

University of Toronto – Department of Sociology
SOC496H1F: Special Topics in Sociology
Fall 2018
Gender, Race, Class, and the Politics of Medicine
Mondays 16:00-18:00

Instructor: Brigid Burke

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Classroom: FE 41

Office hours: Wednesdays 11:00-1200, Room 335 (Dpt. of Soc. – 725 Spadina Avenue, 3rd Floor)

Course website: Quercus (q.utoronto.ca)

Course Description

In this course we will engage in an examination of the politics of medicine as both a discipline and a practice. We will examine how social values, cultural assumptions, and political interests influence the ways diseases are defined, experienced, studied and treated. In line with this, we will problematize notions of “scientific objectivity” that are foundational to modern medicine, and critique how concepts of gender/sex, race/ethnicity, class, and (dis)ability both shape and are shaped by its practice. Students will be challenged to consider the parallels between historical and contemporary problems within medicine and health care, and to reflect on potential avenues for change and reform.

Prerequisites: Completion of 1.0 SOC FCE at the 300+ level is required to take this course. Students without prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice. Enrolment is limited to 4th year Sociology Majors and Specialists.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, students will learn how to:

1. Apply an intersectional lens to analyse historical & contemporary medical/healthcare issues.
2. Interrogate and de-naturalize concepts such as “objectivity”, “race”, “sex”, “gender”, “disease”, “illness”, “disability”, “normality”.
3. Explore historical changes and continuities in how medicine is understood and practiced.
4. Engage in critical thinking, apply course and lecture materials to carry out a sociological analysis, and develop recommendations for addressing medical/health care issues.

CLASS STRUCTURE & ATTENDANCE

This is a reading-intensive seminar class. Students should be prepared to complete all the assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss them. Given the small class size, there will not be a formal lecture. Rather, each week different students will provide an overview of the weekly topic and help guide the class in discussion. Class attendance is mandatory, and students will be responsible for all information covered in class.

I encourage students to engage in vibrant and open debate and discussion on the course material. Some topics covered may be sensitive in nature. Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and be respectful of different opinions. If confronted with an opposing idea, my expectation is for students to engage in dialogue with each other to build understanding around these differences. It is important to recognize that each person in the class has valuable insights to contribute and that our learning as a group will be maximized when we each commit to sharing with and listening to each other as openly as possible.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. *Lecture Presentation:* Students will work together to present the weekly class material and help guide the class discussion. As more than 1 student will be assigned to each week, in the first class we will divide the reading material students will to cover. Presentations should not just summarize, but also apply a sociological lens to raise critical connections and critiques across the readings. Students are encouraged to share their own individual insights/perspectives on the readings & their current relevance by, for example, making links to related news articles, videos, social media posts, etc.
2. *Reading Questions:* Students will come to class each week with 2 discussion questions based on the assigned material. Discussion questions must be written/typed ahead of time and submitted as a hard copy to the instructor at the start of class. In total, 8 sets of questions must be submitted, worth 2 points each. Marking will be based on submission and quality of the questions. The questions will be used to help guide class discussion. Students can only submit their own questions. No make-up opportunities will be provided for missed questions.
3. *Workshop:* Students will participate in a workshop to help develop their research methods skills, work with peers to refine their research question, brainstorm possible arguments/angles of inquiry and, identify appropriate supporting literature. We will also explore different forms of “public sociology” writing that can serve as inspiration for writing blog posts. Students should leave the workshop with a basic outline of their proposal. For this to occur, students must come to class with a preliminary sense of what they want to study.
4. *Proposal and Instructor Meeting:* Students will write a 4-page proposal for their final blog post and submit it online to Quercus. They must also schedule a meeting with the instructor

to receive feedback on the proposal. A handout will be provided outlining the structure and expectations for the proposal.

5. *Final Blog Post:* As a class, we will develop an online “publication” where students will each contribute 1 blog post. These posts should be considered as alternatives to a traditional essay, and as a form of “public sociology” writing. Each student will select a topic relevant to the class that they feel represents a significant social issue today and develop their blog post around this topic. Their writing should draw on academic research, but in addition can also make reference to other sources/material. Blog posts should present a sociological analysis of the topic and discuss strategies for addressing it. A handout will be provided with further instructions.
6. *Final Presentations:* Students will present their research and online blog posts to the class. Presentations should be between 7-10 minutes each. A handout will be provided with further instructions.

GRADING SUMMARY

Lecture Presentation	15 points	T.B.D.
Reading Questions	16 points	Ongoing
Workshop	5 points	Oct 15 th
Proposal	15 points	Oct 22 nd
Instructor Meeting	4 points	By Nov 12 th
Final Blog Post	30 points	Nov 26 th
Final Presentation	15 points	Dec 3 rd / 6 th
Total	100 points	

PROCEDURES AND RULES

Course Webpage

The course syllabus, links to all the readings that are in journal article form, handouts, and course announcements will be posted on Quercus. You are responsible for all the course materials and for all announcements. Please make sure to check your official utoronto.ca email addresses as well as the Quercus course page regularly.

Electronic communication and electronic learning technology

You are encouraged to use email communication to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- Assignments will not be accepted via email.
- All course communication should be conducted through Quercus.
- All emails must include the course code (i.e. SOC 496) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student’s full name and student number.

- Emails from students will generally be answered within 48 hours of receipt (except on weekends or holidays).
- All emails should be treated as a form of professional communication.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., “how much is assignment X worth; when is the assignment due; when is the test...”) will not receive a response.
- Emails must identify a specific question or concern. Students asking questions that are very involved or in-depth may be asked to visit office hours to receive a full response.
***Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

Grade Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with their grades have one week to address their concerns, in writing, to the course instructor. Students contesting a grade will submit a 1-2 page typed and printed document, outlining why the grade is believed to be inappropriate. The instructor will then review the claim and respond in writing, either by email or hard copy. Students who remain unhappy with the response should make an appointment with me to review the case.

Missed Deadlines

Late proposal and blog posts will receive a **5% late penalty off the assignment grade for each day past the due date**. Late lecture questions will not be accepted.

In case of illness, you must supply a **Verification of Student Illness or Injury form** (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca) or **doctor’s note**. The original form must be given to me in person, within 10 business days, with the opportunity for me to make a Xerox copy. Forms that are scanned or Xeroxed will not be accepted. If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a **letter from your college registrar** (it is recommended you always advise your registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies).

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to know and adhere to the University's principles of academic integrity. Any act of plagiarism or other unethical behavior will be addressed in accordance with University guidelines. Please see the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" 6 (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) for specific information on academic integrity at the U of T.

Accessibility and Student Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and visit the Accessibility Services Office (<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>) as soon as possible.

Writing Support

Students are urged to seek assistance from the University of Toronto writing centre should they anticipate problems in this area. The writing centre can be visited on the web at: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/centres.html>

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Sept 10th Lecture 1: Introduction
1. Schiebinger, Londa (1993) "Theories of Race and Gender," in *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*. Beacon Press. Pp. 143 – 183 (**Rec.**)
- Sept 17th Lecture 2: Responsibility, Merit and Health Care
1. Brandt, A.M. and Gardiner, M (2000) Antagonism and Accommodation: Interpreting the Relationship between Public Health and Medicine in the US during the 20th Century. *American Journal of Public Health* 90: 707-715.
 2. Farmer, P. (2006) Listening for Prophetic Voices: A critique of Market-Based Medicine. Pp. 160-178 in *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. Oxford University Press
 3. Belluz, Julia (2014) The Truvada Wars. *British Medical Journal* 348: 3811-3813.
- Sept 24th Lecture 3: Diversity and the Medical Professional
1. Witte MH. (1978) Let the Experiment Be Fairly Made. *JAMA*. 239(21):2276–2277.
 2. Timmermans, S. (2003). A black technician and blue babies. *Social Studies of Science*, 33(2), 197-229
 3. Brooks KC (2015) A Silent Curriculum. *JAMA*. 313(19):1909–1910.
 4. Murphy, M. (2016). Hiding in plain sight: The production of heteronormativity in medical education. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(3), 256-289
- Oct 1st Lecture 4: Medical Research and Trials
1. Axelsen, D. E. (1985). Women as victims of medical experimentation: J. Marion Sims' surgery on slave women, 1845-1850. *Sage*, 2(2), 10.
 2. Gamble VN. Under the shadow of Tuskegee: African Americans and health care. *American Journal of Public Health*. 1997;87(11):1773-1778.
 3. Angell, Marcia (1997) The Ethics of Clinical Research in the Third World by. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 337(12): 847 – 849
 4. Elliott, Carl (2014) "The Best-Selling, Billion-Dollar Pills Tested on Homeless People" *Matter* (<https://medium.com/matter/did-big-pharma-test-your-meds-on-homeless-people-a6d8d3fc7dfe>)
- Oct 8th Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)**
- Oct 15th Workshop**
- Oct 22nd Lecture 5: Managed Birth**
1. Theresa Morris (2013) *Cutting it Out: The C-Section Epidemic in America*. New York: NYU Press. pp. 135-174

2. Borges, M. T. R. (2018) A Violent Birth: Reframing Coerced Procedures During Childbirth as Obstetric Violence. *Duke Law Journal*, 67(4), 827+
3. Cohen Shabot, S. and Korem, K. (2018), Domesticating Bodies: The Role of Shame in Obstetric Violence. *Hypatia*, 33: 384-401

***Proposal Due**

Oct 29th

Lecture 6: Managed Populations

1. Smith, A., & LaDuke, W. (2015). *Conquest: Sexual violence and American Indian genocide*. (Chapter 4: Better Dead than Pregnant)
2. Daniels, C. R., & Heidt-Forsyth, E. (2012). Gendered Eugenics and the Problematic of Free Market Reproductive Technologies: Sperm and Egg Donation in the United States. *Signs: Journal Of Women In Culture & Society*, 37(3), 719-747.
3. Chernoguz, Jonathan (2014) "California Set to Prohibit Sterilization of Prisoners" *Biopolitical Times*
(<http://www.biopoliticaltimes.org/article.php?id=7936>)
4. O'Connor, E & Prakash, N (2018) Pregnant Women Say they Miscarried in Immigration Detention and Didn't get the Care the Needed. *Buzzfeed News*.
(<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/emaconnor/pregnant-migrant-women-miscarriage-cpb-ice-detention-trump>)

Nov 5th

Reading Week (no class)

Nov 12th

Lecture 7: Defining and Maintaining "normalcy" I

1. Kessler, S (1990) The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersex Infants. *Signs*. 1(16): 3-26
2. Dreger, Alice & Herndon, April (2009) Progress and Politics in the Intersex Rights Movement. *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* 15: 199-224.
3. Sullivan, N. (2007). "The price to pay for our common good": Genital modification and the somatechnologies of cultural (in)difference. *Social Semiotics*, 17(3), 395-409
4. Jason Behrmann, Vardit Ravitsky. (2013) Queer Liberation, Not Elimination: Why Selecting Against Intersex is Not "Straight" Forward. *The American Journal of Bioethics* 13:10, 39-41

***Meetings with Instructor**

Nov 19th

Lecture 8: Defining and Maintaining "normalcy" II

1. Davis, L. (1995). *Enforcing normalcy: disability, deafness, and the body*. London: Verso. (Chapter 2)
2. Saxton, Marsha (1998) *Disability Rights and Selective Abortion*. Excerpted from "Disability Rights and Selective Abortion," in *Abortion Wars, A Half Century of Struggle: 1950 to 2000*. Rickie Solinger (ed) Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

3. Grue, J. (2016), The social meaning of disability: a reflection on categorisation, stigma and identity. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 38: 957-964

Nov 26nd

Lecture 9: Medical Activism & Reform

1. Nelson, Alondra (2011). *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 115- 152 (Chapter 4: "Spin Doctors: The Politics of Sickle Cell Anemia").
2. Wells, S. (2008). Our Bodies, Ourselves: Reading the Written Body. *Signs*, 33(3): 697-723
3. Brown, P. , Zavestoski, S. , McCormick, S. , Mayer, B. , Morello-Frosch, R. and Gasior Altman, R. (2004), Embodied health movements: new approaches to social movements in health. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 26: 50-80

***Final Essays Due**

Dec 3rd

Final Presentations

Dec 6th

Final Presentations (If needed)