

## SOC363H1F – Fall 2012 - Sociology of Mental Health and Mental Disorders

**2012 (Fall); Location: MP 102**  
**Wednesday 10:10-12:00**  
**Office Hour: Friday 10:30 – 11:30**

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**Prerequisite:** A 200+ level SOC course, *or* PSY101H1, *or* a 200+ level PSY course. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time they are discovered.

**Course Objectives:** *Sociology of Mental Health and Mental Disorders* will examine the social conditions that influence mental health and illness. Course materials will cover the conceptualization and measurement of mental health/illness, the social distribution of mental health, and the sociological approaches to understanding the stress process. Some of the many questions we will address include: How do we measure or assess mental health and illness? What is stress and how does it influence mental health? How do social statuses like gender, social class, and age influence the experience of stressors and their effects on mental health? How does the quality and intersection of work and family life influence exposure to stressors and their consequences? How do other social contexts and psychosocial resources influence stress processes and outcomes?

### Required Reading

Mirowsky, John and Catherine E. Ross. 2003. *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Aldine De Gruyter.

In addition, there are assigned readings posted on Blackboard. **Assigned readings are numbered below.** (You must log in to the Portal to access the materials: <https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>) It is essential that students read the assigned readings before each class period. My lectures and our in-class discussions will be based on those readings. Therefore, they represent the fundamental core of the course. Given time restrictions, I may not cover each and every aspect of the readings during class periods. However, all materials from the readings may appear on the tests. Students are encouraged to express relevant questions and insights about the readings in class. While time restrictions place limits on the extent and depth of these discussions, I encourage students to also use the 'discussion board' in Blackboard to post questions or engage in dialogue about substantive, course-specific topics.

### Course Details

**Marks:** There will be 3 in-class tests. Test 1 is worth 35%; Test 2 is worth 40%; Test 3 is worth 25% of your final mark. Total = 100%. These tests cover all materials from readings and lectures. The format includes multiple choice questions and short- and long-answer/essay. Tests cover designated schedule periods. Tests are **time** and **writing intensive**.

**Attendance:** Full and complete attendance is critical for learning the material in this course. The class meets 12 times; each class is an hour and fifty minutes (with a short break halfway through). By remaining in the course, you are committing to attend class (on time) and satisfy all requirements. I realize that some students work or have other obligations. However, if you have a scheduling conflict, please consider other course options. Excessive lateness and other problematic in-class behaviours will not be tolerated and will result in mark penalties or other punitive action at the discretion of the instructor.

**Policy Regarding Missed Tests:** The privilege of taking make-up tests will only be granted in cases where there is legitimate, university-approved evidence of *very serious* illness or family emergency. If your reasons for absence are medical, you must submit an original University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate (completed by a Health Services physician or by your own physician). No other medical certification will be accepted. (<http://www.healthservice.utoronto.ca/pdfs/medcert.htm>). Note: I will verify each case. Excuses like "working late," "overslept," and "bad traffic" are not legitimate. Make appropriate scheduling arrangements in advance. Documentation must be presented within 48 hours of the test. Late documentation will not be accepted. I will be strict about make-up tests to ensure that the process is fair for all students. All make-up work will be written *on one final date to be determined*.

**Grading:** See U of T guidelines: <http://www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/ofr/calendar/rules.htm#term>

**E-mail etiquette and Blackboard Policy:** Email correspondence with the professor or TA must contain your full name and student ID. All use of the Blackboard, especially "Discussion Board" content, must relate specifically to the substantive content of course material. This must not be used as a forum for evaluations about the course or content that is unrelated to in-class lecture or readings. All emails and posts must be respectful in tone and content.

## STUDENTS WHO NEED ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please approach Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060; accessibility.utoronto.ca. Accommodations include getting a volunteer note-taker and writing tests under special conditions. Do not approach your professor or TA about accommodations. Accessibility services has the necessary expertise, and they provide full confidentiality, so your privacy is protected.

### PART 1. INTRODUCTION: STRESS PROCESSES AND MENTAL HEALTH

#### Overview:

#### September 12: Introduction: The Sociological Study of Stress Processes and Outcomes

- (1) Pearlin, Leonard I. 1999. "The Stress Process Revisited: Reflections on Concepts and Their Interrelationships." Pp. 395-415 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, edited by C. S. Aneshensel and J. C. Phelan. New York: Kluwer.  
(2) Mirowsky and Ross: *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 3 – 20.

#### September 19: The Stress Process and Measuring Social Stress

- (3) Wheaton, Blair and Shirin Montazer. 2009. "Stressors, Stress, and Distress." Pp. 171-199 in *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health*, edited by Scheid and Brown. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. KluwerAcademic/Plenum.  
(4) Mirowsky and Ross: *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 159 – 170.

#### September 26: Conceptualizing and Measuring Distress

- (5) Mirowsky and Ross: *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 23 – 71; 159 – 170.  
(6) Horwitz, Allan V. 2007. "Distinguishing Distress from Disorder as Psychological Outcomes of Stressful Social Arrangements." *Health* 11(3):273-289.  
(7) Wheaton, Blair. 2007. "The Twain Meet: Distress, Disorder and the Continuing Conundrum of Categories (comment on Horwitz)." *Health* 11(3):303-319.

#### October 3: Test 1 [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials from September 12, 19, and 26]

### PART 2. BASIC SOCIAL PATTERNS AND CONTEXTS

#### October 10: Basic Social Patterns

- (8) Mirowsky and Ross: *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 75 – 129.  
(9) Tausig, Mark and Rudy Fenwick. 2012. "Work and Mental Health in Social Context." In *Social Disparities in Health and Health Care*, pp. 161-183.

#### October 17: Stress in the Work-Family Interface

- (10) Simon, Robin. 1995. "Gender, Multiple Roles, Role Meaning, and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 36:182–194.  
(11) Glavin, Paul, Scott Schieman, and Sarah Reid. 2011. "Boundary-Spanning Work Demands and their Consequences for Guilt and Psychological Distress" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52(1):43-57.  
(12) Schieman, Scott and Paul Glavin. 2011. "Education and Work-Family Conflict: Explanations, Contingencies, and Mental Health Consequences." *Social Forces* 89(4):1341-1362.

#### October 24: Alienation and Identity

- (13) Mirowsky and Ross: *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 171 – 229.  
(14) Thoits, Peggy, A. 1999. "Self, Identity, Stress, and Mental Health." Pp. 345-36 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, edited by C. S. Aneshensel and J. C. Phelan. New York: Kluwer Academic.

#### October 31: Test 2 [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials from October 10, 17, and 24]

### PART 3. SPECIAL TOPICS

#### November 7: Stigma

- (15) Link, Bruce G., & Phelan, Jo C. 2001. "Conceptualizing Stigma." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27:363-385.  
(16) Phelan, Jo. C., Link, Bruce G., Stueve, Ann., & Pescosolido, Bernice A. 2000. "Public Conceptions of Mental Illness in 1950 and 1996: What is Mental Illness and is it to be Feared?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 41(2):188-207.

#### November 14: Neighbourhood Effects

- (17) Mirowsky and Ross: *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 145 – 156; 234– 242 (from "Mistrust" to "Inequity")

(18) Aneshensel, Carol. S. 2009. "Neighborhood as a Social Context of the Stress Process." Pp. 35-52 in *Advances in the Conceptualization of the Stress Process*. Edited by Avison, Aneshensel, Schieman, and Wheaton. New York: Springer.

November 21: Religion

(19) Schieman, Scott, Alex Bierman, and Christopher G. Ellision. 2012. "Religion and Mental Health." In *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, edited by Carol Aneshensel, Jo Phelan, and Alex Bierman.

**November 28: Test 3 [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials from November 7, 14, and 21]**