

## Sociology of Medicine and Health Care

Syllabus - Fall 2017

Sociology 920:210

M/W 7:15-8:35 PM ARH-200 CDC

### Contact Information

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Office Hours: By Appointment

The best way to reach me is to contact me by **email**. Please include your name in the email. I want three things in each email: (1) include "Soc 210" in the subject line and (2) mention your name. Please don't be this student. Read the syllabus before emailing me.

### Required Textbook

No required textbook for this course. All required readings will be provided via Sakai. I would like you to bring a computer, tablet, or smartphone to complete the attendance each day.

### Course Description

This course is organized in three sections. First, you will learn about how sociologists participate *in* shaping knowledge about medicine and health care. For example, you will get an introduction to social epidemiology, environmental justice, and intersectional approaches to health research. Second, you will learn how sociologists conduct research *on* medical professionals, which takes a more critical perspective. This includes historical analysis of the US healthcare system, critical theory about health politics, or an introduction to the processes of medicalization and pharmaceuticalization. The third section will focus on health care providers and the social interactions within those institutions. Course attendance is highly recommended. The course will be graded primarily on three exams, four short memo assignments, and your class attendance.

### Teaching and Learning Objectives

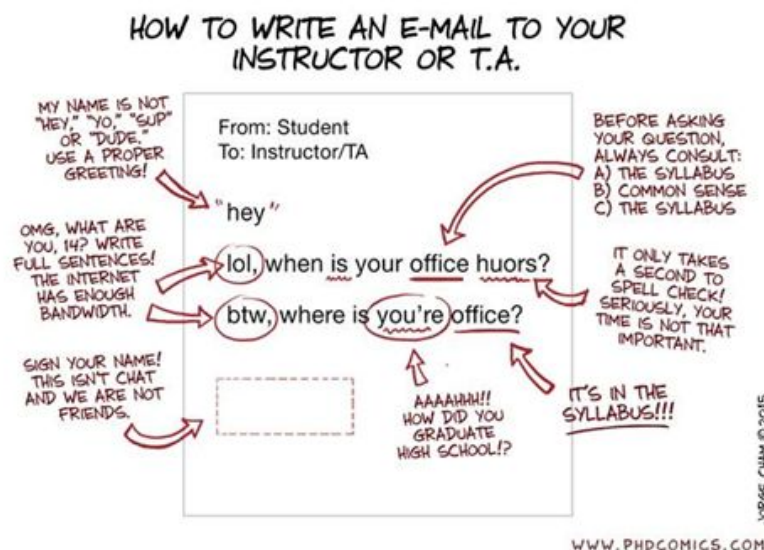
**Teaching Objective 1:** I want to introduce you to (1) core sociological theories, (2) core sociological methods, and (3) the core concepts of medical sociology with the intention of teaching you how to think critically about the causes and discourses of health in a globalized world. Using theories in combination with empirical observations and statistical trends, this course is designed to teach you *how* to think sociologically - not just how to memorize and regurgitate medical information that might be change within a few years. In a sense, I want you to say "Hm, I never thought about that" every day you come to class and have that shape how you learn in your genetics or biochemistry courses. I expect you to give me feedback critical feedback via your attendance surveys.

**Teaching Objective 2:** This class is designed to introduce and critically dissect the health sciences in their relation to the *causes* of health conditions, the use of medicines, and

implementation of health care. You should acquire the basic resources to think about scientific methodology in the health sciences and how science is embedded in the political economy. In a general sense, this class will teach you how to think about the biological, social, economic and political as mutually constitutive and deeply entangled processes. More specifically, I hope to provide concrete examples of how the politics and economics shape your own health and why you might consider taking a more critical and active approach to shaping those conditions through voting, activism, and research.

## Communication and Resources

**Teacher-Student Contact Etiquette.** The best way to reach me is to contact me by email. I want two things in each email subject line: (1) include “Soc 210” in the subject line and (2) mention your name. This information ensures your email is filtered directly into my course folder and does not get lost among other messages. When you are composing your message, remember you are not writing to describe last Friday night to your roommate. I will respond to your e-mail within 48 hours on weekdays – please plan accordingly if you have questions right before a deadline – but you should *not* expect to hear from me during the weekend.



**Class Conduct.** The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by individual instructors. Courteous expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted and strongly encouraged.

**Diversity Statement.** The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among

our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

**Disability accommodations.** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: [ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form).

**Academic Integrity.** I follow the Rutgers University's policy on academic integrity. You can familiarize yourself with this policy at this website: <https://tinyurl.com/hoh6f9f>. Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying others access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and I am obligated to report such conduct and violations of this policy to the Undergraduate Director of the Sociology Department and the Dean of your college.

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Some common examples of plagiarism are: Copying word for word (i.e. quoting directly) from an oral, printed, or electronic source without proper attribution; Paraphrasing without proper attribution, i.e., presenting in one's own words another person's written words or ideas as if they were one's own; Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement; and Incorporating into one's work graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.

**Academic and wellness support.** Rutgers University offers various academic and wellness support for everyone. Please check out and take advantage of the following resources:

*Rutgers Learning Centers.* Their resources including peer tutoring, academic and writing coaching, and academic success workshops. ([rlc.rutgers.edu/student-info/group-and-individual-academic-support](http://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-info/group-and-individual-academic-support))

*Counseling, ADAP and Psychiatric Services (CAPS).* Provides mental health services including individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, and referrals. ([rhscaps.rutgers.edu](http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu))

*Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA).* Provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling, and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence and stalking. ([vpva.rutgers.edu](http://vpva.rutgers.edu))

*Scarlet Listeners.* A free and confidential student-run peer counseling and referral hotline: [www.scarletlisteners.com](http://www.scarletlisteners.com) | 732-247-5555 (Sunday - Thursday, 6pm-12am)

## Technology

**Using Sakai.** I will post all materials we use in class on the course Sakai site. You will be able to find them under the Resources tab. For example, you will see Lecture Slides and Required Readings. I will post any supplementary materials to a separate Supplementary Readings folder. I may also periodically send out reminders and additional instructions to you through the site; please be sure to check both the portal and your associated Rutgers email regularly. You are required to be accountable for this information, so I won't make special accommodations for you ignoring this information.

**In-Class Technology Policy.** I *recommend* the use of computers, tablets, smartphones and the like in the classroom, as long as those technologies are used to *supplement* your learning capacities. The reason for this is twofold: First, it is likely that you will need to use these technologies when you are employed after college. Second, while literature on multitasking suggests that individuals who multitask perform worse on various cognitive tasks (e.g. Ophir et al. 2009), organizations that employ multitasking to create more fluid workflows increase productivity. Thus, I am hoping that we can use technologies to bolster classroom learning and communication amongst ourselves - as long as we don't fall into the trap of being constantly distracted. This means that I likely will call you out if I think you are using technologies for alternative purposes. Further, I will employ multimedia throughout the course and often recommend that you engage with media both in and outside the classroom. However, I reserve the right to change this policy if we cannot work together to use technology for the benefit of the class material. All of this said, no electronic devices will be allowed in exams.

## Grading Criteria

Your final grade will have five core components. 75% of your grade will come from your performance on three exams (25% each). 20% will come from the completion of four memos throughout the course of the semester. 5% will derive from your attendance.

<b><u>Grade Allocation</u></b>	<b><u>Percent</u></b>
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%
Four Memos	20%
<u>Attendance</u>	<u>5%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Exams.** There will be three exams in this course with each exam corresponding to a section (see below). Exams will consist of roughly 75 multiple choice questions. Some exams may also include additional short-answer and matching questions. The final exam is *cumulative*, in the sense that some of the questions in the mid-term that many of you get incorrect may reappear in the final. The exams are of course closed-book and no notes will be allowed. No official study guides will be provided, unless someone kindly volunteers to share their own with the whole class informally. The purpose of this evaluation method is to assess your overall understanding of the course contents and help you review what you have learned.

**Excused absences from exams:** No makeups will be given unless there are severe, extenuating circumstances. Personal holidays, broken alarm clocks, weddings, jobs, exams in other courses, and the Rutgers bus system are not acceptable reasons for missing an exam. If there are conflicts between exam days and your personal schedule, you should withdraw from the course. There will be no opportunity for extra credit.

**Memos.** In this class, you will be required to complete four research memos for course credit. These memos will account for 20% of your overall grade (each memo counts as 5% of the total grade). Two of these memos will be due on **October 11, 2017 at 11:59 PM via Sakai**. The other two memos will be due on **November 20, 2017 at 11:59 PM via Sakai**. You can complete these memos at any time before these dates, but I will not accept any memos after each of the respective due dates.

Basically, you will be given a number of prompts that you can write about relating to concepts touched on in the class. You will be expected to respond to these prompts following three criteria: (1) your ability to follow instructions, (2) your comprehension of the material covered in class that week, and (3) your ability to formulate a critical argument.

The criteria for part (1) includes (a) submitting your memo in the correct Sakai assignment folder, submitting the assignment on time, having the memo in the correct format (Microsoft Word using Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spacing, and at least two pages of content). You will need to use (b) at least three academic resources to outline your argument. I would like you to cite using [American Sociological Association](#) formatting. I have provided a template on Sakai and even written an example of what a memo should look like. **If you don't follow the instructions, you won't get any of the points.** Remember, 5% - a third of an exam.

The criteria for parts (2) and (3) includes writing an essay based on the prompts that employ a concept (or concepts) covered in class or the readings. I want you to use this concept to explain a process that you observed in the news or in the everyday social structures you inhabit. For these memos, I am not interested in opinions. I want you to apply concepts that help explain aspects of your life - particularly as it relates to social issues of medicine and health care. You need to use evidence and do at least some research to complete the memo. To be clear, you will *not* receive feedback on these memos - just a grade on Sakai. If you clearly BS the assignment, I'll likely ask you to do another one to make up for it later. I may also use your memos to generate commentary during course discussions.

**Attendance.** Attendance counts as 5% of your final grade. Points will be deducted for unexcused absences beyond three missed classes. If you are absent from class, make sure to get notes from a colleague or classmate to make up for the missed material.

**Overall Grades (as a percentage):**

A 90-100 B+ 86-89 B 80-85 C+ 76-79 C 70-75 D 61-69 F 60 or below

Final grades are **non-negotiable**. There will be **no extra credit** offered in this course.

Date	Lecture or Discussion Topic	Required Readings/Materials for Class
9/6	Syllabus & an Overview of Sociology	Bring computer, tablet or smartphone
<b>Section One: Outlining Disparities &amp; Historical Trends</b>		
9/11	Social Epidemiology & Disparities	
9/13	Sex & Gender	
9/18	Race & Genetics	
9/20	Disparities in Other Intersections	Summary of How to Write Memos
9/25	Politics of Exposure	
9/27	Embodiment & Epigenetics	
10/2	Catch Up and Review	Be prepared to ask questions
<b>10/4</b>	<b>First Exam (<a href="#">Study Guide 1</a>)</b>	
<b>Section Two: Getting Political &amp; Critical</b>		
10/9	Biopolitics in the Era of Biomedicine	
10/11	Medicalization & Diagnosis	Memo #1 Due
10/16	Pharmaceuticalization	
10/18	The Politics of Evidence	
10/23	Critical Take on Obesity	
10/25	A New Era of Infectious Disease	
10/30	Critical Take on Chronic Disease	
11/1	A Short History of US Health Care	
11/6	Dilemmas in US Hospitals	
<b>11/8</b>	<b>Controversies in Health Care Reform</b>	
11/13	Catch Up and Review	Be prepared to ask questions
<b>11/15</b>	<b>Second Exam (<a href="#">Study Guide 2</a>)</b>	
<b>Section Three: Social Interaction in the Medical Profession</b>		
11/18	Medical Professionals, Part I	

11/20	Medical Professionals, Part II	Memo #2 Due
<b>11/22</b>	<b>No class, Thanksgiving</b>	
11/27	Doctor-Patient Interaction	
11/29	Uncertainty & Discrimination: Dilemmas in Sexualities & Trans Care	
12/4	Overcoming Neoliberal Health Tropes	
12/6	Complementary & Alternative Medicine	
12/11	Catch Up and Review	Be prepared to ask questions
12/13	Scheduled Make-Up Day	
	<b>Third Exam (<a href="#">Study Guide 3</a>)</b>	<b>(<a href="https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/">https://finalexams.rutgers.edu/</a>)</b>

**The course instructor reserves the right to change any aspect of the syllabus throughout the course of the semester.**