

SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS
SOC 354, Fall 2012
Burdine 212, Tues/Thurs 3:30-5:00

Instructor: Sarah Beth Kaufman
E-mail: sarahbethkaufman@nyu.edu
Office: Burdine 470
Office hours: Thursdays 11:30-2:30
and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Minle Xu
Email: minlexu22@gmail.com
Office:
Office hours: Monday 11:30-1:30

Description of the class:

This course provides an introduction to components of the sociological study of health and illness, including the culture of biomedicine, doctor-patient relationships, the health-care industry, and recent changes in how the United States provides health care. The course is designed to address a broad range of questions: How does the experience of illness change people's lives and identities? How did the biomedical model of care develop? How should the risks and benefits of new medical technologies be evaluated? Why do doctors and patients have trouble communicating? Should health care be considered a "right" or a "commodity"?

The course is divided into **four sections**:

- We begin **Part One** with a survey of the social distribution of health and disease. Here we consider how these are stratified by gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality.
- In **Part Two**, we turn to the social production of disease as well as the burdens and benefits of the medicalization of life. We look at the history of biomedicine in order to understand the social roles that hospitals, physicians, and patients occupy today.
- Next in **Part Three**, we examine the United States health care system. We'll talk about the new Affordable Health Care Act and compare it to other models of national health care delivery.
- In **Part Four**, we will focus in on a single issue in contemporary biomedicine, to be decided.

Required texts:

1. Phil Brown, ed., *Perspectives in Medical Sociology*, **4th edition** (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2008).
(**Note:** You must have the *fourth* edition of this book. **It is available at the University Co-op.**)
2. Additional readings posted on Blackboard.
3. One additional book to be determined later in the semester.

Class Requirements and Grading:

40%: 4-6 short papers, submitted on Blackboard. Format below, and to be discussed.

15%: Exam one: Thursday September 20

15%: Exam two: Thursday October 18

15%: Exam three: Thursday November 16

15%: Class participation, measured through attendance, group work, and pop quizzes.

NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS CLASS

Class Policies:

1. Attention and participation in classroom discussions is not only expected, but required. Attendance will be recorded via a seating chart, which will be filled out during the third week of class. Participation will be measured according to your in-class group work and participation in large group discussions. Please turn off cell phones and be courteous to other students.
2. A legitimate reason to miss class may be accepted if you tell me about it BEFORE you miss class; please do not email me after you miss class. Two absences over the course of the semester will be overlooked with no explanation necessary or desired. Further absences will affect your grade.
3. Readings are due on the day under which they are listed. Class discussions will focus almost exclusively on the assigned readings, so you must have read them to participate.
4. You have many chances to hand in 4-6 papers. This means you are in control of your work load- you can write the papers as they fit in your schedule. We will discuss the paper format at length. If you are nervous about your writing ability or receive a grade on a paper that you do not like, you are welcome to write up to 6 papers, from which I will take the 4 highest grades. You cannot, however, re-write papers under any circumstances. Because of this flexibility **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS** for any reason. Any paper that I have not received at the time they are due will receive NO CREDIT.
5. I use Blackboard - at <http://courses.utexas.edu> —to distribute course materials, post grades, and submit assignments. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400.
6. **ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: **“The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.”**
I expect academic honesty. I encourage you to ask others for editorial advice and to study together for exams. But all work submitted must be your own. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.
7. **Documented Disability Statement:** Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD. Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.). If the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.), let me know as soon as possible so we can make alternative arrangements.
8. **Religious Holy Days:** By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
9. I will always try my best to make myself available outside of the classroom. Please do not hesitate to stop by or make an appointment with me to talk about things class-related or otherwise.

Paper Requirements

4 essays due during the semester. You may submit up to 6 if you don't like your first two grades. The last essay must be written on the book we read at the end of the semester.

Essays must be emailed to me no later than 2pm the Sunday before the week the readings are due. Please send them as a document attachment, and make sure your name is written on the first line of the paper. The papers must be **single-spaced**, 12-point, Times New Roman, 2-3 pgs. NOTE: **Max 3 pgs.** I WILL NOT READ MORE.

Format: Your essay must reflect your close reading of one article or book chapter that is on the syllabus for the following week. Your goal is to write a thorough, final draft quality essay digesting some parts of the authors' claims. Remember, this is a sociology class – you must focus on topics that interrogate your/our/the author's/another group's relationship to a second social grouping.

I recommend starting with a 4-paragraph essay, though this format can change with your comfort level.

1. Introduce the article that you are writing about. This does not mean you need to give me the author and title of the article/book chapter as your first sentence. Instead, begin with something like:

Rosenberg (1973) sets out to understand the dynamics of mental institutions by sending students as guinea pigs.

Assume that our syllabus is our bibliography. Use APA or MLA citation formats within the body of the essay. There is no need to attach references.

2. Three paragraphs, each with a particular idea in focus. The goal here is for you to think through some of the concepts that you would maybe bring up in class. What would you want to discuss more, flesh out, add your perspective on, or hear my perspective on? Focus in, explore possibilities.
3. No conclusion, as you may not have anything to conclude yet. As you become more comfortable with the material, it would be great to start seeing you weave your observations together, compare weekly class themes to one another, etc.

Writing style: Use of the first person "I" is fine, and even encouraged. Your writing does not have to be formal, but it does have to be easily comprehensible. Read, edit, re-read, and spell check. The spell checking/grammar checking technology on your computers is a teacher's dream when put to good use, but it cannot replace a good human eye. Finally, please do not try to show me that your ideas are better than the author's; criticism is often much easier than deep understanding.

Paper Grades: Papers will receive scores of 1-10. They will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. Is the format correct? Is the length appropriate?
2. How complex was the article the student chose to write about?
3. Does the student accurately describe what the author is doing? (How is the essay's first paragraph?)
4. Does the student develop three different ideas? How thorough are they developed? (What do the second, third, and fourth paragraphs reflect?)

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 10 | Exceptionally good (A/100) |
| 9.5 | Very good (A/95) |
| 9 | Good (A-/90) |
| 8.5 | Acceptable (B/85) |
| 8 | Not Great (B-/80) |
| 7.5 | Tried, but didn't get it (C/75) |
| 0 | Not enough work to get credit (0) |

COURSE SCHEDULE: READINGS, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS*

<<<<<ALL READINGS DUE ON THE DATE LISTED>>>>>

Thurs August 30: Introduction to the course

PART I: THE SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF DISEASE

Tues Sept 4: Inequality

FILM: Unnatural Causes
(no reading)

Thurs Sept 6: Inequality, con't

*Bruce J. Link and Jo Phelan (1995) "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (extra issue): 80-94.

→ DUE Sunday Sept. 9: First paper possibility

Tues Sept 11: Race and Ethnicity

Textbook Chapter 2: David R. Williams, "Race, SES, and Health: The Added Effects of Racism and Discrimination"

*Tamara Dubowitz, Lisa Bates, and Dolores Acevedo-Garcia. 2010. "The Latino Health Paradox" *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*

Thurs Sept 13: Gender. ***SEATING CHART FILLED OUT IN CLASS TODAY*******

Textbook Chapter 3: Judith Lorber, "Women Get Sicker But Men Die Quicker"

*Chloe Bird and Martha Lang. 2010. "Understanding Gender and Health" *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*

→ DUE Sun. Sept. 16: Second paper possibility

Tues September 18: Stress and Social Support

Textbook Chapter 7: Pearlin, "Stress, Coping, and Social Support"

*Ichiro Kawachi. 2010. "Social Capital and Health" *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*

Thurs Sept 20: EXAM 1

PART II: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

→ DUE Sunday Sept. 23: Third paper possibility

Tues Sept 25: Social Construction

*Emily Martin (1991) "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles" *Signs* 16, 3: 485-501.

* Starred readings available on Blackboard.

Textbook Chapter 5: Phil Brown, "Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness"

Thurs Sept 27: Medicalization

Textbook Chapter 6: Peter Conrad, "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization"

*Loe, Meika. 2004. "Introduction." *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*. New York: New York University Press.

→ DUE Sunday Sept. 31: Fourth paper possibility

Tues Oct 2: The History of Biomedicine

*Turner, Bryan. "The History of the Changing Concepts of Health and Illness: Outline of a General Model of Illness Categories" *The Handbook of Social Studies in Health and Medicine*: 9-23.

Thurs Oct 4: The History of Biomedicine, con't

*Foucault, Michel. 1973. "Preface," *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archeology of Medical Perception*. New York: Pantheon Press.

→ DUE Sunday Oct. 7: Fifth paper possibility

Tues Oct 9: Contemporary Medical Authority

Textbook Chapter 31: Paul Starr, "The Growth of Medical Authority"

Textbook Chapter 11: Irving Zola, "Pathways to the Doctor"

Thurs Oct 11: Experiences of Illness

Textbook Chapter 13: Susan Bell, "Experiences of Illness and Narrative Understandings"

*Linda Blum and Nena F. Stracuzzi. 2004. "Gender in the Prozac Nation: Popular Discourse and Productive Femininity" *Gender and Society* 18,3: 269-286.

→ DUE Sunday Oct. 14: Sixth paper possibility

Tues Oct 16: Experiences of Illness, con't

*Peter Conrad. 2001. "The Meaning of Medications: Another Look at Compliance" *The Sociology of Health and Illness*. Edited by Peter Conrad, pps. 137-148.

*Peter Conrad and Cheryl Stults. 2010. "The Internet and the Experience of Illness" *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*.

Thurs Oct 18: EXAM 2

PART III: HOW STATES PROVIDE HEALTH CARE

→ DUE Sunday Oct. 21: Seventh paper possibility

Tues Oct 23: The United States Health Care System

*Rose Weitz. 2004. "The U.S. Health Care System and the Need for Reform." *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care*, 3rd ed., Belmont, CA: Wadsworth: 222-249.

Thurs Oct 25:

(con't)

→ DUE Sunday Oct. 28: Eighth paper possibility

Tues Oct 30: Non-U.S. Health Care Systems

*Rose Weitz. 2004. "Alternative Health Care Systems." *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care*, 3rd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth: 250-289.

Thurs Nov 1

(con't)

→ DUE Sunday Nov. 4: Ninth paper possibility

Tues Nov 6 : Current Attempts at Reform (PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TODAY !)

Textbook Chapter 26: "Why the United States Has No National Health Insurance"

Thurs Nov 8: Current Attempts at Reform, con't

*"Proposal of the Physicians' Working Group for Single-Payer National Health Insurance," 2003. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 290, no. 6 (13 August): 798-805.

Thurs Nov 16: EXAM 3

PART FOUR: Issues in Contemporary Medicine

→ DUE Sunday Nov. 4: Tenth paper possibility

Tues Nov 20:

FILM: Health For Sale

Textbook Chapter 27: "Pills, Power, People: Sociological Understandings of the Pharmaceutical Industry"

Thurs Nov 22: NO CLASS

Tues Nov 27: Book, part one

Thurs Nov 29: Book, part two

Tues Dec 4: Book, part three

Thurs Dec 6: Last class: Wrap up.

→ DUE Thurs Dec. 6: MANDATORY last paper.