Health Care Landscapes

Through the lens of diabetes and obesity, students will explore the health landscape and gain insight into current "healthy environments", including how we are - or are not - addressing citizens' health needs. Students will use a social determinants of health lens to critically analyze how our systems and environments (e.g. health care, food, schools, built environment/neighborhoods, community organizations and more) are situated within a context of local, national, and global inequities and struggles for justice. In using this lens, students will learn how to critically explore what impact race, gender, socioeconomic status, neighborhoods, and more have on health.

Students will participate in regular guest lectures and interactions with community programs to gain valuable appreciation of, and hands-on experience in, dealing with these issues. As part of this exploration, students will rigorously test new ideas with JBS classmates, guest lecturers, site visit hosts, and the broader Brandeis and JBS community. Such debate and critical thinking on these issues will include a) facilitating group discussions, b) writing evidence-based policy memos as well as social and digital media policy pieces, c) written reflections, and d) oral presentations. At the end of the course, students will be able to describe and apply a social determinants of health lens to both diabetes and obesity as well as consider “Health in All Policies” from a theoretical and evidence-based perspective, with particular focus on actions designed to reduce the negative impact of obesity and diabetes in our communities. As a part of the Food, Lifestyle, and Health JBS, this course will provide knowledge and skills applicable to a wide array of present health and health care issues, preparing students for a career that addresses the impact of health in all sectors of society.

The Health Care Landscape: Our health care context is so much more than the traditional health care system and the delivery of health care. What the “traditional health care system” is and how health care is or is not delivered is – in and of itself – a hotly-debated topic. We will certainly discuss this in our
course. However, in this course, we will move beyond the health care system alone. We will conceptualize the “health care landscape” as the broad array of social, biological, behavioral, environmental, policy and other factors that impact health – and specifically that impact diabetes and obesity in the United States. We will apply both social determinants of health (SDOH) and health in all policies (HiAP) lenses as we consider the nature and impact of, and interventions to, the diabetes and obesity epidemics. We explore issues of race, gender, neighborhood, immigration, education, socioeconomic status, literacy, and many other determinants as we critically apply the SDOH and HiAP lenses to our work.

This experientially-based course is designed to provide an overview of and an insight into current health landscapes to explore how citizens’ health issues are – or are not – addressed by the health care and other systems. We will explore health care, food systems, schools, the built environment/neighborhoods, community organizations and others in order to explore the impact of varied societal influences on health, particularly diabetes and obesity.

Through a variety of applied methodological approaches, we will explore the ways in which diabetes and obesity are shaped by social, policy, family, organizational, and community factors. Such methods include but are not limited to descriptive epidemiology, field research, qualitative interviewing, community assessment, literacy assessment, and literature review. In applying these methods and the SDOH and HiAP lenses, you will be able to critically assess and explain the ways in which diabetes and obesity are shaped by the world in which we live – not only the cells in our bodies.

We will continually work to define and redefine the “health (care) landscape” within Greater Boston and beyond through the course’s diverse structure, including: group discussion, experiential learning, (virtual) site visits, facilitated dialogue, guest speakers, writing of many kinds (including policy, reflections, and social & digital media), debate, course readings, and presentation.

COURSE READINGS:
The primary source(s) of readings for this course are drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, policy and issue papers/briefs, related web sites and projects as well as national news sources. When possible, the readings will be available on the course LATTE page. LATTE will serve as the most up-to-date version of course activities. It is your responsibility to keep track of announced changes.

COURSE OUTLINE – topics, visits, etc. subject to change
LAST YEAR’S SCHEDULE – to be UPDATED as plans confirmed

Week 1: Social Determinants of Health / Social Determinants of Diabetes & Obesity
Last year: American Diabetes Association; Joslin Diabetes Hospital
Week 2: School Food Environment: Schools
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; Milton Public Schools
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; Shape Up Somerville
Week 4: Food Access and Food Security Part II: Built Environment, Urban Design, Neighborhoods & Health
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; Groundwork Lawrence
Week 5: Framing Diabetes/Obesity – Health Equity & Communication Strategies
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center
Week 6: Methods to Examine Social Determinants of Diabetes/Obesity
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; Methods Day at Brandeis/Waltham
Week 7: Clinic to Program to Policy - - Local to National
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; ChildObesity180; Center for Youth Wellness
Week 8: Policy and Program Action
Last year: Critical Discussion/Prep & Reflection; Waltham Community Farms

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Observe a variety of “health (care) landscapes” in the Greater Boston area, such as those related to health care, food systems, schools, the built environment/neighborhoods, community organizations – considering their collective relationship with diabetes and obesity
- Distinguish basic concepts and components of the social determinants of health (SDOH) and health in all policies frameworks (HiAP), including how to apply them in research, debate/interactive discussion, and policy settings.
- Determine the benefits and drawbacks of the SDOH and HiAP frameworks and how to move forward given their limitations, i.e. what should be added, what more needs to be understood.
- Hone ability to critically analyze “health (care) landscapes” through SDOH, HiAP, and other perspectives by building foundational competency in theoretical, structural, and methodological research skills used to identify, assess, and conceptualize distinct community resources necessary for undertaking research with and within environments that impact health.
- Develop the knowledge and curiosity to challenge your own – and others’ – understanding(s) about health and what impacts health. Participate in the debate. Advocate for change. Be part of the solution.
- Exhibit exemplary professional and collegial behavior: as part of our JBS team and in interactions with community members, guest lecturers, and other Brandeis JBS participants in preparation for the HSSP internship and beyond.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: PARTICIPATION AND ASSIGNMENTS

Course Assignments (see Detailed Memos [LATTE], including JBS FLH dates/assignment matrix)
- Reflections
- Writing for Different Media
- Public Speaking
- Final Presentation and Position Paper – completed in close collaboration with BISC10j
**Attendance and Participation**

Classroom and site visit etiquette:

---Cell phones off. Absolutely no use of cell or smart phones during class or visits.
---Please do not attend class if you are ill (contagious). As a courtesy to the learning community, please let Dr. Rosenfeld and Sara know you’ll be absent, before the start of class, when at all possible.
---Come to class and visits prepared, in business-casual attire, and on-time. When transportation is scheduled to leave, we must leave. It is your responsibility to arrive on-time and ready to represent Brandeis and our JBS.
---Class participation, including asking questions and active listening is expected in the classroom, with guest lecturers, and at site visits. Respect of fellow students, instructors, and other participants is of utmost importance at all times to create a collaborative, productive learning environment.
---You must have a personal photo ID with you for all site visits. Many sites require this for entry.
---Assignments are due on due date. No exceptions. Type-written and according to the format described below. **If for some unforeseen reason this is not possible, you are expected to contact the professor before the assignment is due to make alternate arrangements.**

**Student participation:** Active participation, including active listening and discussion/questions, is expected. A JBS is first and foremost about active engagement in the course material, far beyond the traditional classroom setting. Participation includes, but is not limited to: completing assignments, posting to HSSP120bj forum on LATTE, reading presentations/discussions, engaging dialogue/debate/questions with JBS team, guest lecturers, site visits hosts, on-time arrival, and full participation in class and site visits, including engaged, inquisitive, and positive attitude.

In this JBS, we will treat you as the professionals you are – and we expect to be treated in the same manner. We are all busy colleagues with many obligations and expectations of our time. Come to class prepared. Use the time efficiently and respectfully. Finish reading before class. Engage in discussion. Actively listen and participate. Complete assignments thoughtfully. This syllabus, and LATTE, contain the terms of our working relationship; we all must make every effort to adhere to what is outlined, especially since JBS moves quickly.

**Assigned Readings:** Honest effort, enthusiastic curiosity, and work reflective of thoughtful and thorough familiarity with readings and course material is absolutely expected. Close and attentive reading of all materials prior to our class meeting (unless otherwise indicated in the syllabus) is expected and essential to your successful learning in this class.

**Site Visits:** Our investigation of the “health (care) landscape” will include both in-person and virtual site visits throughout the semester. Site visits comprise a foundational component of our learning; attending all site visits is essential.

**In-person:** A central objective of this course is learning through direct experience and engagement. We will visit, query, and conduct research and reflection in and with various areas
in Greater Boston. These organizations, sites, neighborhoods, and people will be our gracious hosts – and our detailed preparation, due respect, and genuine attention is warranted.

*Virtual:* Each week we will explore projects and organizations across the country [and around the world] working on issues under study in this course. Doing so will help us to ask deeper questions of our own work, research, and the sites we visit in Greater Boston.

**GRADING:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Active Class Participation &amp; Attendance</td>
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<td>Reflections</td>
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<td>Writing for Different Media</td>
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<td>Presentation &amp; Policy Paper</td>
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*Format:* All submitted assignments should be in Arial font, 11 point, double-spaced, 1 inch margins and should follow APA style formatting (i.e. references).

**DISABILITY STATUS**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have an accommodation made, please see me immediately *(within the first two weeks of the start of class)* to discuss how to proceed.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Violations of University policy on academic integrity may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. *If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course it is your personal responsibility to ask for clarification. Please make sure to read the full academic integrity policy, including “Top 10 Ways to Promote Academic Integrity.*

http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/ai/top10students.html
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**Plagiarism:** Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically require collaborative effort. **Collaborations must be noted in writing on the first page of any assignment in which collaborations are permitted.** Failure to note collaborations will be considered plagiarism. **You must cite sources with proper citation whenever they are used, whether those sources are published or unpublished (e.g., internet web sites).** Wikipedia is never appropriate to site. Assignments that appear to be instances of plagiarism may be returned to the student for revision, considered incomplete, or reported to the University, at the discretion of the professor. Such behavior will also be considered a serious deficiency in grading. *If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism it is your personal responsibility to ask for clarification.*