

**SOC 3330: MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY**  
**Fall 2017**

Classroom: Eccles Science Learning Center 046  
Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm  
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00 am – 11:00 pm

**Contact Information:**  
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*“Medical sociologists explore every type of question found in the larger discipline and sometimes stretch its borders to include new frontiers...Whether we examine large databases or study micro interactions, we raise innovative questions that generate new understandings.”*

*–Kathy Charmaz, 2004 ASA Medical Sociology Section Chair*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

Rapid developments in medical and rehabilitative services in the U.S. since the late 19th century have encouraged a steadily growing concern for the health of Americans, with *health* being a catch-all phrase that encompasses the presence or absence of various physical, psychological and social conditions. Our understanding of what constitutes optimal or poor health has changed dramatically over this time, as has the medical profession as a whole and the processes of medicalization. How do we explain these changes? And, what are their consequences? Our task this semester is to explore these questions.

Toward this end, we will seek to understand health and medicine by exploring multiple domains, including the market relations that commodify health care; the work sites in which medical practice is articulated; the research arenas that transform medical knowledge, practice and technologies; the systems of cultural meaning within which ideas of health and disease circulate; the social inequalities that structure the experience of illness and access to care; and the bodies and selves that experience and are remade by illness. These considerations will be pursued through interactive lectures, in-class discussions of assigned readings, films, and other course materials.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define and elaborate on major concepts in the sociology of health and illness (IDEA: *learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories*);
2. Distinguish between social and biological determinants of health (IDEA: *learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view*);

3. Summarize various and opposing viewpoints on current health-related social issues (IDEA: *learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view*).

### **REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:**

You do not need to buy a textbook for this course. Instead, we will be heavily relying on Open Educational Resources (OERs) available through the Utah State University Library. All required readings will be made available in the library or through the course website.

### **FORMAT:**

I hope that we can all learn from each other throughout the course. In order to achieve this goal, it is imperative that you come to class prepared and ready to participate. This course is an active course – one in which all of us will participate and contribute. The course will be largely discussion-based so it is important that you complete the reading assignments before class.

### **DESCRIPTION OF COURSE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

All students are expected to complete the following course requirements: **(1)** Read *all* assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them in class; **(2)** Review one of the assigned case study articles and co-present your side of the material to the class; **(3)** Complete three non-cumulative exams. These requirements are described in greater detail below:

**1. Class preparation, attendance, and participation (10 percent):** This class is intended to be a setting where we reflect on and critique the assigned material. This requires that everyone prepares for class, attends class, and participates in class discussions. This is required of everyone, every week. I ask that you try to make at least one contribution to each class discussion. Otherwise, it may not be clear that you have sufficiently prepared for our class meeting. Derogatory comments will not be tolerated and will not contribute to your participation grade. Also, you cannot receive class participation credit if you do not attend class.

Regular attendance is a requirement of this class. You are allowed two unexcused absences. Beginning on your third unexcused absence, there will be a penalty of 5 percent off of your final grade for each additional absence. If you are scheduled to co-lead a class discussion on the day you miss (more on this below), you will not be able to make this up except in extreme cases.

**2. Article Review and Discussion (15 percent):** Each student will sign up for shared responsibility to lead class discussion on one of the assigned readings. You will first work independently to develop your own summary of the main points of the reading and a reaction to the reading, which might include a discussion of the theoretical insights, explicit or implicit assumptions about social structure and human agency, or practical problems that may arise in the application of the theory to other substantive issues. You will then work collaboratively with group members to develop a class discussion on your side of the topic of the reading. At a minimum, this will entail that each student prepares discussion

questions based on the reading, though I strongly recommend that you meet beforehand so that there is not too much repetition in the questions you prepare. You may also be creative in how you lead the discussion. You might find it useful to share music, a film clip, poem, etc., that relates to the topic. This is welcome and encouraged. Do note that your group's discussion should take no more 30 minutes of class time unless you get special permission from me beforehand.

**3. Three Multiple Choice Exams (25 percent each; total 75 percent):** You will complete three multiple choice exams on the material covered in the previous section of the class (i.e., the final exam is not cumulative but, rather, is based on the material covered since the mid-term exam).

The grading distribution is as follows:

94 and up	=	A
90 to 93	=	A-
87 to 89	=	B+
84 to 86	=	B
80 to 83	=	B-
77 to 79	=	C+
74 to 76	=	C
70 to 73	=	C-
67 to 69	=	D+
60 to 66	=	D
59 <	=	F

### **Make-up Exams:**

A make-up exam will be arranged only for true emergencies. The instructor must be notified before the exam takes place (if at all possible). A desire to leave early before the end of the semester, vacation rentals, plane reservations, marriage plans, marriage plans of relatives or friends, other appointments interfering with the exam schedule (including job interviews and routine doctor appointments), or *other exams scheduled on the same day* are emphatically *not* valid reasons for requesting a make-up.

### **Office Hours:**

I encourage you to come to my office hours if you are having trouble with the course material, or if you would like to discuss any concerns you are having with the class. If you are unable to come during my normal office hours I am more than happy to set up an alternate time during in which we can meet.

### **Grade appeal policy:**

We all make mistakes and it is consistent with my teaching philosophy that students be allowed the right to have those mistakes corrected. In order to facilitate that process: **always keep all graded work in case there is a discrepancy with your grade.** If you do not agree with a grade you have received, you may submit a *written* grade appeal to me within *one week* of receiving the grade. Appeals received after one week will not be considered unless there are serious extenuating circumstances. Write a rationale

addressing all comments given to you on the assignment and explain your reasons for wanting a change in grade. We will then set a time to meet and discuss your appeal. Finally, if there are circumstances prohibiting you from completing course requirements, please see me *before* the end of the course.

### **Communication:**

Key points regarding communication:

- ❖ Note that I do *not* monitor my e-mail 24/7. You should reasonably expect a reply to your electronic communications within 24 hours, *except for weekends and holidays*. Please include the course number in the subject line of all email messages (SOC 3330) and your name.
- ❖ Please keep a copy of all of your work. We cannot be responsible for missing work due to technical issues.
- ❖ It is expected that students in this course will access their e-mail *at least once a day*.

### **Electronics:**

I do not allow the use of any electronic devices in class, which includes cell phones, laptops, I pads, and other devices. The World Wide Web is just too tempting. Any slides I use will be posted to the course website on Canvas, which should minimize the notes you'll need to take. Exceptions will be made for students who require a laptop for accessibility reasons or who see the laptop as essential to their work.

### **Classroom Conduct:**

Professional behavior is expected in this course at all times. This class will have students enrolled from a variety of backgrounds who hold a variety of differing opinions. This diversity only adds to the enjoyment of the class and our learning experiences. Additionally, we will be covering sensitive subjects on which students may hold differing views. Your opinions and participation in this class is highly valued, and you are encouraged to share your opinions, so long as it is presented in a respectful way. Students who are unable to act professionally and treat others with respect will be removed from the class and receive a failing grade

### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism (Latin for "to kidnap") which is using others' work and presenting it as your own, **is not allowed**. You must abide by the rules on honesty in academic work, outlined here: <http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/article6.cfm>. Please be familiar with the rules and if you are confused, do not hesitate to ask me to clarify them.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodation to participate in this course, please make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible so that together we can arrange the necessary reasonable accommodations. Please note that prior to our meeting you must obtain documentation of your disability through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) on campus.

## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

**NOTE: This class schedule is tentative. Readings, videos, and topics are subject to change at the instructor's discretion**

Week		Topics	Readings
Week 1	Aug 29	Welcome	No readings
	Aug 31	Introduction to Medical Sociology	Rosich, Katherine J., and Janet R. Hankin. 2010. "Executive Summary: What Do We Know? Key Findings from 50 Years of Medical Sociology." <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 51(1 suppl):S1-S9  Chapter 19: Health and Medicine
Week 2	Sept 5	Epidemiology	Chauvel, L., & Leist, A. K. (in press). Social epidemiology. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), <i>International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences</i> (2nd. ed.), Section Health (eds. Johannes Siegrist, Claus Vögele). Elsevier. DOI 10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.14039-5  Patricia O'Campo and James R. Dunn. (2012) Introduction. In P. O'Campo and J.R. Dunn (eds.), <i>Rethinking Social Epidemiology: Towards a Science of Change</i> . DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-2138-8_1
	Sept 7	<i>Case Study: Are We Winning the War on Cancer?</i>	
Week 3	Sept 12	Social Demography of Health: Class	Adler, N. E., Boyce, T., Chesney, M. A., Cohen, S., Folkman, S., Kahn, R. L., & Syme, S. L. (1994). Socioeconomic status and health: The challenge of the gradient. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 49(1), 15  Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. (1995). Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , 80-94  Adler, N. E., & Newman, K. (2002). Socioeconomic disparities in health: pathways and policies. <i>Health affairs</i> , 21(2), 60-76.
	Sept 14	In-Class Documentary: In Sickness and in Wealth	
Week 4	Sept 19	Social Demography of Health: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Age	Williams, D. R. (2012). Miles to go before we sleep: Racial inequities in health. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , 53(3), 279-295  Read, J. N. G., & Gorman, B. K. (2010). Gender and health revisited. In Pescosolido B.A., Martin J.K., McLeod J.D., Rogers A. (eds.) <i>The Handbook of the Sociology of Health, Illness, and Healing</i> , pp. 411-429  Williams, D. R., & Sternthal, M. (2010). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in health: sociological contributions. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , 51(1_suppl), S15-S27.

	Sept 21	<i>Case Study: "Should Doctors Prescribe Drugs Based on Race?"</i>	
Week 5	Sept 26	Review for Exam 1	
	Sept 28	<b>FIRST IN-CLASS EXAM</b>	
Week 6	Oct 3	Social Stress and Health	Thoits, P. A. (2010). Stress and health: Major findings and policy implications. <i>Journal of health and social behavior</i> , 51(1_suppl), S41-S53  William, A.R., & Thomas, S. (2010). Stress. In Cockerham W. C. (Ed.) <i>The New Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology</i> , pp. 242-267.
	Oct 5	In-class Documentary: Not Just a Paycheck	
Week 7	Oct 10	Health Behavior, Illness Behavior, and Doctor-Patient Interaction	Pampel, F. C., Krueger, P. M., & Denney, J. T. (2010). Socioeconomic disparities in health behaviors. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 36, 349-370.  Boyer, C. A., & Lutfey, K. E. (2010). Examining critical health policy issues within and beyond the clinical encounter: patient-provider relationships and help-seeking behaviors. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , 51(1_suppl), S80-S93.
	Oct 12	<i>Case Study: Should the Government Regulate the Sale Advertisement and Distribution of Junk Food?</i>	
Week 8	Oct 17	Mental Health	Link, B. G., Cullen, F. T., Struening, E., Shrout, P. E., & Dohrenwend, B. P. (1989). A modified labeling theory approach to mental disorders: An empirical assessment. <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 400-423.
	Oct 19	<b>NO CLASS - Friday class schedule</b>	
Week 9	Oct 24	Medicalization and The Sick Role	Levine, S., & Kozloff, M. A. (1978). The sick role: Assessment and overview. <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> , 4(1), 317-343.  Conrad, P. (2005). The Shifting Engines of Medicalization. <i>Journal of health and social behavior</i> , 46(1), 3-14.
	Oct 26	<i>Case Study: Does Obesity Cause a Decline in Life Expectancy?</i>	
Week 10	Oct 31	Review for Second Exam	
	Nov 2	<b>SECOND IN-CLASS EXAM</b>	
Week 11	Nov 7	The Profession of Medicine	Timmermans, Stefan, and Hyeyoung Oh. (2010). The Continued Social Transformation of the Medical Profession. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 51(1 suppl), S94-S106.  Light, D. W. (2004). Introduction: Ironies of Success: A New History of the American Health Care" System". <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , 1-24.
	Nov 9	In-class documentary: Rx: The Quiet Revolution	
Week 12	Nov 14	Other Health Care Providers	Baer, H.A. (2010). Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Processes of Legitimation, Professionalization, and Cooption.

			In Cockerham W. C. (Ed.) <i>The New Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology</i> , pp. 373-390.
	Nov 16	<i>Case Study: Should Marijuana Be Legalized for Medical Purposes?</i>	
Week 13	Nov 21	Health Care Settings and Technologies	
	Nov 23	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING	
Week 14	Nov 28	Health Care Reform and Health Care in the U.S.	Wright, E. R., & Perry, B. L. (2010). Medical sociology and health services research: past accomplishments and future policy challenges. <i>Journal of health and social behavior</i> , 51(1_suppl), S107-S119.  Problems of Health Care in the United States. Chapter 13.4 in <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>
	Nov 30	<i>Case Study: Should Health Care be Rationed in the United States?</i>	
Week 15	Dec 5	Global Health	Global Aspects of Health and Health Care. Chapter 13.2 in <i>Social Problems: Continuity and Change</i>
	Dec 7	Review for final exam	
	<b>Dec 10</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	