

Fall 2012
920:523:01
Monday 9:50am-12:30pm

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SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Course Description

The sociology of health and illness (also known as medical sociology) is a broad field examining the social production of health, wellness, illness and mortality. We cannot understand the topics of health and illness simply by looking at biological phenomena and medical knowledge, but, instead, we must also consider a variety of social, political, economic, and cultural forces. We will survey the central topics in the field, with an emphasis on understanding the way that the following themes: the structural and cultural dimensions of health; health inequalities; the profession of medicine; the experience of illness; and attempts to reform healthcare. Throughout the course, we will apply sociological theory and the recent scholarship of anthropology, history and social and cultural studies of science to make sense of contemporary issues in medicine. Although the course focuses on the United States, we will try whenever possible to place issues in a global context and students are welcome to explore these topics in their course papers.

Learning Goals

Students will

- Be versed in a wide range of theory and research in the sociology of health and illness
- Understand the history and trajectory of the field of medical sociology, including its recent turn towards the sociology of science.
- Be able to use concepts developed across disciplines to analyze biomedical research on health and illness
- Critically assess how health is produced through social, political, economic and cultural forces on a macro, meso and micro level.

Course Logistics

This is a seminar course. The quality of our discussions depends on your full participation. Typically, I will begin with a short presentation to provide background and history for understanding the readings. The discussion that follows will be grounded in the reading and based on your comments submitted for the week. Students must fulfill the following requirements:

1) Over the course of the semester, each student will be expected to write a 1-2 page memo responding to each week's readings. (single-space is fine.) These comments will be pasted into the discussion section on sakai the day before class (Sunday) by 7pm, so that everyone has time to read each other's comments by Monday morning. Comments may be informal, but they must be a *critical* response. Memos will be graded as 'check,' 'check plus,' or 'check minus.' You can take four exemptions from writing these memos. If you choose to take an exemption, please let me know by email.

These memos should help you focus your ideas in a way that can contribute to our collective conversation during class time. In general, each memo should include both a synthetic analysis of some dimension of the course readings that you found compelling and warrants further discussion and two to three well-crafted questions for the class to consider as a group. These memos ought to address readings within that particular week, but you may also compare that week's readings to themes and theories discussed earlier in the semester. This is also a good opportunity to raise questions and concerns about the substance of the readings. Finally, these memos are a great opportunity to develop a killer set of notes.

These memos are worth 20% of your grade.

2) Participate in class! This is a seminar and each of you are expected to contribute to the discussion. Part of participation includes helping me lead at least one weekly class discussion for a single article assigned that week. Sign-up sheets will be passed around during the first week of class. As a codiscussant, your job is to introduce critically the material and to come up with a few (3-5) substantive questions in the form of a one-page handout (to be electronically distributed to the rest of the group by 9 pm on the day before class) to get the discussion rolling. Such questions may target what you consider the key issue/problematic raised by the author(s) in question, a shortcoming in the argument/evidence, a puzzling claim, broader implications, exciting/provocative comparisons, and so forth. You will meet with me 15 minutes before class to go over our approach to discussion for the day.

Class participation is worth 20% of your grade.

3) Students taking the course for credit are expected to submit a 17-20 page paper on a topic related to this course. The paper can be analytical, critically reflecting on a substantive issue related to the sociology of health and illness or you may choose to write a research proposal, drawing on theoretical perspectives and existing empirical work to identify an interesting and until now unsolved empirical question.

In order to get approval for your topic, you must submit a 2-3 page memo describing your project, complete with a brief bibliography by October 19th, after which you are expected to make an appointment to discuss this paper with me further. Of course, I'm happy to discuss this with you in advance. **Final paper is due on December 16th.** Late papers are strongly discouraged.

The memo is worth 5% of your grade. The paper is worth 45% of your grade.

4) Students will present their research in progress in class on the last day of class.

The presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

Required Texts

- Anne Fadiman. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Kristen Barker. 2005. *The Fibromyalgia Story: Medical Authority and Women's Worlds of Pain*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Gil, Eyal et. al. 2011. *The Autism Matrix*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness

September 10, 2012

Week 2 Cultures of Medicine

September 17, 2012

Anne Fadiman. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Chapters 1-9, 11, 13-15, 17

Week 3 Health inequalities: Theoretical frameworks

September 17, 2012

The McKeowan Thesis: American Journal of Public Health, 2002, 92(5):

Szreter, Simon. "Rethinking McKeown: The relationship between public health and social change." pp 722-4.

Colgrove, James. "The McKeown thesis: A historical controversy and its enduring influence." pp 725-9.

Link, Bruce and Jo Phelan. "McKeown and the idea that social conditions are fundamental causes of disease." pp 730-2.

Wilkinson, Richard and Pickett, Kate. 2009. Greater Inequality: The Hidden Key to Better Health and Higher Scores. *The Spirit Level*. (excerpt).

Schnittker, Jason and Jane D. McLeod. 2005. "The Social Psychology of Health Disparities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 31:75–103.

Williams, David R. and Michelle Sternthal. 2010. "Understanding Racial-Ethnic Disparities in Health: Sociological Contributions." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51: S15-27.

Read, Jen'nan Ghazal, and Bridget K. Gorman. 2010. "Gender and Health Inequality." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 36: 371-86.

Week 4 Sickening social worlds

October 1, 2012

Williams, David R. and Chiquita Collins. 2001. Racial residential segregation: A fundamental cause of racial disparities in health. *Public Health Reports*

Evans, Gary W. and Elyse Kantrowitz. 2002. Socioeconomic status and health: The potential role of environmental risk exposure. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 23: 303-331.

Brown, Phil, Brian Mayer, Stephen Zvestoski, Theo Luebke, Joshua Mandelbaum, and Sabrina McCormick. 2003. The health politics of asthma: environmental justice and collective illness experience in the United States. *Social Science and Medicine*. 57: 453-564.

Auyero, Javier and Debra Swiston. 2008. "The social production of toxic uncertainty." *American Sociological Review*. 73 (3):357-379.

Week 5 Biomedical dominance, expertise, and transformation

October 8, 2012

Paul Starr. 1984. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. Basic Books. pp. 3-29, 79-144

Wertz, Richard and Dorothy C. Wertz. Notes on the Decline of Midwives and the Rise of Medical Obstetricians. In *Sociology of Health and Illness*, edited by Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter.

Timmermans, Stefan, and Hyeyoung Oh. 2010. "The Continued Social Transformation of the Medical Profession." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S): S94-S106.

Week 6 Theories of (Bio)medicalization

October 15, 2012

Zola, Irving. *Medicine as an Institution of Social Control*, In *Sociology of Health and Illness*, edited by Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter.

Conrad, Peter. *The Shifting Engines of Medicalization*, In *Sociology of Health and Illness*, edited by Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter.

Adele Clarke, et al. 2003. *Biomedicalization: Technoscientific transformations of health, illness, and US Biomedicine*. *ASR*. 68(2).

Rosenberg, Charles. 2006. *Contested Boundaries: Psychiatry, Disease and Diagnosis*. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*. 49:3. 407-424.

Week 7 Medical Practice

October 22, 2012

Mishler, Elliot G. The Struggle Between the Voice of Medicine and the Voice of the Lifeworld, *Elliot G. Mishler*, In *Sociology of Health and Illness*, edited by Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter.

Lo, Ming-Cheng Miriam, Cultural Brokerage: Creating Linkages Between Voices of the Lifeworld and Medicine Across Cross-cultural Clinical Settings, In *Sociology of Health and Illness*, edited by Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter.

Hafferty, Frederick W., R. Franks. 1994. The Hidden Curriculum, Ethics Teaching, and the Structure of Medical Education. *Academic Medicine*. 69. 11:861-871.

Timmermans, Stefan. Social Death as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy. In *Sociology of Health and Illness*, edited by Peter Conrad and Valerie Leiter.

Anspach, Renee R. 1993. "Predicting the Future: Why Physicians and Nurses Disagree." *Deciding Who Lives: Fateful Choices in the Intensive Care Nursery*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp 55-84

Week 8 Experiencing Illness

October 29, 2012

Barker, Kristen. *The Fibromyalgia Story: Medical Authority and Women's Worlds of Pain*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Selections

Frank, Arthur. 1995. *The Wounded Storyteller: Bodies, Illness and Ethics*. Chapter 4, "The Remission Society." Pp. 75-96.

Charles Rosenberg. 2002. The Tyranny of Diagnosis: Specific Entities and Individual Experience. *Milbank Quarterly*. 80(2).

Week 9 Neurochemical selves/Social and cultural meanings of illness

November 5, 2012

Rose, Nikolas. 2007. *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century*. ("Neurochemical Selves," Chapter 7).

Kempner, Joanna. In progress. *Not Tonight: A Cultural Analysis of Headache Medicine*. ("All in Her Brain" and "Embracing the Migraine Brain" Chapters 2 and 3)

Week 10 Constructing medical objects and subjects

November 12, 2012

Hirschauer, Stefan. 1991. "The Manufacture of Bodies in Surgery." *Social Studies of Science* 21 (2): 279-319.

Thompson, Charis. 2005. *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 145-178.

Berg, Marc, and Geoffrey Bowker. 1997. The Multiple Bodies of the Medical Record: Toward a Sociology of an Artifact. *Sociological Quarterly* 38: 513-537.

Casper, Monica. 1998. *The Making of the Unborn Patient: A Social Anatomy of Fetal Surgery*. Rutgers University Press. ("Working on and Around the Unborn Patient", Chapter 4).

Week 11 Creating Consensus: The Autism Epidemic

November 19, 2012

Gil, Eyal et. al. 2011. *The Autism Matrix*. Polity Press. Selections TBA.

Shwed, U. & Bearman, P.S. (2010) The Temporal Structure of Scientific Consensus Formation. *American Sociological Review*. Volume 75(6):817-840.

Week 12 The Political Economy of Health Care

November 26, 2012

Quadagno, Jill. 2011. "Interest Group Influence on the Patient Protection and Affordability Act of 2010: Winners and Losers in the Health Care Reform Debate." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 36 (3): 449-453.

Sismondo, Sergio. 2009. "Ghosts in the Machine: Publication Planning in the Medical Sciences." *Social Studies of Science* 39 (2):171-198.

Kempner, Joanna. In progress. *Not Tonight: A Cultural Analysis of Headache Medicine*. ("Gendering the Migraine Market." Ch. 5)

Fischer, Jill A. 2009. *Medical Research for Hire: The Political Economy of Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials*. Rutgers University Press. 33-65. (Ch. 3: "Pursuing Contract Research").

Week 13 Health social movements

December 3, 2012

Brown, P., S. Zavestoski, et al. (2004). "Embodied health movements: new approaches to social movements in health." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 26(1): 50-80.

Klawiter, M. (1999). "Racing for the cure, wallking women, and toxic touring: mapping cultures of action with the Bay Area terrain of breast cancer." Social Problems 46(1): 104-126.

Epstein, Steven. 1995. "The Construction of Lay Expertise: AIDS Activism and the Forging of Credibility in the Reform of Clinical Trials," *Science, Technology & Human Values* 20: 408-437.

Nelson, Alondra. 2011. *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Chapter 5: "As American As Cherry Pie: Contesting the Biologization of Violence").

Week 14 Presentations

December 10, 2012

**Thank you to Sara Shostak and Steven Epstein for making their syllabi available!