

University of Toronto – Department of Sociology  
**SOC316H1S: Sociology of Health Care**  
**Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:10 pm – 5:00 pm**  
**Summer 2024**

Instructor: Brigid Burke  
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Office hours: Tuesdays 2-3pm via Zoom, or by appointment  
Course Website: Access via U of T Quercus (q.utoronto.ca)  
Class Location: Online via Zoom  
Teaching Assistant: TBA

### **Course Description**

The World Health Organization defines health care systems as: "all organizations, people and actions whose primary intent is to promote, restore or maintain health. This includes efforts to influence determinants of health as well as more direct health-improving activities". In this course, we apply a sociological lens to examine the social, culture, economic and political forces shaping health care systems and the provision of health care services. Major topics will include: the structuring of health care systems and how these are maintained or changed, social disparities in health care, doctor-patient interactions, as well as cultural and market influences on health care. We will apply a sociological lens to critically analyze options for addressing emerging issues in health care.

### **GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

In this course, students will:

1. Acquire knowledge of relevant sociological theories and apply these to examine the structure and organization of health care.
2. Explore historical and emerging trends in health care and their impact population health.
3. Interrogate how power and social inequality shape health care access and experiences.
4. Develop hands-on experience conducting original research on an emerging issue in the sociology of health care.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

The city of Toronto, including the UTSG campus, is on Indigenous territory. We acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. The territory is the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

## Course Format

This is a fully virtual class. Synchronous video lectures will take place via *Zoom* during the scheduled class time. Attendance is required and students are expected to come to class having done the readings so as to participate in class debates and discussions. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive clarifications about the class material or assignments during class, weekly office hours, or any time via email/the class discussion board.

**Prerequisites & Exclusions:** Completion of 1.0 SOC FCE at the 200 or higher level is required to take this course. Students without the prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice. It is recommended, but not required, that students take SOC265 in preparation for this course. Exclusions: SOC244H1, SOC333H5, SOC346H1. *These class prerequisites and exclusions are firm and cannot be waived.*

## Textbooks and Other Materials

- Hyperlinks will be provided for all assigned chapters and journal articles available through the U of T Library.
- Selected book chapters not accessible through the library will be made available as PDFs through Quercus.
- The list of assigned readings is included in the class schedule.
- Every attempt will be made to follow this list, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.
- N.B. if you encounter a broken link throughout the semester, please advise asap so that it can be updated. Unless you contact me and I am unable to resolve the issue in a timely manner, broken links are not excuses for not doing the readings. In addition to contacting me, you can also copy-paste the reading title into the U of T library database search box, to independently locate the reading.

## ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATIONS

**Class Reflections (15% of final grade):** Students will demonstrate understanding of, and critical engagement with, the class subject matter by submitting written reflections after each class. Students will be assigned reflection groups, divide class readings between their groups, and will be given time in class to share what they learnt about their selected readings. Class reflections should be between 250-400 words, be submitted by midnight the day of the class and address the following questions:

1. What did you know about the topic before you did the reading?
2. How did reading the materials impact your understanding or perspective about the topic? What did you learn? What are you still confused or unclear about from the reading?
3. How did coming to class / participating in discussion further refine your understanding about the topic? How did learning about the other context from your partner impact your understanding of the context you read about?

4. What questions did the class/material raise? What are you left with (e.g. a wondering, a question, or a feeling)?

\*Students must attend and participate in class to receive points for corresponding class reflections.

**Health Care Dialogue & Reflection (20%) Due July 25<sup>nd</sup>:** Students will work in pairs to discuss and reflect on access to health care in early adulthood. They will record a 30-minute minimum conversation, and develop a reflection on the conversation that addresses key themes from the assigned readings for Class 6.

Each student will submit: 1) a sound file with the audio recording of the interview and 2) a reflection on the conversation points and what they learn from the overall experience. The reflection can be submitted as a written document (no more than 2 pages), a video (no more than 2 minutes) or a 1-page digital collage combining text and creative visuals.

### **Scaffolded Research Assignment**

Students will work individually, or in groups of up to 3, to complete a content analysis of newspaper articles on a contemporary topic related to health care. This assignment is broken down into 3 main components, and students will be given in class instruction, research workshops and some class time for individual/group work on the assignment. The components of the assignment to be submitted for evaluation include:

**Proposal (15%) – Due Midnight July 16<sup>th</sup>:** Students will propose a topic for a research project on a contemporary health care issue. They will submit a proposal (no more than 2 page) outlining:

1. Their proposed research question
2. The sociological significance of their proposed research
3. Connection of proposed topic to class concepts or theories
4. Search terms & Inclusion/Exclusion criteria to be used in their research, with supporting justification
5. Bibliography (can be on a separate page)

**Literature Review & Data Charting (25%) – Due Midnight Aug 1<sup>st</sup>:** For this component of the project students will:

- 1) Review relevant sociological literature to identify and key concepts/theories/empirical findings relevant to their topic. These will be summarized into themes and used to develop a literature review of no more than 2-3 pages (Excluding Bibliography). As part of this review, students should explain how their research will add to this body of literature.
- 2) Organize newspaper data collected through their research process into a chart. They chart should include individual columns for: data source, date, hyperlink, decision (was the article included/excluded from the final analysis). For all “accepted” articles, students must also include columns for: data/summary, and three additional columns

to chart focal themes, concepts or specific data that students will examine in their analysis.

**Final Project (25%):**

- 1) Students will participate in a research symposium where they present and discuss their (preliminary) findings, and work in break out rooms to provide peer feedback on and identify overarching themes, areas of contention and emerging issues in the sociology of health care. Students will complete an in-class reflection on their take-aways from the research symposium (In-Class, August 8<sup>th</sup> - 5%).
- 2) Students will submit a final report that reflects the process and product of the research completed throughout the semester. The report will offer a narrative of the project, underscoring the research question and highlighting the importance of the research findings. Students will be assessed on critical and analytical skills in formulating a research question, describing the research design (methods), synthesizing (not summarizing) the data, calling on a theoretical approach to frame and explain the analyses, and highlighting the project's contributions to the field. This can be submitted either as a formal research paper (no more than 8 pages) or a recorded video presentation (no more than 8 minutes). (Due Midnight Aug 12<sup>th</sup> - 20%)

**N.B. Rubric and Hand-Out with more specific assignment instructions will be posted to Quercus for each assignment. Class time will be accorded to go over assignment instructions and expectation and answer any student questions. Students are also encouraged to follow up by Quercus message or in office hours for additional support.**

GRADING SUMMARY

Assignment	Weight	Due Date
Class Reflections	15 points	Ongoing
Health Care Dialogue & Reflection	20 points	July 25 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Research Project</b>		
Proposal	15 points	July 16 <sup>th</sup>
Literature Review & Data Charting	25 points	Aug. 1 <sup>st</sup>
Final Project	25 points	Aug. 12 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>	

You will receive at least one significant mark (15%) before the last day you can drop a course without academic penalty (July 29<sup>th</sup>).

Please note that Grades in Quercus gives early access to preliminary grades; it does not represent your official final marks. For final grades logon to [ACORN](#).

## PROCEDURES AND RULES

### Course Webpage

The course syllabus, links to all the readings, handouts, assignment submission links and course announcements will be posted on Quercus. You are responsible for all course content posted to Quercus. Please make sure to check your official utoronto.ca email addresses, Quercus Messages as well as the course Quercus page regularly. *Please review your Quercus settings to ensure that course notifications are turned on.*

### Electronic communication

You are encouraged to use electronic 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. See above for how to submit them.
- All online communication must be conducted through Quercus Messaging (not Outlook).
- All online communication must include the course code (i.e., SOC316) in the subject line.
- All online communication should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Online communication from students will generally be answered within 48 hours of receipt (except on weekends or holidays).
- All online course communication must maintain a respectful and professional tone.
- Online communication asking 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.
- Online communication must identify a specific question or concern. Students asking questions that are very involved or in-depth may be asked to attend office hours.  
**\*Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

### Grade Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with their grades have 1 week to address their concerns, in writing, to the teaching assistant. Students contesting a grade will submit a 1-page typed document to the TA, outlining why the grade is believed to be inappropriate. The teaching assistant will then review the claim and respond in writing by email. Students who remain unhappy with the response should make an appointment with me to review the case. Please note that upon re-grading your mark may go up, down or stay the same.

### Missed Deadlines/Classes

Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days of**

missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with **one of the following**:

Absence declaration via ACORN

U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form

College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)

Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor. It is recommended you always advise your registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies. Should this occur, I advise you to inform both me and your registrar as soon as possible so we can coordinate any needed accommodations. If you delay, it becomes more difficult to put accommodations in place.

I understand students may experience difficulties in completing coursework. My priority is on you, your wellbeing and your learning *as people*, and in supporting your mastery on the material and overall success in the class. If you feel like you are falling behind or experiencing academic difficulties in the course, I encourage you to make an appointment with me so that I can assess the situation and recommend a strategy for moving forward. Again, if this is the case it's imperative you reach out as soon as possible, as the longer you wait the harder it will be for me to help you.

- **Class Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded each class. Please note, class time will be dedicated for reviewing assignment content, group work and reflection. Part of the classes will also be dedicated to instruction and work on class assignments. Students who fail to attend a class will miss vital instruction, support and work time on assignments.
- **Class Reflections:** As noted above, students **must attend class** to receive marks for the corresponding reflections. There are no-make ups for these assignments. If you missed class, you will receive zero for the corresponding reflection.
- It is important to note that the major research project in this class is a scaffolded assignment. Feedback on earlier components is crucial for being able to complete later components. Given the intensive summer semester timeline, I cannot guarantee that students submitting late work on an assignment will receive feedback before the following assignment is due. Students must therefore prioritize submitting all assignments by the stated deadlines.

#### Academic Integrity & Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

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](#)" for specific information on academic integrity at the U of T. See also: [How Not to Plagiarize](#). Students may choose to use generative artificial intelligence tools as they work through the

assignments in this course; this use must be documented/cited in an appendix for each assignment. The documentation should include what tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results from the AI were incorporated into the submitted work. If you do rely on AI to help generate ideas (e.g. asking ChatGPT to provide a list of contemporary debates about gender to help inspire your essay topic selection), you are responsible, and will be held accountable for any resulting limitations or biases with the integration of the generated content. You **must not** integrate and pass off any AI-generated content as your own original work, you **must not** cite ideas from any articles identified through AI without finding, reading, vetting and developing your own original assessment of these sources. You **must** use AI responsibly, judiciously and in conformity with academic principles of academic integrity. If you have any doubts or concerns, you are responsible for consulting with me or your TA to ensure that your work and work process conforms to this policy.

#### 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](#) as soon as possible.

#### Writing Support

Students are urged to seek assistance from the [University of Toronto Writing Centre](#). This is recommended for all students as valuable resource for strengthening writing assignments (which you are paying for!), but especially for students who anticipate any problems in this area.

#### Food Insecurity Support

Students who are experiencing food insecurity are encouraged to access either [The University of Toronto Student Union \(UTSU\) Food Bank](#) or [The Toronto Food Bank and Community Food Programs](#).

### **ENGAGING WITH COURSE MATERIAL**

To prepare yourself to engage with the class materials as critical and analytic consumers and to better prepare you to write the class memos, you should ask yourself a few questions as you read the assigned materials: *What are the main points that the author is trying to make? What are the specific components of each theory being discussed? How do each of the theories/approaches relate to each other or contradict each other? Are there contingencies or specific conditions under which the theories do/do not apply, or certain contexts in which they are more effective/applicable? What implications do these readings/theories have for how we understand human identity, thoughts, behaviour and/or interaction from a sociological perspective? How do these theories explain social inequality?* Being able to answer these questions will help you move beyond absorbing facts, to develop a critical lens. If you are unsure about how to approach a specific reading or you are confused about any of the theories/approaches covered in the class, I strongly encourage you to post a question to the discussion board or to come speak to me during office hours.

## CLASS ETIQUETTE

I encourage students to engage in vibrant debate and discussion about 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.

During virtual classes, for example, students will not only hear the instructor lecture, but they are also exposed to their classmates' questions (many of which they might not have thought of on themselves), opinions/responses (which they may or may not agree with to varying degrees), real life examples/experiences (which may resonate with them in a variety of ways: e.g., as relatable, reassuring, eye-opening, strange, or uncomfortable), etc. Regular participation in class is therefore a vital element of your and your classmates' learning and should be prioritized.

The same level of respect and professionalism should be brought to group work. Students are expected to be respectful of others' time, ideas, and perspectives, and work dialectically to resolve any conflicts. Students are expected to be proactive in reaching out to the instructor as needed for additional problem-solving support (e.g., office hours, or by Quercus messages). Please be patient and supportive of groupmates facing challenges. I have adopted flexible submission policies for precisely this reason.

**Videotaping and recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

- July 2<sup>nd</sup>      **Class 1:** Introduction
1. Strohschein & Weitz (2014) *The Sociology of Health, Illness and Health Care* (On Quercus)
- July 4<sup>th</sup>      **Class 2:** Health Care as a Social Determinant of Health
1. Navarro, V. (2009). [What we mean by social determinants of health](#). *Global Health Promotion*. 16(1), 05-16
  2. Quesnel-Valee, A. & Jenkins, T. (2010) *Social Policies and Health Inequalities*. Pp. 464-483 in [The New Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology](#). Ed: Cockerham, W.C. Wiley-Blackwell.
- July 9<sup>th</sup>      **Class 3:** Health Care in Canada
1. Strohschein & Weitz (2014) *A History of Health Care in Canada* (On Quercus)

2. Bryant, T., & Raphael, D. (2020). Moving Towards the Future. In: [The politics of health in the Canadian welfare state](#). Canadian Scholars.
3. Listen: [Uninsured: How universal is Canada's Health Care System](#)  
Recommended: Marchildon, G.P. (2014) [The Three Dimensions of Universal Medicare in Canada](#). *Canadian Public Administration*. 57(3), 362-382

July 11<sup>th</sup>

**Class 4:** Evaluating Different Models of Health Care

1. Strohschein & Weitz (2014) Health Care in Other Countries (On Quercus)
2. Schneider et al. (2021) [Reflecting Poorly: Health Care in the U.S. Compare to Other High Income Countries](#). The Commonwealth Fund.
3. Light, D. W. (2000). [Fostering a Justice-Based Health Care System](#). *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(1), 62–74
4. Navarro V. [The Consequences of Neoliberalism in the Current Pandemic](#). *International Journal of Health Services*. 2020;50(3):271-275.

July 16<sup>th</sup>

**Class 5:** Critiques and Alternatives

1. Farmer, P. (2004). [Listening For Prophetic Voices: A Critique Of Market-Based Medicine](#). In *Pathologies of Power* (1st ed., pp. 160-). University of California Press.
2. Borges, M. T. R. (2018). [A Violent Birth: Reframing Coerced Procedures During Childbirth As Obstetric Violence](#). *Duke Law Journal*, 67(4), 827–862.
3. Geiger, S. (2021). [Healthcare Activism: Markets, Morals, and the Collective Good](#). In *Healthcare Activism*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

July 18<sup>th</sup>

**Class 6:** Access and Utilization of Health Care Services

1. Andersen, R. (1995). [Revisiting the Behavioral Model and Access to Medical Care: Does it Matter?](#) *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 36(1), 1-10
2. Luftey, K. & Freese, J. (2005) [Towards Some Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality: Socioeconomic Status and Health in Routine Clinic Visit for Diabetes](#). *American Journal of Sociology*, 110(5), 1326-1272
3. Watch: [LGBTIQ+ People Talk About Their Experiences Accessing Health Care](#)

July 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Class 7: Research Project Workshop**

July 25<sup>th</sup>

**Class 8:** Health Care Professions

1. Strohschein & Weitz (2014) Health Care Professions (On Quercus)
2. Murphy, M. (2016). [Hiding in plain sight: The production of heteronormativity in medical education](#). *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(3), 256-289

3. Brooks KC (2015) [A Silent Curriculum](#). *JAMA*. 313(19):1909–1910.
4. Shanafelt, T. D., Schein, E., Minor, L. B., Trockel, M., Schein, P., & Kirch, D. (2019). [Healing the Professional Culture of Medicine](#). *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 94(8), 1556–1566.

July 30<sup>th</sup>

**Class 9:** Clinical Encounters

1. Shim, J. (2010). [Cultural Health Capital: A Theoretical Approach to Understanding Health Care Interactions and the Dynamics of Unequal Treatment](#). *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 51, 1-15.
2. Schnittker, J. (2004) [Social Distance in the Clinical Encounter](#). *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 67(3): 217-235.
3. Timmermans, S. (2020). [The Engaged Patient: The Relevance of Patient–Physician Communication for Twenty-First-Century Health](#). *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 61(3), 259-273

Recommended: Parsons, T. (1975). [The Sick Role and the Role of the Physician Reconsidered](#). *Millbank Memorial Fund Quarterly. Health and Society*, 53(3), 257-278.

Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>

**Class 10:** Cultural Competency & Safety in Health Care

1. Kleinman, A., & Benson, P. (2006). [Anthropology in the Clinic: The Problem of Cultural Competency and How to Fix It](#). *PLoS Medicine*, 3(10), e294
2. Fadiman, A. (1997) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. (Chapters 3 and 5) – On Quercus
3. Muller da Silva, M. (2024). [A moral economy of care: How clinical discourses perpetuate Indigenous-specific discrimination and racism in western Canadian emergency departments](#). *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*.

Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>

**Class 11:** Emerging Issues: AI in Health Care

1. d’Elia, A., Gabbay, M., Rodgers, S., Kierans, C., Jones, E., Durrani, I., Thomas, A., & Frith, L. (2022). [Artificial intelligence and health inequities in primary care: a systematic scoping review and framework](#). *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 10(Suppl 1), e001670-
2. Ledford, H. (2019). [Millions of black people affected by racial bias in health-care algorithms](#). *Nature (London)*, 574(7780), 608–609.
3. Watch: [Responsible AI: Fighting AI Bias in Healthcare](#)

Aug. 8<sup>th</sup>

**Class 12:** Research Symposium