

SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

920:523
Spring 2008

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Course Description

This course will provide graduate students and advanced undergraduate students with a survey of research on the social origins of the health and illness of individuals and populations. Students will be introduced to the process of formulating important social research questions in health and illness, including attention to major theoretical perspectives, measurement of concepts, the merits of various study designs, and both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The sociology of health and illness is a large and historically important subdiscipline within the field, distinctively sociological, but with important links to public health, social epidemiology, and health psychology. To quote from a recent newsletter of the Medical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association:

In its early decades medical sociology was often construed as an applied field. Now we are known for our many and wide-ranging contributions, including sophisticated applications. Medical sociologists explore every type of question found in the larger discipline and sometimes stretch its borders to include new frontiers. We bring the body back into sociological theorizing and empirical research. We reveal the rhythms of cultural rituals in ordinary routines. We chart the development of biomedicine and map its consequences. We challenge preconceptions as we study institutional and interactional practices. We develop ever more exacting instruments and analytic tools to conduct our demographic studies and survey research. Whether we examine large data bases or study micro interactions, we raise innovative questions that generate new understandings.

Kathy Charmaz, 2004 Section Chair

Regular class sessions will include: an introductory lecture on background concepts, theory, or methods; discussion of assigned chapters or articles that have been read by the class and are critiqued by individual students; a "Minute for Books", with a focus on nonfiction accounts of illness; or a "Minute for Media", with a focus on recent health news. The final two weeks of the semester will be devoted to the presentation of student projects.

Course Requirements and Grading

For those students taking the course for credit, the grade will be based on class participation (10%), completion of weekly article extracts (10%), one or more "Minutes" (10%), a poster version of the project prepared for the department poster session (20%), class presentation of project (20%), and a final paper (30%). Auditors may register for 1-3 research credits with the instructor. Undergraduate students are by permission of instructor only and must meet, at a minimum, department requirements for Independent Study.

Course Objectives

- To understand the biopsychosocial perspective on health within an aging and life course framework
- To understand current social theories and knowledge about health-related perceptions and behaviors of individuals
- To become familiar with indicators and trends in population health over time
- To retrieve relevant research in the sociology of health and illness, using modern library search systems
- To think critically about social arrangements related to health and medicine
- To critically interpret medically-related stories in the mass media

COURSE OVERVIEW

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|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 25 | Introductions, course overview, and history of medical sociology |
| February 1 | Twentieth century mortality, the shift from infectious to chronic disease, and aging populations |
| February 8 | History of social causation and the stress process |
| February 15 | Health consequences of social inequality and work-related stress |
| February 22 | Health consequences of social networks and institutions – the family, religion, community groups |
| February 29 | Measurement of health status and disability, quality of life |
| March 7 | Health behaviors – smoking, obesity |
| March 14 | Social support and caregiving |
| March 28 | Mind – body connections: physical health and mental health |
| April 4 | Death, dying, and bereavement |
| April 11 | Physician – patient relationships |
| April 18 | Issues in health care |
| April 25 | Paper presentations |
| May 2 | Paper presentations |

++ All classes meet in Lucy Stone Hall Room A256 ++

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

| Date | Topic | Readings to discuss that day |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-25-08 | Introductions Course overview A history of medical sociology | |
| 2-1-08 | Demographic transition, the shift from infectious to chronic disease, disability, and aging populations | Susser et al., 1972, Chapter 1 Day, 1992, pp.xiii - 35 Fries, 1980 Verbrugge, 1984 *Schoeni et al., 2001 |
| 2-8-08 | History of social causation and the stress process The biopsychosocial model | Brunner and Marmot in M&W, pp.6-30 Wadsworth and Butterworth in M&W, pp.31-53 Pearlin, 1989 *Heim et al., 2004 |
| 2-15-08 | Health consequences of social inequality: work-related stress, race, and poverty | Marmot et al. in M&W, pp.97-130 *Phelan et al. 2004 Bartley et al. in M&W, pp.78-96 *Ferraro and Farmer, 1996 *Ming et al. 2004 |
| 2-22-08 | Health consequences of social networks: family, religion, community groups | *Berkman and Syme, 1979 *Cohen et al. 1997 Klinenberg, 2002 pp. 1-128 *Strawbridge et al., 1997 |
| 2-29-08 | Measurement of health status, definitions of health, illness behavior, quality of life | *Covinsky et al., 1999 Freidson, 1975, Chapter 10 Gill and Feinstein, 1994 *Idler, Kasl and Lemke, 1990 |
| 3-7-08 | Health behaviors – smoking, diet, obesity | Jarvis and Wardle in M&W, pp.224-237 Robertson et al. in M&W, pp.172-195 *Pampel and Rogers, 2004 *Ferraro, 2003 |
| 3-14-08 | Social support and caregiving | *Piliavin and Siegl, 2007 *Kempen et al. 2001 Stansfeld in M&W, pp. 148-171 *Schulz and Beach, 1999 *McCann et al., 2004 |
| 3-28-08 | Mind-body connections: physical and mental health links [Guest speaker: Howard Leventhal, PhD] | *Aneshensel et al. 1984 *Verbrugge, 1985 Leventhal et al., 1999 *Idler et al., 2004 |
| 4-4-08 | Death, dying, and bereavement | Christakis, 1999, Chapters 1-4 *Cicirelli, 1997 *Idler, Kasl, and Hays, 2001 *Anson and Anson, 2001 *Carr, 2004 |

| Date | Topic | Readings to discuss that day |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4-11-08 | Physician – patient relationships | Parsons, 1951, Chapter X. Christakis, 1999, Chapters 5-8 *Cooper et al, 2003 *Mechanic and Meyer, 2000 |
| 4-18-08 | Issues in health care today [Guest speaker: David Mechanic] | Mechanic, 2006 |
| 4-25-08 | Paper presentations | |
| 5-2-08 | Paper presentations | |

* Reports empirical research; prepare Article Extract

DETAILS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

| Due | Assignment | Instructions |
|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Varies | Minute for media | Students will take turns presenting a story from the print media (newspapers, magazines, web), highlighting important social factors that are present or absent from the account. There is no writing necessary for this assignment, but you should bring handout copies of the piece. A sign-up sheet will be distributed at the first class. |
| Varies | Minute for books | Students will take turns doing a brief book review of a nonfiction illness account. There is a list of books to choose from at the end of this syllabus, but others may be used – please let me know of any additional books. Write a one-page summary of the account. In your review, note the social factors that appear to play a causal role in the illness and/or coping strategies that are used by the patient and family. Formulate a general research question from your single “case”. |
| Each class | *Empirical paper extracts | Use the form at the end of this syllabus as an extract for the assigned empirical papers for that day (maximum two). These papers are marked with an asterisk* in the syllabus. I will also distribute the form as a Word file. |
| 2-15-08 | Proposal for paper | <p>Prepare a one-page proposal for your paper for the course. Use the format of an annotated outline for meeting the aims of the project. Identify your primary literature sources. Choose from the following possible topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose a disease, disorder, risk factor, or health problem and discuss its conceptualization and measurement. Compare measures that have been used or are currently used. Discuss the validity and reliability of each and analyze differences in study results that may be due to differences in measurement. 2. Choose a disease, disorder, or health problem and discuss the set of risk factors known or suspected to play a role in its causation. Differentiate social/cultural factors from psychological, behavioral, or physiological factors. Evaluate the evidence for their association with the disease, disorder, or health problem. |

3. Choose a potential risk factor and analyze its antecedents and consequences. Cigarette smoking, for example, may have antecedents including opportunity variables such as association with people who smoke, social psychological variables such as elevated anxiety or need for approval, or economic variables for the cost of smoking. Consequences may be disease outcomes related to smoking, selection into and out of marriage, weight gain or loss, etc.

4. Propose a secondary analysis of publicly available data. Review the literature suggesting causal associations of some set of risk factors with some health outcome. Identify appropriate measures of key concepts for the analysis in the available data. Choose an appropriate study design. Specify a model for the associations you expect to see in the data. Locate an appropriate data source.

5. Choose a recent article in a medical journal with a biomedical focus, and show how a biopsychosocial approach would differ. Develop your theoretical framework, identify additional variables that should be added to the analysis, and specify a more appropriate study design. In short, appoint yourself the sole social scientist member of the research team and the Principal Investigator for the follow-up study. Prepare an NIH-style grant proposal following Public Health Service guidelines. PHS instructions are available on the CSRI server with the readings for the class, or at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf>

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| 3-26-05 | Poster session | Prepare a poster version of your paper as for an ASA poster session. We will participate as a class in the Department Poster Session. |
| 4-18-05 | First drafts of papers due | Papers should be approximately 20 pages, double-spaced. Citations and references should use ASA style. Attach appendices for data sets, scales, measures of key variables, as appropriate. |
| 4-25-05 | Paper presentations | Prepare and deliver a 12-15 minute presentation of your paper as you might for ASA or a job interview. Speak from notes; do not read your paper. Use visual aids to organize the material and present findings. Be prepared for questions. |
| 5-2-05 | Paper presentations continued | |
| 5-5-05 | Final versions of papers due | |

READINGS

Required Texts

Christakis, Nicholas. 1999. *Death Foretold: Prognosis and Prophecy in Medicine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Klinenberg, Eric. 2002. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Marmot, Michael, and Richard G. Wilkinson, Editors. 2006. *Social Determinants of Health*, 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mechanic, David. 2006. *The Truth about Health Care: Why Reform is Not Working in America*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Required Articles

*Aneshensel, Carol, Ralph Frerichs, and George Huba. 1984. "Depression and Physical Illness, a Multiwave, Nonrecursive Causal Model." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 25:350-371.

*Anson, Jon and Ofra Anson. 2001. "Death Rests a While: Holy Day and Sabbath Effects on Jewish Mortality in Israel." *Social Science and Medicine* 52:83-97.

*Berkman, Lisa F. and S. Leonard Syme. 1979. "Social Networks, Host Resistance, and Mortality: A Nine-Year Follow-Up Study of Alameda County Residents." *American Journal of Epidemiology* 109:186-204.

*Carr, Deborah. 2004. "Gender, Pre-Loss Marital Dependence and Older Adults' Adjustment to Widowhood." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 66: 220-235.

*Cicirelli, Victor. 1997. "Relationship of Psychosocial and Background Variables to Older Adults' End-of-Life Decisions." *Psychology and Aging* 12:72-83.

*Cohen, Sheldon, William J. Doyle, David P. Skoner, Bruce S. Rabin, and Jack M. Gwaltney. 1997. "Social Ties and Susceptibility to the Common Cold." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 277:1940-1944.

*Cooper, Lisa, Debra Roter, Rachel Johnson, Daniel Ford, Donald Steinwachs, and Neil Powe. 2003. "Patient-Centered Communication, Ratings of Care, and Concordance of Patient and Physician Race." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 139:907-915.

Covinsky, Kenneth, Albert Wu, Seth Landefeld, Alfred Connors, Russell Phillips, Joel Tsevat, Neal Dawson, Joanne Lynn, and Richard Fortinsky. 1999. "Health Status versus Quality of Life in Older Patients: Does the Distinction Matter?" *American Journal of Medicine* 106:435-440.

Engel, George L. 1977. "The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine." *Science* 196:129-136.

*Ferraro, Kenneth. 2003. "The Life Course of Severe Obesity: Does Childhood Overweight Matter?" *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological and Social Sciences* 58:S110-119.

*Ferraro, Kenneth, and Melissa Farmer. 1996. "Double Jeopardy, Aging as Leveler, or Persistent Health Inequality? A Longitudinal Analysis of White and Black Americans." *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 51:S319-28.

Freidson, Eliot. 1975. *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge*. New York: Dodd, Mead.

Fries, James F. 1980. "Aging, Natural Death, and the Compression of Morbidity." *New England Journal of Medicine* 303:130-135.

- Gill, Tom, and Alvan Feinstein. 1994. "A Critical Appraisal of the Quality of Quality of Life Instruments." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 272:619-626.
- *Greene, Michele, Ronald D. Adelman, Rita Charon, and Erika Friedmann. 1989. "Concordance between Physicians and their Older and Younger Patients in the Primary Care Medical Encounter." *The Gerontologist* 29:808-813.
- *Heim, Christine, Cynthia Bierl, Rosanne Nisenbaum, Dieter Wagner, and William Reeves. 2004. "Regional Prevalence of Fatiguing Illnesses in the United States Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001." *Psychosomatic Medicine* 66:672-678.
- *Idler, Ellen L., Stanislav V. Kasl, and Judith C. Hays. 2001. "Patterns of Religious Practice and Belief in the Last Year of Life". *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 56B:S326-S334.
- *Idler, Ellen L., Stanislav V. Kasl and Jon H. Lemke. 1990. "Self-Evaluated Health and Mortality among the Elderly in New Haven, Connecticut, and Iowa and Washington Counties, Iowa, 1982-1986." *American Journal of Epidemiology* 131:91-103.
- *Idler, Ellen L., Howard Leventhal, Julie McLaughlin, and Elaine Leventhal. 2004. "In Sickness but Not in Health: Self-ratings, Identity, and Mortality." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45:336-356.
- *Kempen, Gertrudis I. J. M. Kempen, Winnie Scaf-Klomp, Adelita V. Ranchor, Robbert Sanderma, and Johan Ormel. 2001. "Social Predictors of Recovery in Late Middle-Aged and Older Persons After Injury to the Extremities: A Prospective Study." *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences* 56B:S229-S236.
- Leventhal, Howard, Ellen L. Idler, and Elaine A. Leventhal. 1999. "The Impact of Chronic Illness on the Self System." In Richard D. Ashmore and Richard J. Contrada, eds., *Self, Social Identity, and Physical Health: Interdisciplinary Explorations*, pp.185-208. New York: Oxford University Press.
- *McCann, Judith, Liesi Hebert, Julia Bienias, Martha Clare Morris, and Denis Evans. 2004. "Predictors of Beginning and Ending Caregiving During a 3-Year Period in a Biracial Community Population of Older Adults." *American Journal of Public Health* 94:1800-1806.
- *Mechanic, David, and Sharon Meyer. 2000. "Concepts of Trust among Patients with Serious Illness." *Social Science and Medicine* 51:657-668.
- *Ming, Eileen, Gail Adler, Ronald Kessler, Louis Fogg, Karen Matthews, Alan Herd, and Robert Rose. 2004. "Cardiovascular Reactivity to Work Stress Predicts Subsequent Onset of Hypertension: The Air Traffic Controller Health Change Study." *Psychosomatic Medicine* 66:459-465.
- *Moen, Phyllis, Julie Robison, and Donna Dempster-McClain. 1995. "Caregiving and Women's Well-being: A Life Course Approach." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 36:259-273.
- *Pampel, Fred. C., and Richard G. Rogers. 2004. "Socioeconomic Status, Smoking, and Health: A Test of Competing Theories of Cumulative Advantage." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45:306-321.
- Parsons, Talcott. 1951. *The Social System*. New York: The Free Press.
- Pearlin, Leonard I. 1989. "The Sociological Study of Stress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30:241-56.
- *Phelan, Jo C., Bruce Link, Ana Diez-Roux, Ichiro Kawachi, Bruce Levin. 2004. "'Fundamental Causes' of Social Inequalities in Mortality: A Test of the Theory". *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45:265-285
- Piliavin, Jane Allyn, and Erica Siegl. 2007. "Health Benefits of Volunteering in the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 48:450-464.
- *Schoeni, Robert F., Vicki Freedman, and Robert B. Wallace. 2001. "Persistent, Consistent, Widespread, and Robust? Another Look at Recent Trends in Old-Age Disability". *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological and Social Sciences* 56B:

S206-S218.

*Schulz, Richard and Scott R. Beach. 1999. "Caregiving as a Risk Factor for Mortality." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 282:2215-2219.

*Strawbridge, William J., Richard Cohen, Sarah J. Shema, and George Kaplan. 1997. "Frequent Attendance at Religious Services and Mortality over 28 Years." *American Journal of Public Health* 87:957-961.

Susser, Mervyn and William Watson. 1972. *Sociology in Medicine*. 2nd Edition. London: Oxford University Press.

Verbrugge, Lois. 1984. "Longer Life but Worsening Health? Trends in Health and Mortality of Middle-Aged and Older Persons." *Milbank Memorial Fund Health and Society* 62:475-519.

*Verbrugge, Lois. 1985. "Triggers of Symptoms and Health Care." *Social Science and Medicine* 20:855-876.

RECOMMENDED NONFICTION ILLNESS NARRATIVES

- Bauby, Jean-Dominique. 1997. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly: A Memoir of Life in Death*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Written by a man completely paralyzed except for his eyelids; he chose the words one letter at a time.
- Cohen, Richard M. 2004. *Blindsided: Lifting a Life Above Illness*. New York: Harper Collins.
First-person account of a former television news producer stricken with multiple sclerosis in his 20s; he also has colon cancer.
- Cole, Jonathan. 2004. *Still Lives: Narratives of Spinal Cord Injury*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Accounts of 12 quadriplegics' lives; the author asks, "What is it like to live without sensation or movement in your body?"
- Fadiman, Anne. 1997. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
Story of a Hmong refugee family in California; cultural differences in the treatment of their seriously ill child.
- Hsi, Stephen, with Jim Belshaw and Beth Corbin-Hsi. 2004. *Closing the Chart: A Dying Physician Examines Family, Faith, and Medicine*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
A young physician's first person account of his three heart surgeries, necessitated by a rare disease of the blood vessels; strongly critical of his mostly technically competent, but psychosocially insensitive care.
- Lear, Martha Weinman. 1980. *Heartsounds*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
A wife's account of her physician-husband's serious and eventually fatal heart disease.
- Neugeboren, Jay. 2003. *Open Heart: A Patient's Story of Life-Saving Medicine and Life-Giving Friendship*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
Account of the author's quintuple bypass surgery and his four physician-friends who helped him through it.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. 2002. *As I Lay Dying: Meditations Upon Returning*. New York: Basic Books.
First person account of a Roman Catholic priest's near-death experience during treatment for colon cancer.
- Price, Reynolds. 1994. *A Whole New Life: An Illness and a Healing*. New York: Penguin.
First person account of a Duke literature professor/novelist's diagnosis and treatment for spinal cancer.
- Rapp, Emily. 2007. *Poster Child: A Memoir*. New York: Bloomsbury.
First person account of a professor/writer who received successive amputations of the foot and leg in her childhood.
- Sheehan, Susan. 1984. *Kate Quinton's Days*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
Originally published in the *New Yorker*, a journalist's account of an elderly woman's multiple chronic, disabling, but not life-threatening illnesses. Highlights issues of family and professional caregiving for community-living elderly.
- Snowdon, David. 2001. *Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches Us about Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives*. New York: Bantam Books.
Story of an ongoing epidemiological study of Alzheimer's disease in a Roman Catholic religious order.

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE TEXTS

- Berkman, Lisa F. and Ichiro Kawachi, Editors. 2000. *Social Epidemiology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
The first textbook in the field of social epidemiology, or the systematic study of the social determinants of health.
- Bloom, Samuel W. 2002. *The Word as Scalpel: A History of Medical Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
A history of the field by a first hand observer.
- Freund, Peter E. S. and Meredith B. McGuire. 1995. *Health, Illness, and the Social Body: A Critical Sociology*. 2nd Edition. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
An American textbook, emphasizing power relationships in health.
- Gabe, Jonathan, Mike Bury, and Mary Ann Elston. 2004. *Key Concepts in Medical Sociology*. London: Sage.
Handbook-style review of important concepts and research areas. Offers a definition and summary of current controversies.
- Last, John M., Ed. 2001. *A Dictionary of Epidemiology*. 4th Edition. London: Oxford University Press.
The new edition of a classic “look-up” book for brief definitions of methods, statistics, measurements, techniques, study designs, data presentations, biases, data sources, data collection
- Oakes, J. Michael and Jay S. Kaufman, Editors. 2006. *Methods in Social Epidemiology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Extensive text on methods, measures, design, and analysis of social factors in disease causation.
- Palmore, James A. and Robert W. Gardner. 1983. *Measuring Mortality, Fertility, and Natural Increase: A Self-Teaching Guide to Elementary Measures*. Honolulu: East-West Population Institute.
Rates, ratios, and life tables.
- Selvin, Steve. 2001. *Epidemiologic Analysis: A Case-oriented Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Uses examples of specific health problems (e.g. maternal weight gain in multiple pregnancies, risk of Alzheimer’s disease, trends in Hodgkins’ Disease among African-Americans, etc.) and identifies appropriate study designs and statistical tests.
- Susser, Mervyn. 1973. *Causal Thinking in the Health Sciences*. New York: Oxford University Press.
A classic exposition of the logic of health research, particularly strong on the conditions of observations, screening for extraneous variables, and establishing causal associations.
- Young, T. Kue. 1998. *Population Health: Concepts and Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Integrates the concepts of epidemiology with the relevant social sciences: sociology, anthropology, demography.

Article Extract Form

Title:

Author(s):

Journal, date, pages:

Institution of primary author:

Project or data set:

Most important previous studies mentioned in literature review:

Research question:

Hypothesis:

Study design:

Sample size and selection procedures:

Dependent variable(s):

Primary independent variable(s):

Analytic or statistical technique used:

Primary findings:

Weakness of study:

Strength of study:

Other important issues: