

SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS: OUTLINE

SOC 2246B-001

Class meets Thursdays 1:30-4:30 pm in SSC 2020

Instructor: Dr. Anna Zajacova

Email: anna.zajacova@uwo.ca

Office: SSC 5330

Office hours: TBD

Teaching assistant: Mr. Riley Rier

Email: rrier@uwo.ca

Office: SSC

Office hours: TBD

Prerequisite(s) 1.0 from: Sociology 1020, 1021E, 1025A/B, 1026F/G, 1027A/B.

Antirequisite(s): Sociology 2245.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we explore the idea that health and illness cannot be understood simply as biological phenomena or individual medical issues. Instead, we must consider broad societal influences and contexts, from structural and cultural to political, economic, and interpersonal forces. In the first part of the course, we will study social causes, correlates, and consequences of health and illness. We will explore how social structures and inequalities with respect to social class, age, gender, race, etc., impact the patterns of health and illness in Canada and worldwide. In the second part of the course, we will examine how people experience illness, analyze the roles of the patients and health care providers and their interactions, and discuss the basics of health care systems in Canada and globally from a sociological perspective.

Issues surrounding health and health care are at the forefront of economic, social, and political discourse in most countries around the world. The overarching goal of this course is to help you become a better informed citizen with respect to health and health-care issues by analyzing health and medical institutions sociologically.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the class, students will be able to

- Provide a broad overview of the field of medical sociology
- Understand the links between social factors and health
- Appreciate how age, sex, race/ethnicity, social class, and other sociodemographic characteristics shape health and illness over the lifecourse
- Explain major historical and current issues related to medical institutions, the medical professions, and health care in Canada
- Critically evaluate the how a society's views on health and medical care fit within its broader cultural and structural perspectives.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The classes will combine lectures with student participation, individual and group exercises, in-group discussions, and active documentary viewing. In order to participate in the class, students are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to the class.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Germov and Hornosty (Eds.) 2016. "Second Opinion: An Introduction to Health Sociology, Second Canadian Edition (Paperback)." Oxford University Press. ISBN-10: 0199018138
- Additional readings as posted on OWL.



EVALUATION

Evaluation Breakdown

- Class attendance and participation 10%
- 3 written assignments 30%
- Mid-term exam 25%
- Final exam 35%

There is no extra credit. Please work consistently throughout the semester. The timing, quantity, and types of assessment are carefully chosen to give you timely feedback on your performance and to draw on a broad spectrum of your skills and strengths.

In keeping with departmental grade guidelines, it is expected that the **class average for this course will be around 72%**. Should the final overall grades yield a value significantly lower, grades will be adjusted upward to ensure an appropriate mean for the class.

There is no routine provision for make-up examinations, tests or assignments.

Evaluation Details

- **Class preparation and participation (10% of the final grade).** The rationale behind this part of your grade is to come to class regularly and be prepared for the day's lecture by having completed all assigned readings. You are of course not expected to master the material prior to the lecture, only to read the assigned material so you are primed to absorb the lecture optimally, and to be able to contribute to discussions meaningfully, as well as to ask questions about issues that weren't clear.
- **Written assignments (30% of the final grade).** There will be **3** assignments during the semester, each worth the same proportion of the final grade (10%). The assignment will be about 2-3-pages of analysis, reflection or other writing as

assigned. The rationale of this item is to encourage you to think more deeply about topics we cover and practice writing in a low-stakes non-exam setting.

- **Midterm exam (25% of the final grade).** A mixed-format test, includes material covered up to reading week.
- **Final exam (35% of the final grade).** A mixed-format cumulative test, with greater emphasis on material covered since the midterm.

Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 8 percent of the per day late.

Here is a crosswalk between letter, number, and adjectival grading

A+	90-100	Exceptional work, remarkable for an undergraduate student
A	80-89	Outstanding work, exceeds all or most requirements
B	70-79	Satisfactory, solid performance, meets all requirements
C	60-69	Competent work, meets most requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, meets some requirements, minimally acceptable
F	0-50	Unsatisfactory work, fails to meet requirements

IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday 1/10	First class
Thursday 1/31	Assignment 1 due
Thursday 2/21	Spring reading week, no class
Thursday 2/28	Mid-term exam
Thursday 3/7	Assignment 2 due
Thursday 4/4	Assignment 3 due, last class
TBD	Final exam

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND ASSOCIATED READINGS

Please note the schedule may be updated during the semester with at least one week prior notice via OWL and in-class announcements.

Week 1, 1/10	Introduction to medical sociology Readings: Chapter 1 and TBD
Week 2, 1/17	Theory and methods in sociology of health and illness Readings: Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
Week 3, 1/24	Social status and health Readings: Chapter 4 and TBD
Week 4, 1/31	Demographic inequalities in health Readings: Chapters 5, 6, 7
Week 5, 2/7	Social-psychological factors in health (stress, social support) Readings: TBD
Week 6, 2/14	Sociological factors in health behaviors Readings: TBD
2/21	Spring Reading Week
Week 7, 2/28	Mid-Term Exam
Week 8, 3/7	Social factors in medical knowledge, medicalization Readings: Chapter 9 and TBD
Week 9, 3/14	Disability, aging, and dying (social construction) Readings: Chapters 10 and 11
Week 10, 3/21	The medical profession Chapter 12 and TBD
Week 11, 3/28	Nursing and allied health professions Readings: Chapter 12 and TBD
Week 12, 4/4	Health care systems in Canada and abroad Readings: Chapter 13

SOC 2246 POLICIES

What if I miss a class?

If you are absent from a class, please follow these two rules

- 1) Do not email your teaching team
- 2) Do get notes and all information from a classmate. You are responsible for keeping up with the material.

Tip: tell one or two classmates ahead of time that you will need their notes. This will be a bonus for them as well: when they miss a class, they will feel comfortable asking you to return the favor. Moreover, they will write extra complete and clear notes that day – a win-win.

What if I miss an assignment deadline?

Due dates for the assignments are posted on OWL. Late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 8% of the assignment value per day. As an example of how this works: Suppose you earn 75% on an assignment but were two days late: two days late is 16% penalty, so you earn $75 \cdot 0.84 = 63\%$.

What can I have with me on exams? Policies on Examinations

Only pen or pencil is allowed for mid-term and final tests. Electronic devices of any sort, including phones, are not allowed.

Note that computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

What if I have questions?

You can contact your teaching team (instructor and/or T.A.) via email. We strongly encourage you to do so as soon as questions or problems arise so we can work with you to help. You can expect replies within 24 hours during regular work days or 48 on weekends. We will aim to answer faster than that.

Please make sure to write "**SOC 2246**" in the subject line – if you don't, we may neglect to notice your email and you may not receive a timely reply.

How to write emails?

You correctly expect that your teaching team treats you with respect and in a professional manner. We expect the same from students. Please make sure your email communication is professional and appropriately formal. Emails to your teaching team are NOT like texting your friends – please be polite and use correct spelling and grammar.

A nice perspective from the New York Times on student emails is [here](#). Embedded in the article is the [handout sheet on email etiquette by Dr. Worthen at University of North Carolina](#).

Please make sure to write “**SOC 2246**” in the subject line – if you don’t, we may neglect to notice and answer it in a timely manner. (yes, I did write it just above – but it bears repeating)

Do really I need to attend classes?

Regular class attendance is essential to learning at the university level. I strongly encourage you to come to class regularly in order to maximize your opportunities to learn. Attending lectures AND doing all assigned readings is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for earning a good grade in this class.

Students are responsible for all announcements, lecture notes, and activities we cover in class even if they have a valid reason to miss a class. If you miss a class, please contact your classmates to get notes and information.

What’s expected of me in class?

Appropriate, professional, and respectful behavior is expected of all students, in order to facilitate a supportive learning environment. Any activities not related to the class material must be conducted outside of the classroom, including any online networking or in-person communication. Cell phones must be turned off and no conversation or texting is acceptable.

Please consider reading this short post on professors’ pet peeves regarding student behavior – many faculty feel it’s spot on:

<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2014/08/25/professors-pet-peeves/>

What is the electronics policy?

Laptops and other devices are permitted for note-taking and other approved in-class use. However, if a student is observed doing non-class-related stuff, including studying for other classes, shopping, social networking or social media of any sort, they may be reprimanded, asked to close the device, or possibly even asked to leave the class. Even if *you* feel you can multitask, your screen is disruptive to those around you and disrespectful to the class. Please make sure that your cell phones are silent or turned off at the beginning of class; beeping and ringing distracts your colleagues and is impolite in a classroom setting.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

Note Regarding Plagiarism

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:
http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:
www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:
www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health @Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.