

## SOC363H1F-Sociology of Mental Health and Mental Disorders

2012 (Summer); Location: LM 162  
Tuesday and Thursday 6:10-8:00

Professor: Marisa Young  
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Office hour: Thursday 12-1pm (725 Spadina Ave., rm. 225)

*Prerequisite:* A 200+ level SOC course or a 200+ level PSY course

**Important Note:** Students who do not have the prerequisite for this course may be removed from the class at anytime.

**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? How do we define stressors, and how do they influence mental health? How do social statuses like gender, social class, ethnicity, 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, such as neighbourhood context influence our experiences of stressors? And how do individuals' physical, psychological, and social resources influence stress processes and mental health outcomes?

### Required Reading

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

I will also post assigned readings on Blackboard. (You must log in to the Portal to access the materials:

<https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>). It is important that students read the assigned readings before each class period. My lectures and our in-class discussions will be based on these readings, not to mention that they reflect the fundamental core of the course. Given time restrictions, I may not cover every aspect of the readings during class periods. However, all materials referenced on the syllabus will be covered on the tests. Students are encouraged to express related opinions, 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. I will be checking in on Blackboard to review and contribute to the discussion throughout the semester.

### Course Details

**Marks:** There will be *three* in-class tests. Test 1 and 2 are each worth 35%; Test 3 is worth 30% (total = 100%). These tests will cover all materials from readings and lectures, but are not cumulative. The format includes multiple choice, short-answer, and long-answer/essay questions. Tests cover designated periods in the schedule. Tests are **time** and **writing intensive**. There will also be in-class exercises that will give you an opportunity to earn "bonus" marks towards your test scores. The specific dates of in-class exercises will be discussed during the first week of classes.

**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. By remaining in the course, you are consenting to attend class (on time) and satisfy all of the designated requirements. I realize that some students have additional obligations, such as work or family-related concerns. However, if you have a scheduling conflict, I urge you to consider other course options. Excessive lateness and other problematic in-class behaviours will not be tolerated and will result in punitive action based on my discretion.

**Policy Regarding Missed Tests and Critical Thinking Exercises:** The privilege of taking make-up tests or exercises will only be granted in cases where there is legitimate, university-approved evidence of a *serious* illness or personal/family emergency. If your reasons for the 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" and "bad traffic" are not legitimate. Make appropriate scheduling arrangements in advance. Documentation must be presented within 72 hours of the test period. 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.

## COURSE OUTLINE

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

**NOTE:** Assigned readings are numbered below.

#### [WEEK 1] Overview: The Sociological Study of Stress Processes and Outcomes

May 15: *Introduction to Course Content*

May 17: *The Stress Process and Measuring Social Stress*

- (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) Wheaton, Blair and Shirin Montazer. 2009. “Stressors, Stress, and Distress.” Pp. 200–212 in *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health: Social Contexts, Theories, and Systems*, edited by T. L. Scheid and T. N. Brown. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- (3) Mirowsky and Ross *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 3-20; 159-170.

#### [WEEK 2]

May 22: *Conceptualizing and Measuring Distress*

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

May 24: **Test 1** [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials to date]

### PART 2. SOCIAL PATTERNS AND ROLE CONTEXTS

#### [WEEK 3]

May 29: *Basic Social Patterns: Socioeconomic Status and Age*

- (7) Mirowsky and Ross *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 75-83; 112-128.
  - (8) McLeod, Jane.D. and James M. Nonnemaker. 1999. “Social Stratification and Inequality.” Pp. 321-344 in *The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, edited by C. S. Aneshensel and J. C. Phelan. New York: Kluwer Academic.
- May 31: *The Intersection of Role Contexts: Socioeconomic Status, Age, and Ethnicity*
- (9) Wu, Zheng, Samuel Noh, Violet Kaspar and Christoph M. Schimmele. 2003. “Race, Ethnicity, and Depression in Canadian Society.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44(3, Special Issue: Race, Ethnicity, and Mental Health):426-441.
  - (10) Mirowsky, John and Catherine Ross. 2001. “Age and the Effect of Economic Hardship on Depression.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 42: 132-150.

**[WEEK 4]**

June 5: *The Intersection of Role Contexts: Gender, Work and Family*

(11) Mirowsky and Ross *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 84-111.

(12) Simon, Robin. 1995. "Gender, Multiple Roles, Role Meaning, and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 36:182-194.

(13) 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.

June 7: **Test 2** [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials from Test 1]

<b>PART 3. SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND CONTEXTS</b>
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**[WEEK 5]**

June 12: *Alienation and Identity*

(14) Mirowsky and Ross *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 171-229.

(15) 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.

June 14: *Guest Lecture: Immigration and Mental Health*

(16) Montazer, Shirin and Blair Wheaton. 2011. "The Impact of Generation and Country of Origin on the Mental Health of Immigrant Children: New Models for Understanding Adjustment across Generations." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52: 23-42.

(17) Noh, Sam and William Avison. 1996. "Asian Immigrants and the Stress Process: A Study of Koreans in Canada." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 37(2): 192-206.

**[WEEK 6]**

June 19: *Neighbourhood Context*

(18) Mirowsky and Ross *Social Causes of Psychological Distress*, pp. 145-158

(19) 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: Essays in Honor of Leonard I. Pearlin*. Edited by William Avison, Carol Aneshensel, Scott Schieman, and Blair Wheaton. New York: Springer.

(20) Young, Marisa and Blair Wheaton. 2012. "The Impact of Neighborhood Composition on Work-Family Conflict and Distress." Paper presented at the 106<sup>th</sup> American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada.

June 21: **Test 3** [covers all text and lecture/discussion materials from Test 2]