

# Course Syllabus

Visiting professor : Ichiro Kawachi

Course	Behavioral Science / Social Epidemiology		
Credit	1	Method of Teaching	Lecture

## Objective

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the major social variables -- social class, gender, poverty, income distribution, social networks/support, community cohesion, the psychosocial work environment and neighborhood contexts -- that affect population health.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Describe the two strategies of prevention (the high risk and population strategies) and formulate interventions to address population health problems using these concepts and principles.
- Critique the validity and reliability of methods used to measure the dimensions of socio-economic status (SES), i.e. income, education, and occupation.
- Describe the theories (mechanisms and pathways) through which income, education, and occupation affect health, health behavior, and illness, and analyze their applicability to different types of health problems.
- Describe and contrast the absolute versus relative approaches to conceptualizing and measuring poverty.
- Identify community-level determinants of health, such as neighborhood assets (e.g. social capital) and deficits (e.g. concentrated disadvantage).
- Compare and contrast compositional versus contextual influences of neighborhood environments on health.
- Discuss the mechanisms and pathways by which neighborhood contexts influence population health.
- Define and describe measurement approaches to assess social networks, social support, and social capital.
- Describe the mechanisms through which social networks affect health outcomes.
- Describe the demand/control model of job stress.
- Describe the hierarchy of public health strategies (information, incentives, regulations) to reduce health disparities.
- Describe the process of developing policies to address health disparities, and the barriers to implementing such policies.

**Outline**

The course covers the theoretical underpinnings of each construct, their measurement, and empirical research linking each to population health status. Methods are introduced to operationalize each construct for the purposes of empirical application in epidemiologic research.

**Class Schedule (90 minutes each)**

1. Introduction to the social determinants of health (7 Jan Sat 9:00-10:30 am)
2. Socio-economic status, Measurement and causal evidence (7 Jan Sat 10:45-12:15pm)
3. Income distribution and health (8 Jan Sun 9:00-10:30 am)
4. Social networks, social support, and health (8 Jan Sun 10:45-12:15pm)
5. Social capital, social cohesion, and health (9 Jan Mon 9:00-10:30am)
6. Psychosocial work environment and health (9 Jan Mon 10:45-12:15pm)
7. Behavior economics and public health (10 Jan Tue 9:00-10:30am)
8. Reducing health inequalities: a policy perspective (10 Jan Tue 10:45-12:15pm)

Exam (10 Jan Tue 14:00-15:30pm)

*We may add seminars by Japanese teachers for each to assist students with difficulty in language/background knowledge*

**Text**

Berkman LF, Kawachi I & Glymour MM. (2<sup>nd</sup> eds). Social Epidemiology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

**Related readings**

Kawachi I. "Inochi no Kakusa wa Tomerareruka". Shogakukan 101 Shinsho, 2013 [in Japanese].

**Achievement evaluation**

2-hour written examination consisting of 4 short-essay questions (10 Jan Tue, afternoon)