ellis, B.J., E.A. Shirlcliff, W.T. Boyce, J. Deardorff and M.J. Essex. 2011. "Quality of Early Family Relationships and the Timing and Tempo of Puberty: Effects Depend on Biological Sensitivity to Context." *Development and Psychopathology* 23(1):85.
- Gaydosh, L., D. W. Belsky, B. W. Domingue, J. D. Boardman and K. M. Harris. 2018. "Father Absence and Accelerated Reproductive Development in Non-Hispanic White Women in the United States." *Demography* 55(4):1245-67.
- Lee, C., C. L. Coe and C. D. Ryff. 2017. "Social Disadvantage, Severe Child Abuse, and Biological Profiles in Adulthood." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 58(3):371-86.

***Would love to include / not sure where it fits!***

- Barker, D. J. and C. Osmond. 1986. "Infant Mortality, Childhood Nutrition, and Ischaemic Heart Disease in England and Wales." *Lancet* 1(8489):1077-81.
- Ferraro, Kenneth F., Markus H. Schafer and Lindsay R. Wilkinson. 2015. "Childhood Disadvantage and Health Problems in Middle and Later Life: Early Imprints on Physical Health?" *American Sociological Review* 81(1):107-33.
- Liu, H. and G. Guo. 2015. "Lifetime Socioeconomic Status, Historical Context, and Genetic Inheritance in Shaping Body Mass in Middle and Late Adulthood." *American Sociological Review* 80(4):705-37.
- Mollborn, Stefanie, Elizabeth M. Lawrence and Jarron M. Saint Onge. 2021. "Contributions and Challenges in Health Lifestyles Research." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 62(3):388-403.
- Pescosolido, Bernice A. 2006. "Of Pride and Prejudice: The Role of Sociology and Social Networks in Integrating the Health Sciences." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47(3):189-208.
- Schulz, Laura C. 2010. "The Dutch Hunger Winter and the developmental origins of health and disease." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Vol. 107.39: 16757-16758.
- Urena, Anthony. 2022. "Relational Risk: How Relationships Shape Personal Assessments of Risk and Mitigation." *American Sociological Review* 87(5): 723-749.

**All students in this class must adhere to the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics.** Violations of this code will not be tolerated. <http://www.asanet.org/code-ethics>

**All students in this class must adhere to the Department of Sociology's values statement** (see next pages).

#### **UMass Amherst statement on academic honesty**

Full statement: [http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/academic\\_policy](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy)

All members of the University community must participate in the development of a climate conducive to academic honesty. While the faculty, because of their unique role in the educational process, have the responsibility for defining, encouraging, fostering, and upholding the ethic of academic honesty, students have the responsibility of conforming in all respects to that ethic. Intellectual honesty requires that students demonstrate their own learning during examinations and other academic exercises, and that other sources of information or knowledge be appropriately credited. Scholarship depends upon the reliability of information and reference in the work of others. Student work in this class may be analyzed for originality of content, electronically or by other means. No form of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or facilitating of dishonesty will be condoned in the University community. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty among others.

#### **UMass Amherst Office of Disability Services**

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to making reasonable, effective and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities and help create a barrier-free campus. If you have a documented disability on file with Disability Services ([www.umass.edu/disability](http://www.umass.edu/disability)), you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in this course. If your disability requires an accommodation, please notify your instructors as early as possible in the course so that we may make arrangements in a timely manner.

#### **Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, and Relationship Violence at UMass**

As a faculty member I have a responsibility to all students to provide resources and assistance to anyone who wishes to disclose potential sexual misconduct. Students can also contact the Title IX office directly at [eod@admin.umass.edu](mailto:eod@admin.umass.edu) if they want to make a report, file a complaint, find out about resources and/or accommodations. Other resources include the Title IX webpage: <http://www.umass.edu/titleix/> and the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence: [http://www.umass.edu/titleix/sites/default/files/documents/policy\\_against\\_discrimination\\_harassment\\_and\\_related\\_interpersonal\\_violence-rev\\_aug-14-2020.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/titleix/sites/default/files/documents/policy_against_discrimination_harassment_and_related_interpersonal_violence-rev_aug-14-2020.pdf)

Values Statement  
Department of Sociology  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst

The Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive and equitable department. We ask that all members of the Sociology community -- faculty, staff, and students -- be mindful of our responsibility to create an environment that is welcoming to all, and where each person feels accepted, included, seen, heard, valued, and safe. We recognize that learning how to be inclusive and respectful is an iterative process and sometimes we all act in imperfect ways. As sociologists, we are aware that we are all inheritors of systems of inequality, whether to our advantage or our disadvantage. We also acknowledge that we each are privileged in various ways. We strive to create safe spaces to encourage productive dialogue with the goal of learning from our mistakes and changing for the better.

We strive for excellence in all we do. True excellence requires each individual to be able to work and learn in an atmosphere of respect, dignity, and acceptance. Our commitment to equity and inclusion requires each of us to continuously ensure that our interactions be respectful. We recognize that marginalized groups of people have unique experiences in the Pioneer Valley and within the larger society. We are committed to making our department a place that counteracts, to the best of our abilities, those processes of marginalization, and that inspires academic freedom and creativity.

Whenever and wherever possible, our department will affirm this commitment to values that oppose racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, transphobia, classism, and hatred based on religious identity publicly and explicitly. As a department dedicated to social justice, we will take very seriously reports, formal or informal, of harassment and discrimination. We will make every effort to ensure that this commitment manifests in our department's policies, programs, and practices.

In the Department of Sociology, we:

- Value equity, inclusion, and dignity for all.

- Insist on a culture of respect and recognize that words and actions matter. The absence of action and words also matter.
- Encourage respectful expression of ideas and perspectives.
- Will not tolerate sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and other overt and covert forms of prejudice and discrimination.
- Share in the responsibility to create a positive culture and to safeguard equity, inclusion, dignity, respect, and safety for all. Each member of our community - faculty, staff, and students - should be a role model for others.
- Will take action when we observe people being treated unfairly or in a demeaning manner.
- Envision and strive to foster an inclusive, welcoming department.