

University of Texas at Austin  
Department of Sociology/Connexus

CXS 118 (Unique # 33595)  
Fall, 2006  
M, 2:00-4:00  
CPE 2.212

### **HEALTH INEQUALITY IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE**

Professor: Dr. Robert Crosnoe  
Office: Burdine Hall 380  
Hours: M: 10-11, W: 2-3  
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#### **Seminar Description**

This forum seminars is a one-credit course that will meet two hours per week for the first half of the semester (September 11 – October 30). It is sponsored by Connexus: Connections in Undergraduate Studies as part of the Children and Society Bridging Disciplines Program and is designed to introduce undergraduates to faculty members from a variety of disciplines who conduct research on health. Please contact Connexus directly (FAC 1, 232-7875, <http://www.utexas.edu/student/connexus>) for more information on this and other interdisciplinary programs at UT.

As one component of the ongoing, exciting learning experiences organized by the Children and Society Bridging Disciplines Program, this seminar focuses on health inequalities in childhood and adolescence. Such inequality appears in all stages of the human life course as a function of the stratification of American society by race, social class, gender, and other factors. In childhood and adolescence, inequalities emerge in mental health, obesity, health behavior, and other aspects of health that lay a foundation for the even greater inequalities in health, including life expectancy, that characterize adult populations. Thus, combating *early* health inequalities can have long-term, lasting effects on the general well-being of American society as a whole. Because the first step in combating such early health inequalities is to understand them, this seminar will investigate in detail the various inequalities in health that arise and persist during the early life course by listening to experts from the health field, reading research articles on health, and discussing both the causes of health problems and possible methods of preventing such problems.

#### **Seminar Home Page**

<http://courses.utexas.edu>

To access the seminar home page, go to this link and log into the Blackboard system with your UT EID. You will find a link to this seminar under the heading “My Courses”. All seminar material will be posted on this web page, as will announcements and grades.

#### **Seminar Format and Requirements**

Except for the first week (September 11), each seminar meeting will feature a presentation by an expert or two in a subfield of health research, followed by a small group discussion and a question-and-answer session. Each week’s speaker will provide one or two articles for students to read. These articles will be distributed at least a week before the speaker is scheduled to attend the seminar. The goal of the seminar is to provide an informative and fun introduction to the breadth and depth of research on health,

childhood, and adolescence while also stimulating interest and participation in other coursework in this area and/or in the Children and Society Bridging Disciplines Program.

The requirements for this seminar are broken down into three components. First, because attendance at and participation in seminar meetings are crucial to the success of this seminar, the TA will take attendance at the start of each seminar and also note class participation. Students are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire seminar period. Second, each week, students will turn in a 300-500 word, double-spaced paper describing the basic themes of the previous week's presentation, how these themes relate to the general theme of the seminar, and how these themes relate to the current state of the world. Third, students will submit a final paper (5 double-spaced pages) regarding a particular health topic of their choosing at the final seminar meeting. A thorough description of this paper will be handed out during the second week of the seminar.

<i>Attendance and Participation</i>	40% of total grade
<i>Response Papers</i>	20% of total grade
<i>Final Paper</i>	40% of total grade

### **Classroom and University Rules**

No late assignments will be accepted unless otherwise cleared with the professor.

Regarding all seminar assignments and examinations, students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the seminar and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, other students, and the integrity of the University, all policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For more information on University policies, see [www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs](http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs). Also on this web site is the University policy on sexual harassment, with which all students should familiarize themselves.

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

### **About the Professor**

A UT alum (1994), Professor Robert Crosnoe received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Stanford University and held a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in demography (the study of populations) and developmental psychology (the study of how people develop from birth to death) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill before returning to Austin as a faculty member in the Department of Sociology in 2001. As a fellow at the Population Research Center, he conducts research on childhood and adolescence with an emphasis on education and health. Of particular interest is the phenomenon of resilience—how people succeed in life despite difficult circumstances.

## **Seminar Outline**

\* Readings for each seminar will be distributed the previous week.

### **Week 1 Introduction**

(September 11)

Led by Dr. Crosnoe

### **Week 2 Infant Mortality and Early Childhood Disease**

(September 18)

Speaker 1: Dr. Cynthia Osborne, Assistant Professor, LBJ School of Public Affairs

Speaker 2: Dr. Yolanda Padilla, Professor, School of Social Work

### **Week 3 Puberty**

(September 25)

Speaker: Dr. Shannon Cavanagh, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology

### **Week 4 Risky Behavior in Adolescence**

(October 2)

Speaker 1: Dr. Lori Holleran, Associate Professor, School of Social Work

Speaker 2: Dr. Jennifer Matjasko, Assistant Professor, Department of Human Ecology

### **Week 5 Obesity**

(October 9)

Speaker 1: Dr. Gayle Timmerman, Associate Professor, School of Nursing

Speaker 2: Dr. Elizabeth Vandewater, Associate Professor, Department of Human Ecology

### **Week 6 Disordered Eating and Health Behavior**

(October 16)

Speaker: Dr. Alison Chase, Lecturer, Department of Psychology

### **Week 7 Mental Health**

(October 23)

Speaker 1: Dr. Christopher Beevers, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

Speaker 2: Dr. Deborah Tharinger, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Psychology

### **Week 8 Prevention Strategies**

(October 30)

Led by Dr. Crosnoe