

SOCI 2509-YA: SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH & ILLNESS

Lecture days/times: TR 10-11:30

Location: UC 1017

Instructor: Dr. Chris Sanders

Office: RB 2038

Office hours: TR 12-1pm, or by appointment

Email: D2L/mycourselink

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The aim of SOCI 2509 is to introduce students to the important and exciting realm of health sociology! The sociology of health and illness is about how society promotes health and, conversely, responds to those who become ill. What makes health sociology important is the critical role that social factors have in influencing the health of individuals, groups, and society writ large. A striking feature of contemporary Canadian society is how “medicine” has developed from a small-scale enterprise in the 1800s to become an enormous complex of behaviors, roles, practices, interests, and services. Hence there is no shortage of opportunities to apply a sociological perspective to make sense of the lived experience and social distribution of health and illness, as well as to the institutions through which care and services are provided.

This course provides an in-depth introduction to health sociology, including key concepts (e.g., medicalization, stigma) and major conceptual frameworks (e.g., functionalism, social constructionism). The readings and lectures focus on sociology’s contribution to understanding the history of medicine, patterns of health and illness, and changes in health care delivery. The readings accomplish this along two dimensions: (1) concepts in health and illness are defined and analyzed using epidemiological and sociocultural perspectives; (2) sociological theories and studies are brought to bear on the problems of definitions of health and illness, behavior and the use of health care services, the organizational features of health care, and the future frontiers of sociology in medicine. Lectures will provide additional emphases on the history of medicine, social disparities in health and inequality of access to care, the political economy of health, theories of risk and health promotion, recent changes in health care delivery at home and abroad, and new perspectives on the role of pharmaceuticals in health care.

Students will be given a broad overview of the subfield of health sociology. Readings and lectures will be supplemented by group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes, and written assignments. Readings and lectures will focus on key concepts and exemplars in research; in-class activities and assignments will emphasize novel applications of the course material. Upon graduation, sociologists pursuing employment in healthcare and health-related services will likely find themselves working with researchers and practitioners from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. This course will prepare students for working in these settings and social contexts by offering them a critical perspective on both their parent discipline and the disciplines of their partners in other fields of healthcare.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In offering an exploration of health sociology, SOCI 2509 focuses on developing both an empirical and theory-informed grasp of health and illness. The course learning objectives are:

- To provide students with an introduction to the social, economic, and political factors that shape medicine as an institution and the experience of health and illness.
- To develop students' understanding of the social and cultural meaning associated with health and illness.
- To introduce classical and contemporary works in medical sociology, and to appreciate some of the main ways that sociologists have treated "medicine" as an object of study.
- To foster respectful intellectual discussion and exchanges among students, and to encourage students to take a critical perspective by challenging taken-for-granted notions, including dominant conceptions of health, illness, medicine, and health care service delivery.
- To improve students' skills at reading, writing, critical analysis, note taking, and synthesizing sociological theory and research into academic writing.

COURSE READINGS

We will use the following book:

- Strohschein, Lisa and Rose Weitz. 2014. *The Sociology of Health, Illness & Health Care in Canada: A Critical Approach*. Toronto: Nelson Education.
- Additional readings will be uploaded to the D2L course website on a weekly basis.

The Sociology of Health, Illness & Health Care (abbrev. *SOHIH*) is available at the Lakehead University bookstore.

COURSE EVALUATION AND SUMMARY OF TESTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

<u>Description</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Value</u>
Test 1	22 October	20%
Assignment 1 (Group Presentation)	01/03 December	20%
Test 2	11 February	20%
Assignment 2 (Critical Paper)	31 March	30%
Active Participation		10%

Tests 1 & 2 are comprehensive and will cover all readings and lectures; test formats will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Test questions are designed to evaluate students' ability to apply key concepts as opposed to rote memorization of materials.

Assignments 1 & 2 are designed to encourage students to apply course concepts and to engage critically with contemporary health issues. Assignment 1 is a group presentation; students will work together in small groups and provide an analytic presentation to the class on a contemporary health issue. Assignment 2 is a major course paper; students will work individually on a critical essay about a current issue concerning pharmaceuticals and health sociology. More precise guidelines will be provided in class.

Tests must be completed during the lecture period on the dates indicated. If serious medical or emergency circumstances arise, students must provide appropriate documentation in order to receive a make-up test. Make-up tests are essay format and will be scheduled as needed. Assignments are due on the date indicated in paper format (assignments will not be accepted by email). Late assignments will receive a 5% deduction (approximately a 1/2 letter grade) per day including weekends. Likewise, if serious medical or emergency circumstances arise, students must provide appropriate documentation to avoid penalties.

All work must be completed with academic integrity. Please review the Lakehead University policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty; it can be accessed from the LU homepage. Please discuss with me any questions or concerns about this policy prior to handing in assignments or taking the tests.

This course will rely in no small part on “active” participation from students. My basic philosophy is that the greater your level of active engagement in class, the greater will be your understanding of the course material and your ability to appraise relevant issues. Students are therefore expected to reflect on readings in advance of class and bring questions and comments to lecture for open discussion. Your **participation grade** (10%) will reflect the degree of participation and preparation you show for each class.

GENERAL POLICIES

Etiquette: Common courtesy goes a long way. This includes paying careful attention in class (i.e., not multitasking with social media/email), listening to what others have to say (i.e., not interrupting), and doing your best to promote to a safe and constructive learning environment. It is also important to remain respectful of the subject matter; keep in mind that many of your classmates will have deeply personal and emotional experiences with health and illness.

Email: Students may contact me through D2L/mycourselink. Please note the course in the subject line as I am teaching several classes. I will read and respond to student emails during my office hours. Emails should be courteous and brief, requiring only a 1-2 sentence response. Lengthier inquiries and concerns should be brought to my office hours.

Attendance: Lecture attendance is not mandatory but is highly recommended. If you decide to attend lecture, you are expected to arrive on time and to be respectful to other students.

Cell phones: It should go without saying that cell phones should be turned off during lecture except in the case of emergencies.

FALL TERM SCHEDULE

UNIT 1: We begin with a brief history of disease and medicine in the western world; students are introduced to key concepts in the sociology of health & illness and epidemiology.

Week 1. Welcome to Health Sociology! What Is It, and What's Its Value?

- 15 Sept: Introductions and Course Overview
- 17 Sept: *SOHIH* Ch. 1, "Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care" and D2L reading, "Medical Model" by Michael Bury.

Week 2. Sociological Approaches to Health & Illness (con't)

- 22 Sept: *SOHIH* Ch. 2, "The Social Sources of Disease and Death"
- 24 Sept: D2L readings

UNIT 2: Students are provided with a systematic overview of what is known about the influence of social factors on the health of the population.

Week 3. Social Factors and Health & Illness

- 29 Sept: *SOHIH* Ch. 3, "The Social Determinants of Health and Illness..."
- 01 Oct: D2L readings

Week 4. Social Factors and Health & Illness (con't)

- 06 Oct: *SOHIH* Ch. 4, "Socioeconomic Inequalities in Health..."
- 08 Oct: D2L readings

Week 5. Social Factors and Health & Illness (con't)

- 13 Oct: *SOHIH* Ch. 5, "Work and Family Life..."
- 15 Oct: D2L readings

Week 6. Social Factors and Health & Illness (con't)

- 20 Oct: *SOHIH* Ch. 6, "Illness and Death in the Developing World" and Test Review
- 22 Oct: Test 1

Unit 3: We shift gears to the social construction of health, that is the ways society frames and responds to matters of wellness and disease as well as how people make sense of the experience of being ill.

Week 7. The Meaning and Experience of Health & Illness

- 27 Oct: *SOHIH* Ch. 7, "The Social Meanings of Illness"
- 29 Oct: D2L readings

Week 8. The Meaning and Experience of Health & Illness (con't)

- 03 Nov: D2L, Wade et al. "Social Dimensions of Mental Illness"
- 05 Nov: D2L readings

Week 9. The Meaning and Experience of Health & Illness (con't)

- 10 Nov: *SOHIH* Ch. 8, "The Experience of Disability, Chronic Pain..."
- 12 Nov: D2L readings

Week 10. The Meaning and Experience of Health & Illness (con't)

- 17 Nov: *SOHIH* Ch. 9, "The Body and the Pursuit of Health"
- 19 Nov: D2L readings

Week 11. Sociology and HIV/AIDS

- 24 Nov: D2L readings
- 26 Nov: D2L readings; In-class group collaboration (work on your presentations)

Week 12. 1st Term Review and Group Presentations

- 01 Dec: Assignment 1 (group presentations)
- 03 Dec: Assignment 1 (group presentations)

Week 13. Study Period

- 08 Dec: No lecture.

WINTER TERM SCHEDULE

Unit 4: Next we focus on sociological studies of health care settings, paying particular attention to the Canadian health care system.

Week 1. Health Care Systems, Professions, Settings, and Technologies

- 05 Jan: *SOHIH* Ch. 10, "The History of Health Care in Canada"
- 07 Jan: D2L readings

Week 2. Health Care Systems, Professions, Settings, and Technologies (con't)

- 12 Jan: *SOHIH* Ch. 11, "Health Care in Other Countries"
- 14 Jan: D2L readings

Week 3. Health Care Systems, Professions, Settings, and Technologies (con't)

- 19 Jan: *SOHIH* Ch. 12, "Health Care Professions"
- 21 Jan: No lecture.

Week 4. Health Care Systems, Professions, Settings, and Technologies (con't)

- 26 Jan: *SOHIH* Ch. 13, "Health Care Settings and Technologies"
- 28 Jan: D2L readings

Week 5. Sociology and Public Health

- 02 Feb: D2L readings
- 04 Feb: D2L readings

Week 6. Sociology and Public Health (con't)

- 09 Feb: D2L readings and Test review
- 11 Feb: Test 2

Week 7. Reading Week

- 16 Feb: No lecture
- 18 Feb: No lecture

Unit 5: We conclude the course by applying what we've learned to recent sociological analyses of pharmaceuticals. In particular, we examine how health sociologists orient to pharmaceutical drugs as objects of inquiry and pose questions about social, cultural, and political relations through research on pharmaceutical treatments and clinical trials.

Week 8. Pharmaceuticals and the "Social"

- 23 Feb: D2L readings
- 25 Feb: D2L readings

Week 9. Pharmaceuticals and Medical Authority: Pharmaceuticalization

- 01 Mar: D2L readings
- 03 Mar: D2L readings

Week 10. Pharmaceuticals and the Construction of New Markets: On Sex and Desire

- 08 Mar: D2L readings
- 10 Mar: D2L readings

Week 11. Pharmaceuticals and Public Health: Studies of HIV

- 15 Mar: D2L readings
- 17 Mar: D2L readings

Week 12. The Globalization of Pharmaceutical Research and Marketing

- 22 Mar: D2L readings
- 24 Mar: D2L readings

Week 13. Moving Forward: Bioethics and Genetics

- 29 Mar: *SOHH* Ch. 14, "Issues in Bioethics"
- 31 Mar: Assignment 2 (critical paper) due in class