

Department of Sociology  
University of Toronto  
**SOC363H1F: Sociology of Mental Health and Mental Disorders**  
Summer 2013  
Instructor Katie Stuart-Lahman

**Class Time:** Tuesdays & Thursdays 6:10-8:00 pm  
**Class Location:** LM 162

**Office Hours:** Mondays 1-2 pm  
**Office:** 725 Spadina Avenue, Room 225  
**E-mail:** [katie.stuart@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:katie.stuart@mail.utoronto.ca)

**TA:** TBA

**Scope and Aims:** This course considers the influence of social environment and social experience on mental distress and disorder, focusing especially on differences in mental health across social groups, and explanations of these differences in terms of the exposure to different types of stress and access to social and personal coping resources. The emphasis is on recent trends in mental health research, while addressing traditional concerns as well. The course can be viewed as a logical sequence of issues that arise in considering the experiential course of a person at risk for mental health problems. We begin with the problem of defining and measuring disorder and distress, and then consider variations in mental health that are related to social position or category, such as social class, gender, race, marital status, and age. Ways of explaining mental disorder in socio-environmental or social psychological terms are considered next. The emphasis in this last section is on the role of stress and coping resources.

**POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS:**

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

**Exclusion:** SOC262Y1, SOC264H1

**COURSE DETAILS:**

**Required Readings:**

*A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health. Second Edition.* Eds. Teresa Scheid and Tony N. Brown. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. (at U of T Bookstore).

Additional required readings may arise for this course. Most will be available through the University of Toronto online article database, those which are not available online will be scanned and uploaded onto the Blackboard course page for you.

**EVALUATION:**

The course requirements include attendance at lectures, a final paper, a midterm, and a final exam. The exam will include material from the readings and the lectures. The final course mark is broken down as follows:

<b>Discussion Questions</b>	15%
<b>Midterm Test</b>	30%
<b>Final Paper</b>	25%
<b>Final Exam</b>	30%

**Discussion Questions:** You will be required to generate a discussion questions for 5 topics over the duration of the course. Each discussion question(s) must be from a different week on the syllabus, and thus on unique topics. Discussion questions must be posted to Blackboard by 12noon on the day of lecture, and at times the discussion questions will be raised during class for group discussion. Grading criteria of the questions will be discussed in lecture. (Value = 15%)

**Guidelines** – Questions must critically evaluate the readings, focusing on the ability of a given article to contribute to sociological understandings of health and mental health.

- a) You can post one “comprehensive” question or a series of questions on the material presented that class.
- b) Questions should be *critical* not substantive in nature.
- c) Questions can focus on one reading; however, questions that attempt to make a connection among several of the week’s readings will be rewarded.
- d) Make reference to particular authors or page numbers, if relevant/helpful.
- e) Try to avoid personal or emotional reactions to articles, unless said reaction is rooted in course content and based in sociological thinking.

**Midterm Test:** The midterm test will be held in class on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and will cover all content covered on the syllabus prior to that date. Materials from lecture and the required readings are both fair game. The structure of the midterm examination is to be determined, but will likely consist of definitions, multiple choice and short answer questions. (Value = 30%)

**Final Paper:** This paper will be a response to the three questions below. The purpose of the paper is to apply concepts and theories discussed in the course. This paper will be a case study of someone you know, using course concepts and findings to help explain their emotional or psychological problems, or alternatively, to help explain why they do *not* have problems given a high-risk life history. The anonymity of the person should be protected. Your current knowledge of the person and their life circumstances must be sufficient to write the paper. In the course of the paper, you will answer the following three questions: (Value = 25%)

1. Give a short history of the problem, or circumstances that could have led to a problem, including important circumstances that must be included to answer questions #2 and #3. Discuss the specific content of the problem, relating it to known criteria for disorder or distress. Also briefly discuss, if appropriate, issues of duration of symptoms, timing in the life course, and severity. This question must be answered in one page.
2. Comment on the specific risk for these problems suggested by findings on the social distribution of mental health from the course. Does your case fit these findings or not, and if not, suggest a reason? Answer this part in 1 to 2 pages.
3. Discuss the role of social statuses, stress exposures and coping resources in explaining the development of their problem and whether the problem has diminished or grown over time (if applicable). It is important here that you focus only on what you argue are the “crucial” stressors or coping resource problems that explain why the problem occurred when it occurred, and how it was maintained over time. If you choose to analyze someone who has avoided mental health problems despite stress, present why you think the stressors they have experienced are important and how their coping resources helped avoid problems. Answer this question in 3 to 4 pages.

### **Submitting Final Paper:**

Your final paper must be submitted twice:

- (1) as hard copy, at the start of class on the due date;
- (2) online at <http://www.turnitin.com>, by the start of class on the due date.

**Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0%)**

Go to <http://www.turnitin.com> to submit your paper online. For access, enter the **class ID** and **enrolment password** (you will receive these before your final paper is due). Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to *Turnitin.com* for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the *Turnitin.com* reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the *Turnitin.com* service are described on the *Turnitin.com* web site.

**NOTE:** This assignment is to be handed in at the start of lecture. Assignments handed in after the start of lecture will be considered late. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day late (weekends = 1 day). Assignments submitted more than 5 business days after the deadline will NOT be accepted. Students are required to contact the instructor within 24 hours of missing a deadline, in order to make appropriate accommodations. If you cannot submit your paper in class, go to room 225 at 725 Spadina Avenue by 5 p.m. on the due date, put a date/time stamp on the top page of your paper, put it into the drop box for 200-level courses, **then notify your TA that your paper is there.**

**Final Exam:** Your final examination will be cumulative, with a heavier focus on materials presented after the midterm, and will be held on Thursday June 27<sup>th</sup> from 6-8pm. More details will be presented closer to the end of the semester. (Value = 35%)

## **RULES & REGULATIONS**

**Plagiarism:** cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices accepted by teachers in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science. A first rule of thumb: each time you use a sequence of three or more words written by someone else, use quotation marks and give the source. But more than this is involved in citing properly, so read "HOW NOT TO PLAGIARIZE" at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.

**Submitting the same work for more than one course:** Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters says it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

**Make-up tests:** students who miss a test will receive a mark of zero for that test unless reasons beyond their control prevent them from taking it. **Within 48 hours** of the missed test, students who wish to write the make-up test must send or give their instructor a written request for special consideration, which explains why the test was missed. A request should be accompanied by contact information (the student's telephone number and email address) so the date, time and place of the make-up test can be communicated to the student. At the make-up test a student must submit **proper documentation from a physician or college registrar** (see below) in a sealed envelope addressed to the instructor. A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test.

**Accessibility needs:** The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

## **DOCUMENTATION FROM YOUR PHYSICIAN OR COLLEGE REGISTRAR**

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, contact the instructor or a TA to inform them of why you have missed a deadline and then make sure to follow the steps described here.

- In case of **illness**, you must supply a duly completed University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate. A doctor's note is not acceptable. There is a blank Certificate in the Faculty of Arts and Science Registration Handbook & Timetable. Attach this Certificate to your work and then hand it in at class or to your TA during their office hours.
- If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). Attach this letter to your work and then hand it in at class or to your instructor

**E-mail policy:** Only e-mails received from utoronto.ca e-mail accounts will be accepted. Please include SOC363 in the subject of your e-mail. Replies can be expected within 48-hours of sending, please do not re-send your e-mail before 48 hours has elapsed. This means that e-mails sent the night before an assignment is due, may not be replied to. **DO NOT** send emails asking questions that can easily be answered by the syllabus, on blackboard or in the lecture notes – they will **not** be responded to.

## **COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULED READINGS**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Heading</b>
May 14	Section 1
May 16	Section 2
May 21	Section 3 & Section 4
May 23	Section 5.1
May 28	Section 5.2 & Section 5.3
May 30	Section 5.4
June 4	<b>MIDTERM</b>
June 6	Section 5.5
June 11	Section 6.1
June 13	Section 6.2
June 18	Section 7.1 & Section 7.2
June 20	Section 7.3

### **READING SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Section 1: Introduction/Overview to the Sociology of Mental Health**

Wheaton, Blair. 2001. "The Role of Sociology in the Study of Mental Health...and the Role of Mental Health in the Study of Sociology." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 42 (Sept.). 221-234. *Pages 221-224, 227-230 only.*

#### **Section 2: Stress Theories**

\*\*Wheaton, Blair & Shirin Montazer. 2010. "Stressors, stress and distress". Ch 9 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

#### **Section 3: Definition and Measurement of Mental Disorder**

\*\*Wakefield, Jerome C. (2010). "The Measurement of Mental Disorder." Ch 2 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

#### **Section 4: Epidemiological Patterns**

\*\*Kessler, Ronald C. 2010. "The Prevalence of Mental Illness." Ch 3 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## **5. SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MENTAL HEALTH**

#### **Section 5.1: Socio-economic Status & Age**

\*\*William W. Eaton, Carles Muntaner and Jaime C. Sapag. "Socioeconomic Stratification and Mental Disorder." Ch. 12 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

#### **Section 5.2: Race & Ethnicity**

\*\*Williams, David R., Manuela Costa & Jacinta P. Leavell "Race and Mental Health: Patterns and Challenges." Ch. 14 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>1</sup> Reading schedule is tentative and can be altered if time requires.

### **Section 5.3: Immigration**

Noh, Samuel & William R. Avison. (1996). "Asian Immigrants and the Stress Process: A Study of Koreans in Canada." *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*. 37(June). Pp 192-206.

### **Section 5.4: Gender**

\*\*Rosenfield, Sarah. "Gender and Mental Health: Do Men and Women Have Different Amounts or Types of Problems?" Ch. 13 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

\*\*Kristi Williams, Adrienne Frech and Daniel L. Carlson. "Marital Status and Mental Health" Ch. 16 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

### **Section 5.5: Sexuality**

Meyer, Ilan H. (1995). "Minority Stress and Mental Health in Gay Men." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 36(1). Pp 38-56.

Ueno, Koji. 2005. "Sexual Orientation and Psychological Distress in Adolescence: Examining Interpersonal Stressors and Social Support Processes." *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 68(3). Pp 258-277.

## **6. EXPLANATIONS OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCES**

### **Section 6.1: Moderators and Mediators of Stress**

\*\*Turner, R. Jay & Robyn Lewis Brown. (2010) "Social Support and Mental Health". Ch. 10 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mirowsky, John & Catherine E. Ross. 1990. "Control or Defense?: Depression and the Sense of Control over Good and Bad Outcomes." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 31. Pp 71-86.

### **Section 6.2: Life Course Theories**

\*\*Mirowsky, John, & Catherine Ross. 2010. "Well-Being Across the Life Course." Ch. 19 in Scheid and Brown, (eds.) *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## **7. NEW DIRECTIONS WITHIN THE FIELD**

### **Section 7.1: Discrimination and Stigma**

Brown, Tony N., David R. Williams, James S. Jackson, Harold W. Neighbors, Myriam Torres, Sherrill L. Sellers and Kendrick T. Brown. 2000. "'Being black and feeling blue': the mental health consequences of racial discrimination." *Race and Society*. 2(2). Pp 117-131.

### **Section 7.2: Traumatic Events**

Kessler, Ronald. 2008. "Trends in mental illness and suicidality after Hurricane Katrina." *Molecular Psychiatry*. 13:4

### **OR**

Knudsen, Hannah K., Paul M. Roman, J. Aaron Johnson and Lori J. Ducharme. 2005. "A Changed America? The Effects of September 11th on Depressive Symptoms and Alcohol Consumption." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 46(3). Pp 260-273.

### **Section 7.3: Neighborhood & Context**

Aneshensel, Carol S. & Clea A. Sucoff. 1996. "The Neighborhood Context of Adolescent Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 37. Pp 293-310.

Wheaton, Blair & Philippa Clarke. 2003. "Space Meets Time: Integrating Temporal and Contextual Influences on Mental Health in Early Adulthood." *American Sociological Review* 68: 680-706.

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