**Soc 201A**

# Topics: Medical Sociology

Spring 2011

12:40-2:10 M W

**Instructor:** Alicia Suarez

**Office:** Asbury Hall 305

**Office hours:** 2:30-3:30 M W; F 1-2 (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 an evaluation of the health care systems.

**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 50 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.

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 (15 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, 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.

**Papers:** There are two required papers for the course. The first paper is worth 75 points and is due­­­­ ­February 24. The second paper is worth 100 points and is due May 12. Please see handouts on each paper for more information.

**Global Health Care Presentations:** In small groups, you will explore another country’s health care system including pros and cons of their system. Your group will prepare a short presentation (10-12 minutes) of your main findings including feasibility of this system in the U.S. Your group must turn in a works cited documenting the sources (at least 2 per person with one being an academic source) of your presentation. We will choose groups and countries in class.

**Grading:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Exam 1 (3/17)** | **100 points** |
| **Exam 2 (5/19)** | **100 points** |
| **Paper 1 (2/24)** | **75 points** |
| **Paper 2 (5/12)** | **100 points** |
| **Global Health Care Presentations (5/3)** | **25 points** |
| **Active Participation** | **65 points** |
| **Total** | **465 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.

### 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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| 1/31 (M) | Introduction to Class |  |
| **HEALTH AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE** | | |
| 2/2 (W) | History of Health and Disease | Conrad: 1-19  Uninsured: Intro and Appendix 1 |
| 2/7 (M) | Social Class | Conrad: 24-29; 55-66; 102-107  Uninsured: Ch. 1 |
| 2/9 (W) | Race/Ethnicity | Conrad: 30-37  *Smaje*  Uninsured: Ch. 2 |
| 2/14 (M) | Gender | Conrad: 38-54  Uninsured: Ch. 3  **Group 1 leads discussion** |
| 2/16 (W) | Social Support | Conrad: 78-101  Uninsured: Ch. 4 |
| 2/21 (M) | Occupation and Environmental Hazards | Conrad: 70-77  Uninsured: Ch. 5  **Group 2 leads discussion** |
| **CULTURAL MEANINGS AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF ILLNESS** | | |
| **2/23 (W)** | Social Meanings | Conrad: 108-125  *Brown*  Uninsured: Ch. 6  **Paper 1 Due** |
| 2/28 (M) |  | Conrad: 126-152  Uninsured: Ch. 7  **Group 3 leads discussion** |
| 3/2 (W) | Medicalization | Conrad: 468-492  Uninsured: Ch. 8 |
| 3/7 (M) | Becoming “Sick” | *Charmaz (Pp.11-40)*, *Zola*  Uninsured: Ch. 9  **Group 4 leads discussion** |
| 3/9 (W) | Experiencing Illness | *Bury, Mechanic*  Uninsured: Ch.10 |
| 3/14 (M) |  | Conrad: 153-185  Uninsured: Ch.11  **Group 5 leads discussion** |
| **3/16 (W)** |  | **EXAM 1** |
| 3/21-3/25 |  | Spring Break |
| **HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS** | | |
| 3/28 (M) | Medicine as an Institution | Conrad: 191-212  Complications: Intro |
| 3/30 (W) | Changing Medical Profession | Conrad: 213-248  Complications: 11-74 |
| 4/4 (M) |  | Conrad: 249-277  Complications: 75-106  **Group 6 leads discussion** |
| 4/6 (W) | Becoming a Health Care Provider | *Becker and Geer, Fox, Chambliss*  Complications: 109-145 |
| 4/11 (M) | Provider/Patient Interactions | *Waitzkin,* Conrad: 329-336  Changing Face: Ch. 6  Complications: 146-183 |
| 4/13 (W) | Social Influences on Decision Making | Conrad: 370-404  Complications: 187-227  **Group 7 leads discussion** |
| 4/18 (M) | Structural Influences on Decision Making | *Clark et al*  Complications: 228-252  Film: *Big Bucks, Big Pharma* |
| **HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS** | | |
| 4/20 (W) | The Health Care Industry | Conrad: 278-296  One Nation: Intro-Ch. 1 |
| 4/25 (M) | US Health Care | Conrad: 321-328  One Nation: Ch. 2-3  **Group 8 leads discussion** |
| 4/27 (W) | Health Care Systems | Conrad: 534-552  One Nation: Ch. 4 |
| 5/2 (M) |  | Conrad: 553-574  One Nation: Ch. 5  **Group 9 leads discussion** |
| **5/4 (W)** | Health Care Reform | Conrad: 493-502  One Nation: Ch. 6  **Global health care presentations** |
| 5/9 (M) |  | Conrad: 575-591, *Strauss and Corbin*  One Nation: Ch. 7 |
| **5/11 (W)** |  | One Nation: Ch. 8  **Paper 2 Due and in class discussion** |
| 5/18 (W) 8:30am |  | **EXAM 2** |

**REFERENCES FOR ARTICLES**

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.

Brown, Phil. 1995. “Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and

Illness” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (Extra Issue): 34-52.

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.

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. 2001. “The Concept of Illness Behavior.” Pp. 130-135 in *Readings in*

*Medical Sociology,* edited by Duane A. Matcha. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Smaje, Chris. 2000. “Race, Ethnicity, and Health”. Pp. 114-128 in *Handbook of Medical*

*Sociology*, edited by Chloe E. Bird, Peter Conrad and Allen M. Fremont. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Strauss, Anselm L. and Juliet M.Corbin. 1999. “Why Major Reform is Needed.” Pp.

591-600 in *Health, Illness, and Healing*, edited by Kathy Charmaz and Debora A. Paterniti. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Waitzkin, Howard. 2000. “Changing Patient-Physician Relationships in the Changing

Health-Policy Environment.” Pp. 271-283 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology*, edited by Chloe E. Bird, Peter Conrad and Allen M. Fremont. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Zola, Irving. 1973. “Pathways to the Doctor-From Person to Patient.” *Social Science and*

*Medicine* 7 (9): 677-689.