

Introduction to Health & Society

HS 301 (29425) | SOC 308S (43165)

Spring 2024 | WCP 1.402 | 11:00am-12:15pm

PROFESSOR

Nina Palmo, Ph.D. (she/her)

Email: npalmo@utexas.edu

Office hours: Sign up at palmo.as.me.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Graduate TAs	Undergraduate TAs
Last names A-E Viktoria Beck (she/her) Email: vbeck@utexas.edu	Last names A-G Brielle Dorsey (she/her) Email: bcd984@utexas.edu
Last names F-K Morgan Brown (she/her) Email: mibrown@utexas.edu	Last names F-O Nikki Hewett (they/she) Email: nikkiehewett@utexas.edu
Last names L-Q Brenda Marques (she/her) Email: brendamarques@utexas.edu	Last names P-Z Asia Stewart (she/her) Email: asiastewart@utexas.edu
Last names R-Z Claire Migliore (she/her) Email: cmiglior@utexas.edu	Feel free to visit any TA during their office hours – Zoom links are posted on Canvas. For email questions, please stick to one of your assigned TAs.

WEEKLY TA OFFICE HOUR SCHEDULE on Zoom

Everyone is welcome to meet with any or all of the TAs. Please check the Zoom links on Canvas for the most up-to-date info & Zoom links. To meet with Dr. Palmo, please schedule an appointment at palmo.as.me.

Monday	9-11 (Brenda) + 1-2 (Claire)
Tuesday	12:30-1:30 (Viktoria)
Wednesday	2-3 (Viktoria) + 3-4 (Asia) + 4-5 (Morgan)
Thursday	1:30-2:30 (Claire) + 4-5 (Nikki)
Friday	9-10 (Morgan) + 11-12 (Brielle)

Office hours

Drop-in office hours are for everyone! You are welcome to visit me or any TA during their office hours – not just your assigned TA by last name. You don't have to have a specific question about course content to attend. You are welcome to stop by to introduce yourself and ask questions about graduate school or other relevant topics. One of the things I enjoy most about teaching is getting to know students, so I welcome you to "stop by" to say hello, chat about class topics, the Health & Society major, career planning, and more.

What is this course about?

This course introduces the social forces that shape health and illness, both historically and in the present-day United States. What diseases killed people ten thousand years ago? Two hundred years ago? Today? What explains these changes? Why do women live longer than men? Why do African American moms die in childbirth three times as often as white moms? Why does American life expectancy rank 29th in the world and why is it falling? By the end of the semester, you will have a better understanding of the complex realities that underlie these phenomena.

Learning objectives

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

- Analyze contemporary health issues from a variety of disciplinary and professional perspectives.
- Explain how one's social location, the media, and economic forces shape health behaviors and outcomes.
- Explain how social and cultural factors shape contemporary understandings and experiences of health and illness and death and dying in the U.S.
- Critically evaluate the assumptions, motives, and evidence that individuals and groups use to make specific claims about health and illness.

How is this course structured?

The first part of the course will focus on **theoretical frameworks** for understanding contemporary health and health care. The second part of the course will focus on the **social determinants of health**. The third part of the course will cover **current topics and policy** issues related to health and health care.

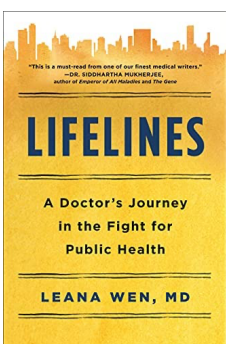
There are **three exams** corresponding to each of these three sections of the course. **There is no final exam.** All exams will take place on Canvas. You can choose when you take the exam within a 48-hour window. More information will be provided before the first exam.

What do I need to buy?



We will be using an online learning platform called Kritik (www.kritik.io) this semester. You must sign up for Kritik to submit assignments. You will register using an invitation that will be sent to the email address you have registered with the university on the first day of classes.

Cost: Approximately \$20 for the semester



There is one required book for this course: *Lifelines: A Doctor's Journey into the Fight for Public Health* by Leana Wen. Dr. Wen is an emergency physician and former Baltimore Health Commissioner. The book chronicles her personal story along with her work to promote public health by combating infant mortality, poverty, violence, addiction, COVID-19, and more.

Cost: Approximately \$20

Weekly schedule

Monday	Kritik peer review due
Tuesday	Lecture
Wednesday	<i>Lifelines</i> essay due (3x during the semester)
Thursday	Lecture
Friday	Kritik discussion question due

What is Kritik?

On the first day of class you will receive an invitation to join Kritik. The cost for a one-semester subscription is \$20. Kritik is a peer-to-peer learning platform that allows you to submit short essays or other assignments, and then review the work submitted by your fellow students. This requires a deeper level of engagement with the material than simply writing an essay. We will follow two steps for each Kritik assignment:

Step 1: Creation

You will write an answer to a discussion question prompt and submit it directly on the Kritik website (kritik.io).

Step 2: Peer review

You will be assigned four essays to review. All reviewing will be completely anonymous, so you will not know whose paper you are grading or who is grading you. You will be asked to provide both numerical feedback and written feedback. The numerical feedback is out of 10 points, reflecting the content and writing style. You should also provide written comments to explain what the writer did well and how the writer could improve (if relevant). Keep in mind that you are assigning your peers a real grade. For example, a 4 out of 5 is a B- grade.

Your essay grade using Kritik

Your grade on each essay assignment will be the average score assigned by your peers. For example, suppose the four students assigned to review your essay assign you the following grades (out of 5): 4, 5, 4.5, 3.5. Your essay grade will be the average of these numbers, which is $4.25/5$, or $8.5/10$, which is a B.

Your peer review grade using Kritik

Your TA will grade your peer reviews on Kritik based on the quality of your written feedback and accuracy of your numerical grade. An honest, accurate, kind, and constructive peer review will result in full credit for your peer review grade. A dishonest, inaccurate, unhelpful, or rude peer review will result in reduced credit or no credit for your peer review grade. We understand that essay grading is subjective by nature, so there is bound to be some variation in the grades assigned by each person. However, if your numerical grade is wildly out of line with what your instructors and peer reviewers believe to be a fair grade, that inconsistency will be reflected in your peer review grade.

What if I disagree with my grade?

If you disagree with the grade assigned by your peers, you can use Kritik's "dispute grade" feature. You will be prompted to provide the reason you are disputing the grade. The TAs and I will be alerted and will review the submission. We can override the grade you received if we believe there is reason to do so. Please note your grade could increase or decrease.

Summary of Assignments

Description	% of grade
Course logistics	
Introductory survey	0.5%
Kritik sign-up	0.5%
Instapolls (lowest 20 polls dropped)	15%
Kritik questions	
Creations (one grade dropped)	15%
Peer reviews (one grade dropped)	10%
Lifelines essays (one essay dropped)	14%
Exams	
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Exam 3	15%
Extra credit	[1.5%]
Total	100 %

Introductory survey

During first week of class, I'll ask you to fill out an introductory survey so your TA and I can get to know you better. Please fill it out on time.

Kritik sign-up

You will need to sign up for Kritik (kritik.io) to submit discussion questions this semester. Please submit a screenshot that includes your name as proof of sign up. This will ensure that there are no mishaps when the first assignment is due.

InstaPolls

Each class period will use Canvas InstaPolls to make lectures more interactive and check for understanding of the material. A typical lecture includes around three InstaPoll questions, but it could be fewer or more. For some questions there is no right or wrong answer – you will get credit for any answer. Other questions have a correct answer. For these questions you must answer correctly to earn full points, but incorrect answers will get half credit. We have 21 class meeting days, excluding film days and exam days. That means we will have roughly 60 InstaPolls during the semester. The lowest 20 polls (not poll days) are dropped from your final grade so that you are not penalized for occasional travel, late arrival, quick trip to the restroom, illness, emergency, or a similar situation. **If you encounter a technical error, let us know before you leave class. We cannot change InstaPoll grades over email.**

Kritik discussion questions & peer reviews

During a typical week there are two lectures and one Kritik assignment. I have written one discussion question to go along with each lecture, so most Kritik assignments will include a choice of two questions to answer. The first assignment is an exception to this, as it has just one question that everyone will answer. For subsequent assignments, you will pick one question and post your answer directly on the Kritik website. After the deadline, discussion questions will be distributed for peer review. Each person will be assigned for “creations” to evaluate; similarly, your “creation” will be assigned for evaluators. More information about the Kritik process will be provided during class.

Lifelines essays

The assigned book for this course is Lifelines: A Doctor’s Journey in the Fight for Public Health by Dr. Leana Wen. It is a non-fiction book written for a popular audience that reads like a novel (not a textbook). A reading schedule will be posted on Canvas. The book is divided into three sections and there will be an essay due for each of the three sections. The essays will be due on Canvas before each exam and graded by our graduate TAs.

Exam info

We will have three objective exams on Canvas that will assess your comprehension of course material. Quizzes will “go live” starting at 12:00am on the day they open and close 48 hours later at 11:59pm the following day. You can take your quiz in any three-hour window during the 48 hours it is “open” on Canvas. Questions will be drawn from lectures, readings, other assigned class materials like podcasts and videos, as well as guest speakers who visit our class. Since you will only have three hours to complete each quiz once you begin the testing session, be sure to start each quiz by 8:59PM on the day it is due to ensure you have the full time available to you.

Exams are open note and open book. You may consult **any resources** from class that you want (books, notes, videos, etc.), **except other people**, including classmates, friends, roommates, family members, and any other human. Just to be clear, let me say this one more time: Once the exam window has opened, you are not permitted to speak with anyone in our class about the exam, share screenshots of the exam, text about the exam, DM about the exam, or communicate about the exam or class content in any way. With anyone. Period.

Failing to follow this rule constitutes a violation of UT’s academic integrity policy and will result in your earning a zero on the exam. The TAs and I will also not respond to emails regarding exam content while the exam is open, even if the person asking the question has not started taking the exam yet. Even after you’ve completed the exam and the exam window has closed, please refrain from discussing the exam with your peers as other students may be planning on taking a late exam due to illness or emergency.

Extra credit

You can earn up to 0.5% extra credit before each exam by contributing two multiple choice questions to the test bank. There are three exams, so you can earn up to 1.5% extra credit added to your final grade in the course if you take advantage of each extra credit opportunity. This means that 1.5% will be added to your final grade in the class. For example, a grade of 89.0 would become a grade of 90.5. More information will be provided before the first exam.

Additional information

If you want to re-watch lectures at home

The classroom is outfitted with Lectures Online equipment, which means that the classroom computer screen video and microphone audio is automatically captured, recorded, and uploaded to Canvas, where the lecture will be available for streaming. UT makes the recordings available as soon as it is technically possible, which is about 4 hours after the end of class. For legal reasons related to privacy, only the screen is captured. No instructors or students will be on video. To access the lectures, use the Lecture Capture link on Canvas. You can read more about Lecture Capture here:

<http://sites.la.utexas.edu/lecturesonline/students/faq/>

Late assignments

Because Kritik assignments are sent out for review soon after they are due, submitting late assignments on Kritik is not possible. Late assignments effectively disrupt the peer review process. Instead, one Kritik "creation" and one peer evaluation will be dropped from your final grade.

I also understand that emergencies and life circumstances sometimes arise. If you find that you cannot submit a Kritik writing assignment on time, **email your TA for approval of a late submission**. If we give you permission to submit your essay late, you will submit an assignment for your TA to grade instead under "Make-up assignments" on Canvas. You will need to answer **both discussion prompts** -- one to make up for the missed discussion question and one to make up for the missed peer review.

We have more room for flexibility on the deadlines for the three Lifelines essays, as these are graded by the TAs and not subject to a peer review process. However, extension requests should happen **before** the essay is due.

Academic integrity and misconduct

All work for this course must be your own, and yours alone. Academic dishonesty and misconduct will not be tolerated. Any unauthorized collaboration with your peers (on Canvas exams) or plagiarism of another person's work (even with his/her/their consent) on exams or writing assignments, is strictly prohibited. Any incident of cheating, plagiarism, or unauthorized collaboration will result in a zero on the assignment for all parties involved, as well as a 10-point deduction from your final course grade. So please, do not engage in academic dishonesty. As a UT student, you are responsible for knowing what constitutes cheating, unauthorized collaboration, and plagiarism, and you have agreed to uphold UT's policies on scholastic dishonesty.

Sharing of course materials is prohibited

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to lecture handouts, videos, assessments, in-class materials, review sheets, or any assignments may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission.

Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am aware of sites used for sharing materials, and any materials associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure of the course.

COVID-19 considerations

Some of us are still affected by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are experiencing difficulties, please let me and your TA know. If you are experiencing symptoms and especially if you are testing positive for the coronavirus, please remain at home and watch video recordings of our class session that will be available on Canvas. If I become ill during the semester, either I or a colleague will hold our class via Zoom until I am well enough to return to our physical classroom. These details, should they arise, will all be communicated on Canvas.

Religious holiday accommodations

I encourage you to celebrate cultural or religious holidays with your loved ones. I strive to avoid scheduling exams and major project due dates on any religious holiday, but there may be times when it is unavoidable given scheduling constraints.

If you need some flexibility around assignment due dates or exams due to a holiday, please let me know. UT policy states that you should notify instructors at least 14 days prior to the observance.

A word of caution about GroupMe

I encourage you to use GroupMe to connect with your peers. However, I advise you to be careful. Consider GroupMe a public forum and carefully consider what you post and send in DMs. Any evidence of scholastic dishonesty communicated on GroupMe will affect your grade in the class. Every semester screenshots from GroupMe land in my inbox, and I read and remember these screenshots.

Grading scale

Final letter grades will be assigned using the scale below. Grades are not rounded automatically.

A	94.0-100	B	84.0-86.9	C	74.0-76.9	D	64.0-66.9
A-	90.0-93.9	B-	80.0-83.9	C-	70.0-73.9	D-	60.0-63.9
B+	87.0-89.9	C+	77.0-79.9	D+	67.0-69.9	F	0-59.9

Disability & Access (formerly SSD accommodations)

Below are the common accommodation requests and how I approach them in the course.

- **Extra time on exams.** I give everyone three hours to complete the exams. Previous versions of the course included a similar exam taken during a 75-minute class period. The full three hours is intended to reduce the stress of a timed assessment. It is not an indication of a lengthy exam. If you would like additional time beyond the standard three hours, please send me an email to let me know at least 24 hours before each exam opens. (There is currently no automated process for this.)
- **Flexibility with Kritik deadlines.** The Disability & Access office notes that flexibility should be based on the structure of the course. This course is structured to include a discussion question prompt and peer review activity associated with each lecture (on Kritik). Due to the peer review process, there are **no extensions on Kritik assignments**. Assignments are distributed for peer review almost immediately after submission, so there is no way for late papers to be included in the peer review process.
- **Flexibility on the Lifelines essay deadlines.** These essays are graded by our graduate TAs and we can therefore be more flexible with deadlines. If you need additional time to complete your essay, please email us at least 24 hours before the due date to request an extension.
- **Flexibility with attendance.** A part of the final grade in this course comes from InstaPoll responses during class. The lowest 20 polls (out of approximately 60 total) are dropped. If you need more flexibility than this, please speak with me individually.

Date	Topic	Assignment
Tuesday, January 16	Introduction to the course	
Thursday, January 18	1 - Theoretical frameworks	Kritik #1
Tuesday, January 23	2 - Social causes of health and longevity	
Thursday, January 25	3 - Epidemiological transition theory	Kritik #2
Tuesday, January 30	4 - U.S. and global disease burden	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 1-2
Thursday, February 1	5 - Methodological approaches to studying health	Kritik #3
Tuesday, February 6	6 - Medicalization & the social construction of illness	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 3-5
Thursday, February 8	Film: <i>Take Your Pills</i> [no InstaPolls]	Kritik #4
Tuesday, February 13	Open office hours during class	<i>Lifelines</i> Essay #1
Thursday, February 15	Exam #1	
Tuesday, February 20	7 - Socioeconomic status, stress, and health	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 6-7
Thursday, February 22	8 - Speaker: Jennifer Flippo, Ph.D. (UT Nursing School)	Kritik #5
Tuesday, February 27	9 - Gender and health	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 8-9
Thursday, February 29	10 - Early life influences on health	Kritik #6
Tuesday, March 5	11 - LGBTQ health	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 10-11
Thursday, March 7	Film: <i>The Gender Revolution</i> [no InstaPolls]	Kritik #7
Tuesday, March 12	Spring break	
Thursday, March 14	Spring break	
Tuesday, March 19	12 - Race and health	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 12-13
Thursday, March 21	13 - Social relationships and health	Kritik #8
Tuesday, March 26	14 - Immigration & health	<i>Lifelines</i> Essay #2
Thursday, March 28	Exam #2	
Tuesday, April 2	15 - Mental health	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 14-15
Thursday, April 4	16 - Obesity in America	Kritik #9
Tuesday, April 9	17 - U.S. health care system	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 16-17
Thursday, April 11	18 - Speaker: Michael Shepherd, Ph.D. (UT Govt. Dept.)	Kritik #10
Tuesday, April 16	19 - Models of health care coverage	Read <i>Lifelines</i> Ch. 18-19
Thursday, April 18	20 - Aging and end of life	Kritik #11
Tuesday, April 23	21 - Speaker: Nancy McCranie, M.Div. (Hospice Austin)	<i>Lifelines</i> Essay #3
Thursday, April 25	Exam #3	

Notes:

- 1) There is no final exam in the course.
- 2) Please refer to Canvas for exact and up-to-date deadlines.