

**Rutgers University**  
**Prevention Science 792:504 – Social Determinants of Health**  
Spring 2025  
W 3:45-6:15  
Business and Science Building Room 109

**Professor Joanna Cohen Kallan**  
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Phone: 856-225-6786  
Office Hours: W 12:00-2:00 or by appointment

**Course Description**

In this seminar, we will identify major areas of inequality in health outcomes, opportunities, and access. We will examine the impact different sociological domains can have on individual and group health, as these can often be more significant than biological factors.

**Course Objectives**

The learning objectives of this course are consistent with the goals of the Prevention Science Graduate Program. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to: understand the significance of social and sociological factors in determining health outcomes; be able to apply this knowledge to the research you are conducting toward your doctoral degree; be able to communicate, via both oral and written means, this understanding as it pertains to prevention science; and know how to critically evaluate documents and materials related to prevention science.

**Course Materials**

There is no text for this course. Readings will be from scholarly journals, books, and popular media sources. These will involve a mix of early and influential papers, significant excerpts, empirical articles, and contemporary findings. All readings will be available on Canvas under the Resources tab. Any readings not yet available will be posted at least one week before they are due.

**Class Policies**

- Late work will be accepted with a penalty. For each calendar day an assignment is late you will lose half a grade off your total score (for example, an A paper will become a B+, a B+ will become a B, and so on.) Make-up exams will only be given under extreme circumstances that have been verified by the appropriate university official. If possible, please inform me in advance if you will miss a scheduled class or exam so that alternate arrangements can be made.
- Please turn off cell phones or place them in silent mode before class begins. Texting or instant messaging is not permitted during class, but if you have an emergency reason for which you may need to be reached by phone during class, please notify me of this possibility.
- I am accessible by email or telephone. You can expect me to answer the telephone during my office hours. At other times, email is preferable, and I will respond to you as quickly as possible (within reason on evenings and weekends.) Please remember to identify yourself in emails (with your name and any necessary contact information.)
- Earbuds/headphones must be taken off during class time. If you are wearing these during class, you will not receive credit for being present.
- Canvas will be used to a great extent. I will post any slides, video clips, and internet links that I use or reference in class; additionally, if I need to send an email to the entire class I will do so through the site. Please familiarize yourself with the website if you have not already, and be sure to check your Rutgers email frequently. You are responsible for information that is disseminated in this manner.

## *Campus Resources*

### **Basic Needs Security**

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, lack a safe and stable place to live, and/or do not have regular access to technology, and believe this may affect your performance in the course, you are urged to contact the Dean of Students (856-225-6050, [deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu), or <http://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/>) for support and/or can utilize the Rutgers University-Camden Food Pantry (856-225-6005, [scarlet-raptor-foodpantry@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:scarlet-raptor-foodpantry@camden.rutgers.edu) or visiting the website at <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/ru-camden-raptor-pantry/>)

### **Chosen Name (Preferred Name) and Pronouns**

If you have a chosen name or preferred name other than what is listed on the roster, kindly let me know. If you would like to have your name changed officially on the Rutgers University-Camden rosters please visit: <https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/chosen-name-application>  
Additionally, this course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you have a preferred gender pronoun, feel free to correct me. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

### **Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity**

Rutgers University-Camden seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community, including in classroom space, and a community in which students respect academic integrity and the integrity of your own and others' work. As a student at the University you are expected adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy (<https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity>).

Use of AI such as ChatGPT is not permitted in any stages of the writing process on any assignment. Please Note: The conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities." Please be aware of classroom and out-of-classroom expectations by making yourself familiar with and by following the Student Code of Conduct (<https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/student-conduct>).

### **Complaints**

Rutgers University—Camden is committed to providing quality services, a great education and an engaged and caring experience for our students. Sometimes problems arise, and students may find that they would like to file a complaint about their experience or a particular situation. To file a complaint, students can complete the form at this link and someone will connect with you to discuss your complaint, explain options and to address the issue that was raised. Students do have the option of filing a complaint anonymously, but then there will be no way for the office handling the complaint to be able to let the student know how it was addressed. Filling out a form will allow students to understand all options and the different ways an issue can be addressed. The form is located at:  
<https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/reporting>

### **Dean of Student Office- CARES Team**

College is a time when you may be testing your independence and/or striving to find yourself. It's not uncommon for these journeys to have rough points. The Dean of Students Office is here to assist you by

strategically and effectively handling and referring student concerns/needs across all areas of the campus and University as needed. For some students, personal, emotional, psychological, academic, or other challenges may hinder their ability to succeed both in and outside of the classroom. The Dean of Students Office serves as your initial contact if you need assistance with these challenges. You can learn more about the free services by calling 856-225-6050, emailing [deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website at <http://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/>

### **Learning Center- Learning Specialists and Tutoring**

I am committed to making course content accessible to all students. The Learning Center provides Learning Specialists who can help you build a learning plan based on your strengths and needs. Tutors, study groups and more services are available for you for free. Many services are available in virtual formats and after normal business hours. In addition, if English is not your first language and this causes you concern about the course, the Learning Center can help. You can learn more about these services or schedule an appointment by calling 856-225-6442, emailing [rclc@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:rclc@camden.rutgers.edu) or [learningcenter@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:learningcenter@camden.rutgers.edu), or visiting the website <https://learn.camden.rutgers.edu/>

### **Office of Disability Services (ODS)- Students with Disabilities**

If you are in need of academic support for this course, accommodations can be provided once you share your accommodations indicated in a Letter of Accommodation issued by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Accommodations will be provided only for students with a Letter of Accommodation from ODS. If you have already registered with ODS and have your letter of accommodations, please share this with me early in the course. If you have not registered with ODS and you have or think you have a disability (learning, sensory, physical, chronic health, mental health or attentional), please contact ODS by first visiting their website <https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services>. The website will further direct you to whom to contact for any free, confidential services you may be in need of.

### **Office of International Students and Programs- International (F-1) Students.**

If you are an international student at Rutgers University-Camden and you need assistance with documentation, travel, campus assistance and/or advising, the Office of International Students and Programs provides support services (856-225-6832, [ois@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:ois@camden.rutgers.edu), or <https://international.camden.rutgers.edu/>)

**Office of Military and Veteran Affairs- Veteran, Active Duty and National Guard Services** The Office of Military and Veterans Affairs and Rutgers University-Camden supports our students who have served and their family members, including explanation of benefits, referrals to resources on and off campus, supporting students who are deployed for active duty and answering questions. If you are in need of assistance and are an active duty, National Guard or veteran (or are a family member), the Office of Military and Veteran Affairs can assist. You can find more information by calling 856-225-2791 or visiting the website at <http://veterans.camden.rutgers.edu/>

### **Title IX and the Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance Office**

If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. The Rutgers University-Camden community is committed to helping to create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. Rutgers University-Camden has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. If you wish to speak to a free, confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can speak to staff in the Office of Violence Prevention & Victims Assistance. You can learn more about these resources or schedule an appointment by calling 856-225-2326 or by visiting the website <http://respect.camden.rutgers.edu>.

Please Note: *All Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 60.1.33) are*

required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell me or any faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, we must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator

### **Undocumented and DACAmented Student Services.**

Rutgers University-Camden is steadfast in its effort to protect and support all members of our community, regardless of immigration status or personal circumstance. If you are in need of resources (legal, career and support) you can find more information at <https://undocumented.camden.rutgers.edu/>

### **Wellness Center- Health and Wellbeing Resources**

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in college, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. The Wellness Center Medical and Counseling staff can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential medical and mental health services available on campus by calling 856-225-6005, going to <https://wellnesscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/> or visiting the Wellness Center on the 2nd Floor of the Campus Center.

### **National and State Resources for Wellbeing**

Crisis Text Line: text HOME to 741741

Crisis Text Line for Students of Color: text STEVE to 741741

National Domestic Violence Helpline: 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522

National Substance Abuse helpline, SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

NJ HOPE line- <https://njhopeline.com/>

The Sexual Assault helpline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ+): 1-866-488-7386

### **Grading**

Participation: 10%

- Includes coming to class and making contributions to lectures and discussions that demonstrate that class readings have been completed on schedule and that attention is being paid.

Discussion questions: 20%

- By midnight the Tuesday before each class (the evening before our class meets), each student will email the instructor 1 high quality discussion question on each of the assigned readings for the week (approximately 3-4 questions total each week.) I will incorporate these questions into our seminar discussions. Some tips for writing your questions:
  - Be sure to understand the major points of the article when you are reading it
  - Think of questions that interest you, both personally and academically.
  - Consider *why* and *how* questions, which are more interesting and complex than other prompts.
  - Look for patterns and connections or contradictions between the readings and existing bodies of literature.

Article facilitation: 30% (2 at 15% each)

- Each student will provide an in-class presentation on an article related to our weekly discussions two times over the course of the semester. Students will locate an empirical article, describe the purpose of the research, how it was conducted, the methods used, the conclusions made, and the limitations of the research. Students are expected to engage the class in a discussion of the concepts/findings, the strengths and weaknesses of the article, and how it relates to other readings assigned for the class.

Term paper and presentation: 40% (30% and 10%)

- The topic of the term paper will be a literature review of evidence on a specific social determinant of health. Students may write about the state of evidence for a novel potential social circumstance that has not been covered in class (or minimally covered), or may write about the

evidence of how a particular social circumstance already covered in class may influence a particular health outcome. This is a chance for students to delve more deeply into an area that they are particularly interested in. Papers will be presented to the class at the end of the semester.

Letter grades:

A: 90-100 points

B+: 85-89

B: 80-84

C+: 75-79

C: 70-74

F: Less than 70 points ("D" is not a grade in the graduate program)

**Course Schedule**

January 22: Introduction

January 29: Socioeconomic status

February 5: Gender and Sex

February 12: Race and ethnicity

February 19: Lifecourse Perspectives and Aging

February 26: Neighborhoods and Living Conditions

March 5: Religion

[Midterm course evaluations]

March 12: Stress

March 19: **Spring recess, NO CLASS**

March 26: Healthcare Coverage and Access

April 2: International context

April 9: Social Determinants as Related to COVID Outcomes

April 16: Health Policy for Addressing Social Determinants of Health

April 23: Term paper presentations

April 30: Term paper presentations, continued

**All term papers due May 5**

## **Course Schedule**

January 22: Introduction

January 29: Socioeconomic status

In class video: *Unnatural Causes*, Part 1

February 5: Gender and Sex

In class video: *Last Week Tonight*, “Bias in Medicine”

February 12: Race and ethnicity

In class video: *Unnatural Causes*, Part 2

February 19: Lifecourse Perspectives and Aging

February 26: Neighborhoods and Living Conditions

In class video: *Unnatural Causes*, Part 5

March 5: Religion

[Midterm course evaluations]

March 12: Stress

March 19: **Spring recess, NO CLASS**

March 26: Healthcare Coverage and Access

In class video: *Frontline* “Sick Around America”

April 2: International context

In class video: *Unnatural Causes*, Part 7

April 9: Social Determinants as Related to COVID Outcomes

April 16: Health Policy for Addressing Social Determinants of Health

April 23: Term paper presentations

April 30: Term paper presentations, continued

**All term papers due May 5**