SOC 6022H Sociology of Health & Illness  Fall 2017

Mondays 4-6PM

Instructor: William Magee, Associate Professor

Medical sociologists work in diverse settings (e.g. NGOs, hospitals, public health organizations, academic departments at universities, etc.). Research in the field also employs many different methods and theoretical orientations. This course survey the field, broadly defined.

Summary of Evaluation:

Take Home Test 1 - 15% : Distributed October 16, Due October 20

Take Home Test 2 - 15% : Distributed November 20, Due November 24

Reaction Papers (3 pages, 6% each, for 2 weeks) 12%

In-class Overview of Readings & Issues (8% each week, for 2 weeks) 16%

Research Paper (20 pages) 34% Due Dec. 7

Attendance & Verbal Participation: 8%

Detailed Description of Evaluation

Attendance & Participation: Attendance at all classes is expected. It is also expected that you will be able to respond knowledgeably to questions about the readings when asked, and give your opinion about issues raised in the readings. If you have to miss class, it is good form to notify the instructor in advance. If you miss a more than one class due to illness, or if you miss any class when you are scheduled to present for that reason, you must submit a Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (see below).

Reaction Papers: For two of the weeks that you are not assigned to do an in-class presentation you will write a 3-4 page paper that provides an analysis of a theoretically or methodologically relevant topic raised in one or more of the assigned readings. Some synthesis across readings is also encouraged. You might be assigned a topic for a reaction paper. Penalty for late submission is 1 point per day (out of the 6 allotted).

In-class Overview of Readings & Issues: Outline the most important issues raised in (or by) all the readings for the week. Although this will require some amount of review and descriptive summary, you should also place issues raised in the readings in broader historical and theoretical context. For example, historical trends in economic inequality provide relevant context for thinking about the association of
inequality with health). Your presentation might also should outline and critique focal research questions or theoretical issues address in the specific papers, methodology, or policy implications. You should be prepared to present for 30 minutes, in 10-minute segments, interspersed with discussion.

*Research Paper:* Topic must be approved after an individual meeting. *Marking:* Grading of papers and essays will be based on how well you draw on the literature in logically coherent and innovative ways. Part of the credit will be allocated on the basis of technical aspects of writing (i.e., grammar, sentence structure, references, etc.). Please submit both a hard copy and electronic version (in a .docx file). *Penalty for late submission* is 1 point per weekday.

*Take Home Tests:* You will be given two questions at the end of class on Monday October 16, and again Monday November 20. Your answers to one of the two questions will be due about four-days later, on Friday October 20 and November 24 respectively, at 4pm. Some questions are likely to be in the form of comprehensive exam questions. Answers should be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, excluding references and cover page. There will be no extensions; lateness penalty will be 100%, except in cases of documented serious illness, or serious personal problem.

*Illness:* Please note that requests for medically based exemptions from deadlines must be accompanied by a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. The original form must be given to me in person, with the opportunity for me to make a hard copy. Forms that are scanned or xeroxed may not be accepted. The university will accept documentation of medical matters only on the U of T Verification of Illness or Injury form, which may only be completed only by a physician, surgeon, nurse practitioner, dentist or clinical psychologist.

**Reading List & Course Schedule**
The following is a tentative reading list.

**I. Broad Trends in Health & Mortality**

Week 1. September 11

**Overview & Introductions**


Suggestion: briefly review an undergrad text on medical sociology or sociology of health and illness

Scheduling of reaction papers and in-class overviews
Week 2: September 18

**Epidemiology, Public Health, Medicine & Medicalization**


**II. Life Course & Health in Context**

Week 3: September 25

**Lifecourse & Illness: Micro to Macro Issues**


Week 4

October 2

“Fundamental Causes”: Social Positions, Mediation & Moderating Processes & Health


http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7684063

Bradley R Crammond & Gemma Carey. 2016 "What Do We Mean by ‘Structure’ when We Talk About Structural Influences on the Social Determinants of Health Inequalities?". Social Theory & Health:1-15.


**THANKSGIVING**

Week 5

**Politics, Governance & Health: A Sampling of Levels & Contexts**


Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English. from "Complaints & Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness." Pp 11-24


Week 6: October 16

Integration & Discussion

We will “catch up”, take stock, further integrate readings, discuss final paper topics, and discuss take-home test.

Discussion newspaper / non-academic magazine articles – e.g.:
“In Sweden, Hundreds Of Refugee Children Gave Up On Life”
http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/03/30/521958505/only-in-sweden-hundreds-of-refugee-children-gave-up-on-life

Students are asked to identify articles ahead of time.

Plan student-selected readings for week 12: Each student will identify an academic reading in the “sociology of health” area, not listed on this syllabus, that they think particularly important or interesting for themselves & other students in this course to read and discuss for week 11 (e.g. selections from Health Area comp list, etc.).

III. Cultural & Structural Considerations in Relation to Embodiment & Agency

Week 7: October 23

Sociomateriality & Practices: Body Parts, Medicines, Cigarettes, Lifestyles, Health & Illness Behaviors, etc.


Sarah L Bell, Jessica Tyrrell and Cassandra Phoenix. 2016. "A Day in the Life of a Ménière's Patient: Understanding the Lived Experiences and Mental Health Impacts of Ménière's Disease." *Sociology of Health & Illness*: 1-16


**Week 8: October 30**

**Health, Healthiness, Healthism: Regulating Health & Fitness**


NO CLASS During Undergrad Reading Week November 6
I assume many will have TA duties for midterms, and will need this time.

Week 9: November 13

Self, Symbolic Interaction, and Illness Experience:
From to Cultural Discourse, and Back


Week 10: November 20

**Mental Health & Therapeutic Society on The Boundaries**

A separate course focuses on mental health. These readings represent a select sampling of issues that resonate with some previously readings from previous weeks.


*Each student or group identifies a reading they chose for the class to read for week 11

**Second TAKE-HOME TEST Distributed** – Due FRIDAY November 24
Week 11: November 27

Integration, Discussion & Student Selected Readings

Catch up (e.g. with any lagged presentations).

Discuss just completed take-home test.

Discuss student-selected readings TBD – see weeks 6 & 10 for student selection of readings

Discuss frameworks and theories for integrate readings.

Discuss Strategies for Teaching Undergrad Sociology of Health & Illness

Week 12: December 4

Review Final Papers & Discuss Future Directions

Schedule & format TBD