**Soc 201A**

# Topics: Medical Sociology

Spring 2012

12:30-1:30 MWF

Asbury Hall 222

**Instructor:** Alicia Suarez

**Office:** Asbury Hall 305

**Office hours:** MW 1:45-3:15 (or by appointment)

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Are you healthy or ill? How do you know? Can your race, class, and gender really affect your health? How has medicine as an institution changed? How do health care providers’ decisions affect your health? Is the health care system able to take care of our country’s citizens? These and many, many more questions will be explored in this topics course: Medical Sociology.

The course is divided into four sections. In the first section, we will explore how macro level factors affect health. Next, we will address the cultural meanings and interpersonal experiences of illness. We will then shift to looking at health care providers followed by a brief evaluation of health care service and reform in the United States.

**COURSE GOALS**

By the end of the semester, you will have gained an understanding of:

-How what may have seemed to be purely physiological, health, can be affected by a variety of cultural and structural factors.

-What it means to be ill and how persons with illness live, cope, struggle, and prosper with illness.

-The rich history of medicine and the changing nature of health care and all of the ensuing implications.

-The multitude of factors that affect the healthcare an individual may receive.

-The many ethical decisions faced by healthcare providers, health care organizations, and government agencies.

-Practical knowledge for you and your family’s future health as well as insight for those of you interesting in working as a health care provider.

In addition, you will learn how to compare and contrast different materials from a sociological perspective in order to heighten your critical thinking skills as well as writing, discussion, and presentation skills.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Conrad, Peter. 2009. *The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives.* 8th ed.

New York: Worth Publishers.

Gawande, Atul. 2002. *Complications: A Surgeon’s Notes on an Imperfect Science.* New York: Picador.

Quadagno, Jill. 2005. *One Nation Uninsured: Why the U.S. Has No National Health Insurance.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sered, Susan Starr and Rushika Fernandopulle. 2006. *Uninsured in America.* Los

Angeles: University of California Press.

The required articles (listed in italics in the course schedule) are available on eReserve on Moodle.

### EVALUATION

**Exams:** There will be two exams (100 points each) in this course. The exams will be short-answer and essay based. We will discuss this further in class.

**Active participation:** I expect you to attend class prepared and ready to *engage* with the material and the class community. Simply showing up to class having skimmed the readings is insufficient. If everyone does this, we will have a boring class (and you will have to listen to me the whole time). If only a few people are prepared, we will only know their opinions and miss out on the full classroom experience of everyone participating. Being an engaged student involves not only classroom participation, but can include coming to office hours, bringing in articles/news stories, or sharing information from the media/popular culture pertaining to the topic of medical sociology. You can earn up to 30 points of your grade from your *active participation*. So, how do I actively participate you may ask?

1) Really, truly listen to others.

2) Ask others to clarify their statements if you don’t understand or need more elaboration.

3) Try to answer questions that are raised in class.

4) Ask questions about readings, lecture, etc.

5) Support your statements with *evidence* (from lecture and/or readings).

6) Summarize various statements made in class; show the linkages or disparate concepts discussed.

7) *Constructively* criticize your colleagues.

8) Contribute to our model site.

I do not expect you to be able to practice these skills perfectly. Instead, they will be a goal to strive for. Some of us are shyer than others, but these are acquired skills that can benefit everyone.

**Leading discussion:** In small groups of 2 or 3, you will lead discussion one day during the semester (10 points). You should have questions prepared to get the class discussing the book chapter due that day (you are not responsible for covering the article from the Conrad reader or e-reserve articles). You should NOT outline the main points or summarize the readings---everyone is capable of doing that outside of class. Instead, your job is to stimulate connections with other course materials, issues, criticisms or questions that remain concerning the reading. You may bring in outside material (newspaper articles, film/TV clips, current events, etc.) that will facilitate these goals. This should last 15- 20 minutes. You earn points through demonstrating thoughtful planning of your discussion, clear comprehension of the chapter(s), and sophisticated connections to other course materials.

**Papers:** There is one required papers for the course (with two editions) and a series of 4 reaction papers. Please see handouts for more information.

**Grading:**

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| **Exam 1 (3/21)** | **100 points** |
| **Exam 2 (5/17)** | **100 points** |
| **Paper 1 (2/22)** | **60 points** |
| **Paper 1 (part 2) (4/2)** | **60 points** |
| **Reaction Papers** | **60 points** |
| **Active Participation** | **40 points** |
| **Total** | **420 points** |

I will follow the usual DePauw University grading system whereby:

A or A- reflects, “achievement of exceptionally high merit.”

B+, B, B- reflects, “achievement at a level superior to the basic level.”

C+, C, C- reflects, “basic achievement.”

D+, D, D- reflects, “achievement which falls short of satisfying the quantitative and qualitative requirements yet warrants credit.”

Remember, you do not start the course with an A and lose points. You essentially start with zero points and *earn* your grades along the way. Please meet with me if at any time you have questions about your grades. **Do not wait until the end of the semester**.

\*\*\* An important point to note about grades. Grades do NOT reflect your effort, but the result of your efforts. We are not all alike and some of us must put forth more effort while others put forth minimal effort and earn higher marks. We are simply diverse people with different talents and abilities. Therefore, I do NOT grade your effort. In addition, grades do NOT reflect what I think you do or do not deserve. Your grade is what YOU earn in the course.

### OTHER POLICIES

### Classroom Etiquette: In order to have a positive and safe learning environment, we as a class will have to agree to disagree at times. Some of us may have strong feelings and/or reactions to class materials, readings, etc. Expressing these reactions is encouraged as long as this is done in a respectful manner. Hostile and/or disrespectful behavior is not allowed. In addition, we must be watchful to not take up too much “airtime” and allow for *everyone* to share. Talking *a lot* is generally *not* a good way of actively participating. Instead, carefully listening to others and clearly and concisely expressing your input is the best strategy. Remember to address each other when talking rather than directing your comments to me (unless they are solely intended for me!) Of course, all cell phones must be turned off. Texting is NOT appropriate behavior in class. Chronic tardiness and/or habitual sleeping, disruptiveness, etc. will lead to embarrassing public shaming (not to mention the effects on your grade). Finally, about laptops, I discourage use of laptops in class and recommend taking notes by hand. A laptop is often a distraction and hinders active participation.

### Absences: It is *your responsibility* to find out what happened in class, not mine. Asking me, “What did I miss?” or “What did we do in class on …?” are not appropriate inquiries. I am, however, more than happy to go over notes *after* you have gotten them from another student. Remember, in order to *actively participate,* you have to be present.

**Late work/Make-up Work:** All papers are due at the beginning of class and all exams will be taken in class on the schedule day, unless, I receive *in advance*, an official notification that you will be off-campus on official university business or some other *legitimate and verifiable* excused absence. Late papers will be docked a letter grade for each day late. Out of fairness to the entire class, no exceptions will be made, do not ask for one. There will be NO EXTRA CREDIT assignments available to anyone.

**Academic Dishonesty/Misconduct:** I take academic dishonesty or misconduct extremely seriously as surely you do as well. Please be familiar with the DePauw University Academic Integrity Policy available in the *Student Handbook.* Any student violating this policy will be subject to a range of disciplinary actions.

**Students with Disabilities:** DePauw University offers accommodations to students with disabilities. It is your responsibility to contact the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator: DiAnna Washington, Harrison Hall 302 to request accommodations.

**Communication:** Please come and visit me during office hours. I am there waiting for you to discuss readings, lecture, grading, exams, classroom behaviors, sociology, etc. If you cannot come to scheduled office hours, please let me know and we will work something else out. The best way to reach me is through e-mail. I will communicate with the class through email. I expect each of you to check e-mail on a *daily* basis.

### SCHEDULE

Readings must be completed *prior* to class on the due date. We may get off schedule and I will make adjustments accordingly in the event that this occurs.

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| 1/30 (M) | Introduction to Class |  |
| **HEALTH AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE** | | |
| 2/1 (W) | History of Health and Disease | Conrad: 1-19  Uninsured: Intro and Appendix 1 |
| 2/3 (F) | Social Class | Conrad: 24-29; 55-66; 102-107  *Phelan, Link, and Tehranifar* |
| 2/6 (M) |  | Uninsured: Ch. 1 |
| 2/8 (W) | Race/Ethnicity | Conrad: 30-37  *Willliams and Sternthal* |
| 2/10 (F) |  | Uninsured: Ch. 2 |
| 2/13 (M) | Gender | Conrad: 38-54 |
| 2/15 (W) |  | Uninsured: Ch. 3  **Group 1 leads discussion** |
| 2/17 (F) | Social Support | Conrad: 78-101  Uninsured: Ch. 4 |
| 2/20 (M) | Occupation and Environmental Hazards | Conrad: 70-77  Uninsured: Ch. 5 |
| **CULTURAL MEANINGS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF ILLNESS** | | |
| **2/22 (W)** | Social Meanings | *Conrad and Barker*  **Paper 1 Due** |
| 2/24 (F) |  | Conrad: 108-125; 126-152 |
| 2/27 (M) |  | Uninsured: Ch. 6  **Group 2 leads discussion** |
| 2/29 (W) | Medicalization | Conrad: 468-492 |
| 3/2 (F) |  | Uninsured: Ch. 7 |
| 3/5 (M) | Becoming “Sick” | *Charmaz (Pp.11-40)* |
| 3/7 (W) |  | Uninsured: Ch. 9  **Group 3 leads discussion** |
| 3/9 (F) | Experiencing Illness | *Bury* |
| 3/12 (M) |  | Conrad: 153-185 |
| 3/14 (W) |  | In class discussion of interview data |
| 3/16 (F) |  | Uninsured: Ch.10  **Group 4 leads discussion** |
| 3/19 (M) |  | Uninsured: Ch 11 and Review |
| **3/21 (W)** |  | **Exam 1** |
| **3/23 (F)** |  | **NO CLASS: Suarez at SSS meetings** |
| 3/26-3/30 |  | Spring Break |
| **HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS** | | |
| **4/2 (M)** | Medicine as an Institution | Conrad: 191-212 |
| 4/4 (W) |  | Complications: Intro  **Paper 1 (part 2) due** |
| 4/6 (F) | Changing Medical Profession | Conrad: 213-248  *Timmermans and Oh* |
| 4/9 (M) |  | Complications: 11-74  **Group 5 leads discussion** |
| 4/11 (W) |  | Conrad: 249-277  Complications: 75-106  **Guest Speaker: Pablo Boada** |
| **4/13 (F)** |  | **NO CLASS: Suarez at MT conference** |
| 4/16 (M) | Becoming a Health Care Provider | *Becker and Geer, Fox, Chambliss* |
| 4/18 (W) |  | Complications: 109-145  **Group 6 leads discussion** |
| 4/20 (F) | Provider/Patient Interactions | Conrad: 329-336  *Boyer and Luftey* |
| 4/23 (M) |  | Complications: 146-183  **Group 7 leads discussion** |
| 4/25 (W) | Social Influences on Decision Making | Conrad: 370-404  Complications: 187-227 |
| 4/27 (F) | Structural Influences on Decision Making | *Clark et al*  Complications: 228-252  Film: *Big Bucks, Big Pharma* |
| **HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND REFORM** | | |
| 4/30 (M) | Health Care Services | *Wright and Perry*  One Nation: Intro-Ch. 1 |
| 5/2 (W) |  | One Nation: Ch. 2-3  **Group 8 leads discussion** |
| 5/4 (F) | Health Care Reform | *Mechanic and Alpine*  One Nation: Ch. 4-5 |
| 5/7 (M) |  | One Nation: Ch. 6-7  **Group 9 leads discussion** |
| 5/9 (W) |  | One Nation: Ch. 8 |
| 5/17 (Th) 8:30am |  | **EXAM 2** |

Becker and Geer. 1978. “The Fate of Idealism in Medical School.” Pp. 138-143 in

*Dominant Issues in Medical Sociology,* edited by Howard D. Schwartz and Cary S. Kart. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Boyer, Carol A. and Karen E. Luftey. 2010. “Examining Critical Health Policy Issues within and beyond the Clinical Encounter: Patient-Provider Relationships and Help-Seeking Behaviors.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S80-S93.

Bury, Michael. 1982. "Chronic Illness as Biographical Disruption." *Sociology of Health*

*and Illness* 4:167-182.

Chambliss, Daniel. 1999. “What It Means to Be a Nurse.” Pp. 251-262 in *Health, Illness,*

*and Healing*, edited by Kathy Charmaz and Debora A. Paterniti. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Charmaz, Kathy. 1991. “Chronic Illness as Interruption,” Pp. 11-40 in *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Clark, Jack A., Deborah A. Potter, and John B. McKinlay. 1991. “Bringing Social

Structure Back Into Clinical Decision Making.” *Social Science and Medicine* 32 (8): 853-866.

Conrad, Peter and Kristin K. Barker. 2010. “The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S67-S79.

Fox, Renee C. 1978. “Training for Uncertainty.” Pp. 189-202 in *Dominant Issues in*

*Medical Sociology,* edited by Howard D. Schwartz and Cary S. Kart. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Mechanic, David and Donna D. McAlpine. 2010. “Sociology of Health Care Reform.”

*Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S147-S159.

Timmermans, Stefan and Hyeyoung Oh. 2010. “The Continued Social Transformation of

the Medical Profession.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S94-S106.

Williams, David R. and Michelle Sternthal. 2010. “Understanding Racial-ethnic

Disparities in Health.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S15-S27.

Wright, Eric R. and Brea L. Perry. 2010. “Medical Sociology and Health Services

Research.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S107-119.