

SOCI 4114-FA
SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH CARE
Fall 2021



Seminar: Tuesdays 8:30-11:30am
Location: AT 2003
Instructor: Dr. Sanders
Office hours: After seminar or by appointment
Phone: 807-343-8530
Email: D2L (not lakeheadu.ca email)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology of Health Care applies a social institutional perspective and a critical lens to analyze a host of health care issues ranging from patient/provider roles, to the provision of medical services, to the design and implementation of health policy. Sociologists are well positioned to critically examine the key issues in health care because of the discipline's ability to appreciate the importance of broader contextual factors and to problematize assumptions that are often taken for granted. A sociological perspective has become even more salient in the context of continued health care system reform in Ontario, growing awareness of the importance of the social determinants of health in achieving health equity among Canadians, and, most recently, the impact of COVID-19 on the Canadian health care system.

SOCI 4114 examines Canadian health care services and health care roles and professions from a sociological perspective, drawing particularly on a political economy approach. Health care funding and organizational issues, the medicalization of society, the shift to patient autonomy and consumer empowerment, the popularity of complementary and alternative medicine, Indigenous health perspectives, contemporary midwifery, and emerging health social movements will all be explored. Given recent historical events, we would be remiss if we did not draw on the experience of COVID-19 as a real-life lesson from which to critically reflect upon the value of the theories and concepts offered by the sociology of health care. While we utilize some texts and articles from other disciplines (e.g., nursing, medicine, public health) the approach to this course remains firmly sociological.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify the central social, political, and economic factors that influence delivery of and access to health care;
- Develop an understanding of the political economy tradition and how health care is being reshaped by market pressures (i.e., privatization);
- Appreciate ways sociologists have treated health care as an object of study;
- Construct, defend, and respectfully critique sociological arguments about health care;
- Develop university-level research, analytical, and writing skills by developing a full qualitative research proposal.

COURSE READINGS

The following textbook available in print or digital versions through the LU bookstore:

- Chappell, Neena L. and Margaret J. Penning. 2010. *Understanding Health, Health Care, and Health Policy in Canada: Sociological Perspectives*. Oxford: University Press.
- Mykhalovskiy, Eric, et al. (editors). 2020. *Health Matters: Evidence, Critical Social Science, and Health Care in Canada*. Toronto: University Press.
- Supplementary readings will be posted to D2L.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

This course is run as a seminar. Much of our time will be spent in shared dialogue or in breakaway groups. You will be expected to carefully read all assigned material before class and to share your thoughts and perspectives during class discussion. You will be encouraged to cultivate a stance of intellectual curiosity toward health care. This means developing a critical sociological imagination about contemporary health services, including taken-for-granted notions of health, illness, and health care. Additionally, please note that seminars will focus on the book by Eric Mykhalovskiy and supplementary readings uploaded to D2L. The readings and assignments for the book by Neena Chappell and Margaret Penning are to be done outside of class, though we can use seminar to discuss specific content and address specific questions.

COURSE EVALUATION AND SUMMARY OF TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations.

Description	Final Submission Date	Weight
Biweekly assignments	Ongoing	20%
Seminar participation	Ongoing	20%
Critical reflections	Ongoing	20%
Midterm	Oct 05	20%
Final	Nov 30	20%

Biweekly assignments: Assigned from the Chappell and Penning book. Your task is to read the material, respond to the questions, and submit your work on or before the assigned date. Your work will be evaluated on the extent to which comprehension of the material is demonstrated (i.e., is it evident that you read) as well as grammar and organization, clarity of writing, and application and originality (i.e., not simply repeating the text). Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day including weekends.

Seminar participation: The success of this course and your final mark rely on careful preparation and active participation in discussions. This means articulating thoughtful questions and answers to questions, and engaging in respectful discussion of course material during seminar. It may also include facilitating class discussion and presenting summaries or discussion questions. I do not expect that you will do these tasks perfectly from the start, but I do expect you to demonstrate improvement over the semester. Please note that participation marks

cannot be made up as the purpose of the mark is to demonstrate to me that you have understood the assigned material, prepared to discuss that material with your classmates, and engaged in discussion about the topic for that day. This is the point of the seminar experience and cannot be made up regardless of why the session was missed.

Critical reflections: Short writing exercises that are intended to prepare students for seminar. The goal is analysis, not simply summary and description. Refer to the handout in the "Critical Reflections" D2L folder.

Midterm: Includes short answer and essay questions and is designed to evaluate your ability to apply key concepts, not recitation of materials. There are no make-ups except with appropriate authoritative documentation (e.g., no parents, no partners).

Final: This capstone assignment is an opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned about the sociology of healthcare by using the course material as a basis to analyze and critique some aspect of health care in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Your task will be to use specific course materials to inform your analysis of the issue. The final can be in the form of an oral presentation (15-20 minutes), a short video (5-10 minutes), or a written paper (8-10 pages).

Extra credit: One extra credit paper (approx. 5 pages) may be submitted. Your task will be to write an academic book review of a chapter from *Health Matters*. Academic book reviews are reflective and evaluate the scholarly merits of a work (i.e., they are not mere statements of personal opinion about how much you liked or disliked the work). They provide a thoughtful critique of argumentation, evidence, conclusions, strengths and weaknesses, and the overall value of a work to a field of study. Refer to the handout, "Writing a Book Review for an Academic Journal," located in the D2L extra credit folder. The writing quality of this paper should be in keeping with a 4th year university level term paper with regard to writing mechanics, syntax, overall organization, and clarity. This paper is worth up to 5 points toward your final mark (or 5% of your final grade). I recommend meeting with me in advance to discuss your idea before writing the paper.

COURSE POLICIES

Email: I encourage you to deal with issues related to your course assignments in person during class or class breaks. For more in-depth discussion of course issues, please see me during office hours or make an appointment. In situations when email is necessary, please consider email equivalent to any other form of written communication. Email should be brief and require a brief 1-2 sentence response. Students who write to their professors are expected to follow rules of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. In addition, please include a proper greeting, such as "Dear Dr. Sanders," and a closing that includes your full name, such as "Sincerely, Joe Biden." In the subject heading, please put the Course Number: SOCI 4114. Email failing to meet these standards may be returned with a request to revise appropriately. Please note that I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account.

Grades and feedback: I will provide written feedback on tests and assignments that are submitted by the due date. For late work, I will provide oral feedback during office hours or by appointment. I do not discuss grades by email or provide detailed breakdowns of graded work by email. All grade inquiries must be in person during office hours or by appointment. I am happy to talk by phone, so please do not hesitate to contact me to make a phone appointment.

Attendance: There is no greater predictor of doing well in a course than attending classes. As this is a seminar course, students are expected to be present in class each week. In the event that we must shift to a Zoom format for seminar, I consider it common courtesy for cameras to be on during discussions. Plus, active cameras help me evaluate attendance and participation. Zoom backgrounds are available if you have privacy concerns.

Copyright compliance: I understand and agree that all instructional, reference, and administrative materials to which I am given access in this course (the course materials), whether they consist of text, still or kinetic images, or sound, whether they are in digital or hard copy formats, and in whatever media they are offered, are protected in their entirety by copyright, and that to comply with this copyright and the law.

1. I may access and download the course materials only for my own personal and non-commercial use for this course; and
2. I am not permitted to download, copy, store (in any medium), forward or share, transmit, broadcast, show, post or play in public, adapt, or change in any way any text, image, or sound component of the course materials for any other purpose whatsoever except as expressly authorized, and only to the extent authorized, in writing, by the course instructor. I further understand and agree that, if I infringe the copyright of the course materials in any way, I may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct—Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviors that support the University's academic values.

Exam/assignment integrity

Plagiarism: All work must be completed with academic integrity. Please review the LU policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, accessible from the LU homepage or the course information folder on the website. Please come to me with any questions or concerns about this policy prior to handing in assignments or taking the tests. I understand and agree that:

1. Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must complete the assignments in this course without the assistance of anyone else.
2. Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must not access any sources or materials (in print, online, or in any other way) to complete any course exam.
3. I further understand and agree that, if I violate either of these two rules, or if I provide any false or misleading information about my completion of course assignments or exams, I may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct—Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviors that support the University's academic values.

Accommodations: LU is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. This commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as early as possible. Please visit: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

As a university student, you may sometimes experience mental health concerns or stressful events that interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily activities.

All of us can benefit from support during times of struggle. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events or feelings of anxiety or depression, **Student Health and Wellness** is here to help. Their services are free for Lakehead Students and appointments are available. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on and off campus at: lakeheadu.ca/shw

Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do - for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you. Asking for support sooner rather than later is almost always helpful.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE*

MODULE 1: ANALYZING HEALTH CARE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Sept 07: Introductions and Federalism in Canadian Health Care

- Introductions, review syllabus, and your questions
- Maioni, Antonia. 2012. "Health Care." Pp. 165-182 in *Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Morgan, Steven G. and Katherine Boothe. 2016. "Universal Prescription Drug Coverage in Canada: Long-Promised yet Undelivered." *Healthcare Management Forum* 29(6): 247-254.
- **Discussion topics:** Explain the differences between health, health care institutions, and the health care system. What is federalism? How is prescription drug coverage an exemplar of federalism? How does federalism contribute to health care as a social institution?

Sept 14: Medicare and the State

- "What is Neoliberalism?" (*The Conversation* article, YouTube video)
- Forget, Evelyn L. 2002. "National Identity and the Challenges of Health Care Reform in Canada." *Review of Social Economy*. Vol LX, No. 3, pp. 359-375.
- Forget, Evelyn L., et al. 2005. "Canadian Health Reform: A Gender Analysis." *Feminist Economics* 11(1): 123-141.
- **Discussion topics:** Explain neo-liberalism. What's at stake in the privatization of health care?

MODULE 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Sept 21: Political Economy and Health Care

- Armstrong, Pat, Hugh Armstrong, and David Coburn. 2001. "Introduction: The Political Economy of Health and Care." Pp. VII-X in *Unhealthy Times: Political Economy Perspectives on Health and Care in Canada*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Born, Karen and Andreas Laupacis. 2011. "Public and Private Payment for Health Care in Canada." *Healthy Debate* (20 July).
- Whiteside, Heather. 2011. "Unhealthy Policy: The Political Economy of Canadian Public-Private Partnership Hospitals." *Health Sociology Review* 20(3): 258-268.
- **RECOMMENDED:** Coburn, David. 2001. "Health, Health Care, and Neo-Liberalism." Pp. 45-65 in *Unhealthy Times: Political Economy Perspectives on Health and Health Care in Canada*, edited by P. Armstrong, H. Armstrong, and D. Coburn. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

* Schedule subject to change as necessary.

- **Discussion topics:** Explain political economy and how this perspective can be usefully applied to analyses of health care. In whose interests is the health care system organized, funded, and distributed, and accessed?
- **Assignment 1:** Read Chappell and Penning, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-34), answer essay questions, due in "Assignment 1" folder by Thursday, Sept 23

Sept 28: The Critique of Evidence-Based Medicine

- Timmermans, Stefan. 2010. "Evidence-Based Medicine: Sociological Explorations." Pp. 309-323 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*, edited by C.E. Bird, P. Conrad, A.M. Fremont, and S. Timmermans. Nashville: Vanderbilt Press.
- Mykhalovskiy, Eric and Lorna Weir. 2004. "The Problem of Evidence-Based Medicine: Directions for Social Science." *Social Science & Medicine* 59: 1059-1069.
- **RECOMMENDED:** Armstrong, Pat. 2001. "Evidence-Based Health-Care Reform: Women's Issues." Pp. 121-145 in *Unhealthy Times: Political Economy Perspectives on Health and Health Care in Canada*, edited by P. Armstrong, H. Armstrong, and D. Coburn. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- **Discussion topics:** Explain the purpose and goals of EBM. What is meant by "evidence" and what counts as evidence and why? What are the main sociological critiques of EBM? Are the critiques useful?
- Midterm distributed

Oct 05: Midterm

- Midterm due Oct 05
- **Assignment 2:** Read Chappell and Penning, Chapter 2 (pp. 35-77), answer essay questions, due in "Assignment 2" folder by Thursday, Oct 07

Oct 12: Reading Week

- No seminar, no assigned readings

MODULE 3. APPLIED TOPICS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH CARE

Oct 19: Health Matters Pt 1

- *Health Matters:* Mykhalovskiy et al. (pp. 3-14)
- *Health Matters:* Dale (pp. 33-51)
- *Health Matters:* McDonald & Wright (pp. 52-74)
- **Discussion topics:** What is the main thesis of the book and of each reading? Discuss significance of the "instrumental turn." How are the political economy perspective and the EBM critique reflected in the readings? What is the role of a critical social science in health care research?

Oct 26: Health Matters Pt 2

- *Health Matters*: Wagner & Darling (pp. 92-110)
- *Health Matters*: Stephens (pp. 111-130)
- **Discussion topics**: What is main thesis of each reading? How are the political economy perspective and the EBM critique reflected in the readings?
- **Assignment 3**: Read Chappell and Penning, Chapter 3 (pp. 78-113), answer essay questions, due in "Assignment 3" folder by Thursday, Oct 28

Nov 02: Health Matters Pt 3

- *Health Matters*: Bell (pp. 155-171)
- *Health Matters*: Ducey et al. (pp. 190-209)
- **Discussion topics**: What is main thesis of each reading? How are the political economy perspective and the EBM critique reflected in the readings? Discuss the significance of gender and socially stigmatized health behaviors.

Nov 09: Seminar 6. Health Matters Pt 4

- *Health Matters*: Sutherland (pp. 229-246)
- *Health Matters*: Ford (pp. 247-262)
- **Discussion topics**: What is main thesis of each reading? Discuss significance of neoliberalism. How are the political economy perspective and the EBM critique reflected in the readings? Discuss the significance of race/ethnicity and critical race theory in analyses of health care.
- **Assignment 4**: Read Chappell and Penning, Chapter 4 (pp. 114-167), answer essay questions, due in "Assignment 4" folder by Thursday, Nov 11

Nov 16: Social Movements and Health Philanthropy

- Moffett, Jill. 2003. "Moving Beyond the Ribbon: An Examination of Breast Cancer Advocacy and Activism in the United States and Canada." *Cultural Dynamics* 15(3): 287-306.
- Kerr, Thomas, et al. 2004. "Harm Reduction in Prisons: A Rights Based Analysis." *Critical Public Health*. 14(4): 345-360.
- **Discussion topics**: What roles have social movements played in the organization and delivery of health care services? What is distinct about a community health perspective on the delivery of health care?

Nov 23. "Healthy Debates"

- Debate between Margaret Somerville and Colleen M. Flood. 2006. "Is a Private Health Care System Necessary?" Pp. 344-356 in *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues, Fifth Edition*, edited by M. Charlton and P. Barker.
- Debate between Andrew Heard & Daniel Cohn and Paul Barker. 2006. "Should the Federal Government Play a Leading Role in Health Care?" Pp. 100-125 in *Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues, Fifth Edition*, edited by M. Charlton and P. Barker.
- Sebring, Jennifer. 2021. Towards a Sociological Understanding of Medical Gaslighting in Western Health Care. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 00: 1-14.

- **Discussion topics:**
- **Assignment 5:** Read Chappell and Penning, Chapter 5 (pp. 168-202), answer essay questions, due in "Assignment 5" folder by Thursday, Nov 25

Nov 30: Final Assignment Due

- Final presentations.
- No assigned readings.