



SOCI 5631: SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH & ILLNESS

Lecture: M 2:30-5:30

Location: RB 2027

Instructor: Dr. Chris Sanders

Office: RB 2038

Office hours: M 1-2pm, T/W 1:30-2:30pm and
by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar provides a graduate-level survey of sociological perspectives on health, illness, and health care. Much of the focus is on issues of health in Canada. The course is divided into four units drawing on both theoretical and empirical research in the sociology of health and illness. Unit 1 introduces the origins of medical sociology and the social constructionist argument that understandings of health and illnesses are embedded with cultural meaning and values. Unit 2 examines “meaning seeking,” or how sick people experience illness, as well as the notion that medicine acts as an institution of social control. In Unit 3 we shift gears to learn about the Canadian public health care system (PHCS) and discuss the impact of structural and economic reforms in the era of neoliberalism. In Unit 4 we conclude with the sociology of public health, which asks questions about the health of publics and communities in Canada and abroad.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To understand how sociologists have studied medicine as a social institution, and how the discipline contributes to a comprehensive understanding of health and illness;
- To understand how social factors influence health and illness, and shape health inequalities in populations;
- To consider the complex social responses to health and illness issues;
- To develop critical thinking and evaluation skills to analyze complex social arrangements related to health and medicine;
- For students to apply course concepts to their areas of academic interest, and to effectively communicate this knowledge to colleagues in the seminar and beyond.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Individual research articles and book chapters are posted to the course website as PDFs, though you'll still need to purchase (or otherwise acquire) four books:

- Armstrong, Pat and Hugh Armstrong. 2016. *About Canada: Health Care, 2nd Ed.* Fernwood Press.
- Conrad, Peter. 2007. *The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders.* Johns Hopkins.
- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity.* New York: Simon & Schuster Inc.
- Rankin, Janet M. and Marie L. Campbell. 2006. *Managing to Nurse: Inside Canada's Health Care Reform.* Toronto: University Press.

These books are available at the LU bookstore. However, if you're operating on a shoestring budget, you can also purchase discounted used copies from Amazon.ca or Abebooks.com, or they can be borrowed for 2 weeks at a time through the LU Library Racer inter-library loan system (allow 2 weeks for requests to be processed and delivered).

Please note that most weeks include recommended readings, which are included in the weekly folders on the LU mycourselink site. These readings are not required for seminar, though they may be useful when writing the analytic responses and the major course paper.

EVALUATION

As this is a graduate seminar, students are expected to attend every class. Students are expected to have required readings completed prior to seminar. Each student will be in charge of facilitating 2 seminars. This tasking will require advanced preparation, including distributing a set of discussion questions in advance of seminar.

Students will be evaluated based on class participation—i.e., attendance and preparation (20%), two analytic reflections (20%), leading two seminars (20%), and a major writing assignment that applies course concepts to a topic of your choosing (40%). Different options for the major writing assignment will be discussed on the first day of seminar.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

UNIT I. INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH SOCIOLOGY. We begin by asking: What are the origins of Medical Sociology? Why has medical sociology been critiqued as “a-theoretical”? How does Medical Sociology differ from the Sociology of Health and Illness? And, most important, how can a sociological perspective contribute to our understanding of health, illness, and health care in Canada?

Week 1: January 9th – Welcome!

“Introduction to Health Sociology (aka Medical Sociology)”

- Straus, Robert. 1957. The Nature and Status of Medical Sociology. *American Sociological Review* 22(2): 200-204.
- Olafsdottir, Sigrun. 2013. “Social Construction and Health.” Pp. 41-59 in W.C. Cockerham (ed.) *Medical Sociology on the Move*. New York: Springer Press.
- Pescosolido, Bernice. 2011. “Taking ‘The Promise’ Seriously: Medical Sociology’s Role in Health, Illness, and Healing in a Time of Social Change.” Pp. 3-20 in B.A. Pescosolido et al. (eds) *Handbook of the Sociology of Health, Illness, and Healing*. New York: Springer Press.

Recommended:

- Bloom, Samuel M. 2002. “The Origins: Medicine as Social Science, Public Health, and Social Medicine.” (pp. 11-22)
- Conrad, Peter and Kristin Barker. 2010. The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(Suppl 1): S57-S69.

UNIT II. THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF DISEASE AND ILLNESS. Next, we examine foundational sociological approaches to understanding the experience of illness and the framing of disease. How have sociologists employed Grounded Theory to study the experience of health? What does it mean to argue that medicine acts as an institution of social control? What is (and what is not) medicalization?

Week 2: January 16th

“Biographical Disruption and the Experience of Illness”

- Bury, Michael. 1982. Chronic Illness as Biographical Disruption. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 4(2): 167-182.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 1991. *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*. (Chapters 4 and 7)
- Ciambone, Desiree. 2001. Illness and Other Assaults on Self: The Relative Impact of HIV/AIDS on Women’s Lives. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 23(4): 517-540.
- Hudson, Nikki et al. 2016. We Needed to Change the Mission Statement of Marriage: Biographical Disruptions, Appraisals and Revisions among Couples Living with Endometriosis. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 38(5): 721-735.



Recommended:

- Lowton, Karen and Jonathan Gabe. 2003. Life on a Slippery Slope: Perceptions of Health in Adults with Cystic Fibrosis. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 25(4): 289-319.
- Karner, Tracy X. and Donna Bobbitt-Zeher. 2005. Losing Selves: Dementia Care as Disruption and Transformation. *Symbolic Interaction* 28(4): 549-570.

Week 3: January 23rd

“Conceptualizing Stigma”

- Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster Inc. (read Chapters 1, 3-4; skim Chapters 2 & 5)
- Scambler, Graham. 2009. Health-Related Stigma. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 31(3): 441-455.

Week 4: January 30th

- Holiday! (no class): A wise student would get ahead on reading *The Medicalization of Society*.

Week 5: February 6th

“Social Control and Medicine”

- Conrad, Peter. 2007. *The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders*. Johns Hopkins.

UNIT III. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF MEDICAL CARE. We shift gears and turn to the Canadian public health care system. We begin from a political economy perspective, a distinctly Canadian sociological approach to understanding health care institutions. We reflect upon health care reform and how restructuring coordinates “care work” to align with the goals of efficiency and cost control. Finally, we consider the problem of care access in geographically isolated regions like our Northern Communities.

Week 6: February 13th

“Health Care in Canada: A ‘Crisis’ in Care?”

- Armstrong, Pat and Hugh Armstrong. 2016. *About Canada: Health Care, 2nd Ed.* Fernwood Press.
- 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.

Recommended:

- Deber, Raisa Berlin. 2003. Health Care Reform: Lessons from Canada. *American Journal of Public Health* 93(1): 20-24.
- Maioni, Antonia (2012) “Health Care” Pp. 165-182 in H. Bakvis and G. Skogstad (eds.) *Canadian Federalism*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.



Week 7: February 20th – Reading week

- Holiday! (no class) A wise student would get ahead on reading *Managing to Nurse*.

Week 8: February 27th

“Restructuring Health Care”

- Rankin, Janet M. and Marie L. Campbell. 2006. *Managing to Nurse: Inside Canada’s Health Care Reform*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Recommended:

- Armstrong, Pat, Armstrong Hugh, and Krista Scott-Dixon. 2008. *Critical to Care: The Invisible Women in Health Services*. (Chapters 1-2)

Week 9: March 6th

“Providing Health Care to Rural and Remote Communities”

- CIHR. 2007. *CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People* (read “Summary of Articles” Articles 1-15). Accessible at: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/29134.html>
- Harris, Roma et al. 2008. “Helpers, Gatekeepers, and the Well-Intentioned.” Pp. 167-181 in C.N. Wathen, S. Wyatt and R. Harris (eds.) *Mediating Health Information*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Fiser, Adam and Robert Luke. 2008. “Between the Clinic and the Community” Pp. 128-149 in C.N. Wathen, S. Wyatt and R. Harris (eds.) *Mediating Health Information*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Hole, Rachelle et al. 2015. Visibility and Voice: Aboriginal People Experience Culturally Safe and Unsafe Health Care. *Qualitative Health Research* 25(12): 1662-1674.

UNIT IV: HEALTH AND THE BODY. We conclude with the sociology of public health (not to be confused with the public health care system), which asks questions about the health publics and communities and the role of the state in controlling health and illness. Whereas traditionally health care focused on treating the sick body, we see a modern emphasis on regulation of the “well” or managing the healthy body. Additionally, we see that major social institutions are increasingly implicated in the regulation of “risk” and health and illness.

Week 10. March 13

“The New Public Health”

- Lupton, Deborah. 1993. Risk as Moral Danger: The Social and Political Functions of Risk Discourse in Public Health. *International Journal of Health Services* 23(3): 425-435.
- Higgs, Paul. 1998. “Risk, Governmentality and the Reconceptualization of Citizenship.” Pp. 176-197 in G. Scambler and P. Higgs (eds) *Modernity, Medicine & Health*. Routledge.
- Levinson, Richard. 1998. “Issues at the Interface of Medical Sociology and Public Health.” Pp. 66-81 in



G. Scambler and P. Higgs (eds) *Modernity, Medicine & Health*. London: Routledge.

- Roy, Stephanie. 2008. 'Taking Charge of Your Health': Discourses of Responsibility in English-Canadian Women's Magazines. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 30(3): 463-477.

Recommended:

- Foucault, Michel. 1973. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Armstrong, David. 2005. The Rise of Surveillance Medicine. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 17(3): 393-404.
- Ayo, Nike. 2012. Understanding Health Promotion in a Neoliberal Climate and the Making of Health Conscious Citizens. *Critical Public Health* 22(1): 99-105.

Week 11: March 20

"Criminalizing Disease and Illness"

- Adam, Barry et al. 2015. HIV Disclosure as Practice and Public Policy. *Critical Public Health* 25(4): 386-397.
- Sanders, Chris. 2015. Examining Public Health Nurses' Documentary Practices: The Impact of Criminalizing HIV Non-Disclosure on Inscription Styles. *Critical Public Health* 25(4): 398-409.
- Hoppe, Trevor. 2013. Controlling Sex in the Name of "Public Health": Social Control and Michigan Law. *Social Problems* 60(1): 27-49.

Recommended:

- Mykhalovskiy, Eric and Glenn Betteridge. 2012. Who? What? Where? When? And with What Consequences? An Analysis of Criminal Cases of HIV Non-Disclosure in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 27(1): 31-53.

Week 12: March 27th

"Pharmaceuticalization of Public Health: Markets, Ethics & Citizenship"

- Petryna, Adriana. 2005. Ethical Variability: Drug Development and Globalizing Clinical Trials. *American Ethnologist* 32(2): 183-97.
- Biehl, João. 2006. "Pharmaceutical Governance." Pp. 206-239 in *Global Pharmaceuticals: Ethics, Markets, Practices*.
- Cataldo, Fabian. 2008. New Forms of Citizenship and Socio-Political Inclusion: Accessing Antiretroviral Therapy in a Rio de Janeiro Favela. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 30(6): 900-912.
- Owczarzak, Jill and Andrew Petroll (forthcoming) "A Critical Case Study Analysis of the Logic and Practices of Prescribing HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to At-Risk Adolescents"

Recommended:

- Bell, Susan & Anne Figert. 2012. Medicalization and Pharmaceuticalization at the Intersections: Looking Backward, Sideways and Forward. *Social Science & Medicine* 75(5): 775-783.
- Williams, Simon et al. 2012. Medicalization and Pharmaceuticalization at the Intersections: A Commentary on Bell and Figert (2012). *Social Science & Medicine* 75(12): 2129-2130.

Week 13: April 3rd

"Media and Health"

- Seale, Clive. 2003. Health and Media: An Overview. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 25(6): 513-531. (read pp. 513-524)
- Rowe, Rob et al. 2003. 'About a Year Before the Breakdown I was Having Symptoms...' *Sociology of Health & Illness* 25(6): 680-696.
- Mykhalovskiy, Eric et al. 2016. "Callous, Cold and Deliberately Duplicious: Racialization, Immigration and the Representation of HIV Criminalization in Canadian Mainstream Newspapers" (read pp. 5-9; 29-51; skim pp. 10-28)

Recommended:

- Riley, Olstead. 2002. Contesting the Text: Canadian Media Depictions of the Conflation of Mental Illness and Criminality. *Sociology of Health & Illness* 24(5): 621-643.

* Readings subject to change.

