



Course Syllabus
Sociology of Mental Health

SOCY 448
FALL 2019

Learning Outcomes

This course introduces students to the ways a sociological perspective informs our understanding of mental health and illness. This course will argue that mental illness is socially constructed, and that population mental health is profoundly shaped by social conditions. This course will also help students acquire critical sociological thinking through understanding the foundations of mental illness and become familiar with how sociologists are analyzing and addressing challenges faced by people labelled with mental disorder. This course uses the main textbook as well as other sociological materials from a variety of sources to examine diverse sociological perspectives on mental health in research and practice.

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- State with confidence the general theoretical, methodological and conceptual approaches to the sociology of mental health and illness.
- Describe and analyze how social factors and social conditions can influence mental illness onset, course, and outcome.
- Discuss how sociologically informed research can uncover inequalities faced by people with mental illness.

Required Resources

Course website elms.umd.edu: Please ensure that you have adequate technology (computer access, a reliable internet connections, word processing and PDF reader software) prior to the first day of class. Download software for free from terpware.umd.edu.

Textbook: There will be a textbook for this course. The book is available at the Campus Bookstore.

A Sociology of Mental Illness 2nd Edition (2004)
Person Prentice Hall
ISBN 13: 978-0131114784

Other materials: I have compiled a list of articles that complement or supplement the textbook. All other course materials will be uploaded and provided through the course website in ELMS (<https://www.elms.umd.edu/>). You will need daily access to the course website to find required resources.

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Class Time
Mondays and
Wednesdays, 10:50am–
12:10pm

Location
ASY 3207

Office Hours
Tuesdays 2-4pm, or by
appointment

Course Communication
To contact me, please use my zylin@umd.edu email address. Please always put SOCY448 in the subject line. You can expect a response within 24 hours. And please do NOT use ELMS messages – your message may get lost. It is essential that we all conduct ourselves as professionals, so please visit [ter.ps/email](http://terp.ps/email) for some friendly guidance on writing emails.



I look forward to working
with all of you!

Course Structure & Schedule

This course will be a mix of lecture, class discussion, and independent learning. My hope is that we can have an engaging discussion about the topics, with less need for PowerPoint lectures, though this varies from class to class. This course is organized as TEN broad parts covering different topics of mental health (see the schedule below). For each part, you need to read the textbook and other assigned materials, come to the class to discuss about readings, and complete quizzes and discussion questions. Please be advised that the course is a high-level course which means you need to spend substantial time and effort to complete course assignments. You will be required to i) read the textbook chapter(s) and other reading materials assigned in the course schedule before the class, ii) come to lecture prepared to discuss the reading, and iii) Take quizzes in the worksheet (WS) and complete writing assignments via discussion board (DB). More details about the worksheet (WS) and discussion board (DB) assignments are described in the ‘Course Assessments’ on the next page.

***WS = Worksheet / DB = Discussion Board**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING	ASSIGNMENTS
1	8/26	Introduction		WS-01; DB-01 (due 8/30)
	8/28	Overview	Textbook, Chapter 1: “Introduction: Social Causes and Consequences of Mental Illness”	
2	9/2	Labor Day (no class)		WS-02; DB-02 (due 9/13)
	9/4	Social Construction of Mental Illness	Conrad and Barker. 2010. “The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	
3	9/9		Social Construction of Mental Illness	Textbook, Chapter 12: “The Medicalization of Deviant Behavior and Mental Illness”
	9/11	Horwitz. 2011. “Creating an Age of Depression: The Social Construction and Consequences of the Major Depression Diagnosis” <i>Society and Mental Health</i>		
4	9/16	Labeling and Stigma	Textbook, Chapter 10: “Labeling Deviant Behavior as Mental Illness”	WS-03; DB-03 (due 9/20)
	9/18		Pescosolido. 2013. “The Public Stigma of Mental Illness: What Do We Think; What Do We Know; What Can We Prove?” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	
5	9/23	Measuring Mental Health	Mirowsky and Ross. 2002. “Measurement for a Human Science” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	WS-04; DB-04 (due 9/27)
	9/25		Keyes. 2002. “The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	
6	9/30	The Social Stress Model	Textbook, Chapter 2: “The Stress Process and Mental Illness”	WS-05; DB-05 (due 10/10)
	10/2		Turner et al. 1995. “The Epidemiology of Social Stress” <i>American Sociological Review</i>	
7	10/7		Pearlin 1989. “The Sociological Study of Stress” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	
	10/9	Mid-Term Exam Review		
8	10/14	Mid-Term Exam		

	10/16	Social Stratification and Mental Health	Textbook, Chapter 3: “Social Status: Gender” Mirowsky. 1996. “Age and the Gender Gap in Depression” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	WS-06; DB-06 (due 10/25)
9	10/21		Textbook, Chapter 4: “Social Status: Socioeconomic Status and Race/Ethnicity”	
	10/23		Brown. 2003. “Critical Race Theory Speaks to the Sociology of Mental Health” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	
10	10/28	Social Networks and Social Support	Thoits. 2011. “Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health” <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i>	WS-07; DB-07 (due 11/1)
	10/30		Alvarez et al. 2017. “Family Social Capital and Health – A Systematic Review and Redirection” <i>Sociology of Health & Illness</i>	
11	11/04	Social Roles and Mental Health	Textbook, Chapter 7: “Social Roles: Spouse, Parent” Textbook, Chapter 8: “Social Roles: Worker”	WS-08; DB-08 (due 11/8)
	11/06		Simon. 2002. “Revisiting the Relationships among Gender, Marital Status, and Mental Health” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>	
12	11/11	Religion and Community	Ellison et al. 2001. “Religious Involvement, Stress, and Mental Health” <i>Social Forces</i>	WS-09; DB-09 (due 11/15)
	11/13		Textbook, Chapter 6: “Social Status: Community” Villarreal and Yu. 2017. “Crime, Fear, and Mental Health in Mexico” <i>Criminology</i>	
13	11/18	Treatment of Mental Illness	Textbook, Chapter 14: “The Challenge of Community Mental Health”	WS-10; DB-10 (due 11/22)
	11/20		Hatzenbuehler. 2010. “The Impact of Institutional Discrimination on Psychiatric Disorders in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Populations: A Prospective Study” <i>American Journal of Public Health</i>	
14	11/25	Social Policies and Mental Health	Mechanic. 2012. “Seizing Opportunities Under the Affordable Care Act for Transforming the Mental and Behavioral Health System” <i>Health Affairs</i>	NO Assignments
	11/27		Hatzenbuehler et al. 2017. “Immigration Policies and Mental Health Morbidity Among Latinos: A State Level Analysis” <i>Social Science & Medicine</i>	
15	11/18	Final Exam Review and Wrap Up		
	11/20	Q&A (no class)		
16	TBA	Final Exam		

*ALL assignments are due by 11:59 PM EST on the assigned date

Course Assessments

In-Class Writing Prompts: Most classes will include a brief (5-10 minutes) writing prompt on the readings for the day. I may provide you with a prompt (perhaps a quote from reading or topic) and you will need to reflect on that prompt based on the readings. You should begin with a brief summary of authors' arguments and findings, and then your reflections on the topic. You can only get credit for the writing prompts if you are present on the day of class.

Worksheets (WS): For each class topic, you will find a worksheet (WS) on our course website. WS is an independent learning assessment that guides you through the course materials. It will give you clear reading and learning guide. After learning through the worksheet, you will complete an online quiz on our course ELMS page. You will have 30 minutes to complete 10 multiple-choice/true-false/matching questions, therefore make sure you have a good internet connection and a quiet environment where you won't be interrupted to complete the quiz. You should complete and submit each worksheet by the assigned deadline.

Discussion Boards (DB): For each class topic, you will need to answer a set of TWO questions via discussion board in the ELMS. You must answer each question separately with a paragraph of at least FIVE sentences. Writing responses are a great opportunity for you to connect course concepts to your own experiences and to reflect on your learning for each topic. Your answers will be graded for completeness, accuracy, written expression, and demonstration of understanding of material. You may find it easiest to compose your answers and responses in a separate file (e.g., MS Word) and then copy and paste into the writing response text box.

Exams: There are two exams, one mid-term and one final exam. The exams are designed to evaluate students' understanding of the materials. Topics covered in the lectures and readings will both be included in the exams. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true-false, matching, and short essay questions. The final exam will only contain material learned after the mid-term. Review sessions for the exams will be held to help students prepare for the exams. Please ensure you bring your UMD Student ID to the exams and place it visibly on the table.

Grades

Grades are not given, but earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the course so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

Category	Amount	Points	Total Points	Percentage
In-Class Writing Prompts	10	10	100	20%
Worksheets	10	10	100	20%
Discussion Boards	10	10	100	20%
Mid-Term Exam	1	100	100	20%
Final Exam	1	100	100	20%
Total Points:			500	

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%		
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%		

Course Policies

Attendance policy: Your active participation in the course is not only crucial for your own learning but for that of your peers. I will not take attendance in lecture, but I will be mindful of classroom participation, i.e., which students try to engage in a positive manner with the material, and it will impact your final grade.

Late work and grading: All assignments – worksheets (quizzes) and answering discussion questions – should be completed by the due. If you do not complete assignments by 11:59 p.m. of the assigned date, you will only receive up to HALF CREDIT. Late assignments will be graded normally according to the requirements, but the scores will be cut in half. Make-ups and extensions are not granted unless you provide documented proof or pre-approved absence defined by the University Policy (<http://ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>). However, late exams will not be accepted except in the case of documented emergency and should get my approval at least two weeks in advance. There is no extra credit and the grade will not be negotiable. If you experience difficulties, I strongly encourage you to contact me as soon as possible so that I can help you get on track in the early stages of the course.

Respectful manner: This course will cover some controversial issues. Therefore, it's imperative that we create and keep a learning environment for all participants of the course and we should be free from judgment. There will be a lot of class discussion throughout this course, so please be ready to openly share your own opinions, experiences and beliefs in an accepting and understanding manner. Do not shoot down the ideas or perspectives of others and try to learn from them. If you disagree with content or comments from the course, I encourage you to express your thoughts respectfully and provide evidence to support your statements. Personal attacks and offensive languages will not be tolerated under any circumstances and will be reported by University Policy.

Syllabus revision: This syllabus may be updated based upon the needs of students and the course at any point during the semester. If any changes are made, the updated syllabus will be posted on ELMS so that you can have the latest version of the syllabus.

Copyright protection: My course materials, including slides, assignment instructions, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own personal use. You may not and may not allow others to reproduce or distribute course materials publicly whether or not a fee is charged without my express written content. More information about UMD's policies about the commercial use of course materials can be found on the [Office of the President's website](#).

Get Some Help!

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit tutoring.umd.edu to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you. In particular, everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting ter.ps/writing and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit counseling.umd.edu or [one of the many other resources on campus](#).



Technical Support

Technology will never work 100% of the time. Please understand that I am not able to diagnose and fix technical difficulties with campus tools or your personal computer. If you have any problems with course resources please consult with the IT Helpdesk directly (helpdesk.umd.edu). If the problem is limiting access to a course resources, try using a campus computer in the meantime – visit the UMD library website (<https://www.lib.umd.edu>) to find available computers near you.

Course Evaluations

As members of our learning community, your personal reflection and feedback is crucial to success of this course and our conversations. As instructors, it is particularly valuable for us to collect formative feedback from our students since it can help inform our own teaching choices and strategies. To do this, there will be several opportunities throughout the course to reflect on our class and your learning experience. I also encourage you to meet with me in person (or through video) and feel free to email me if you have any questions, concerns, and suggestions for me as well as for this course.

Academic Dishonesty

Any of the following acts are considered academic dishonesty and are subject to serious punishment: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. In this class, there will be zero tolerance toward any types of the academic dishonesties and the minimum penalty will be a grade of zero for the assignment; more excessive misconduct will result in a grade of “F” for the course and the filing of charges for academic misconduct. Plagiarism is the borrowing of information, wording, organization, or ideas without acknowledging the source. You must note any sources you use in writing and assignments for this course. When you repeat exact language (even a few words!) you must put the material in quotation marks, followed by a reference to the source. For more information, see the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty (<https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/academic-dishonesty>).