

SOCY 335: Sociology of Health and Illness

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:50am-12:10pm, ASY 3207
Fall 2019

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1. Course Description

1.1 Overview

Welcome to Sociology of Health and Illness! This course is intended to provide an in-depth introduction to the major conceptual frameworks of medical sociology and empirical research examining social factors that influence individuals' health and illness. This course will cover sociological perspectives of health and illness; distributions of health and illness by social factors including sex/gender, race/ethnicity, nativity, and socioeconomic status; illness experience and illness management; life course approaches to the study of health; social contexts and health; and the health care system. Although this course will include a combination of lecture and discussion, my hope is that much of the learning will take place through guided class discussions based on the readings.

1.2 Objectives

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

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

1.3 Course Communication

To contact me, please use my zylin@umd.edu email address. Please always put SOCY335 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 for some friendly guidance on writing emails.

1.4 Texts and Materials

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

- William C. Cockerham. 2015. *Medical Sociology*, 13th Edition. New York: Routledge.

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/>).

2. Course Policies

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 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>).

2.5 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.

3. Course Assessments

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.

3.1 In-Class Writing Prompts (10%): 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.

3.2 Class Participation (10%): Although I will give lecture during this course, you should come prepared to analyze the day's readings with respect to both substance and method and must participate in the discussion. Class participation includes (but not limited to): 1) contributing to class discussion; 2) actively contributing to small group exercise; and 3) raising and answering questions about the week's readings. Please note that this grade is separate from our writing.

3.3 Worksheets (WS) (10%): 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 15 minutes to complete 5 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.

3.4 Discussion Boards (DB) (10%): For each class topic, I will post two discussion questions via discussion board in the ELMS. You need to choose ONE question and answer it with a paragraph of at least FIVE sentences. In addition, you must respond to the post of one of your classmates, and explain what you like, dislike, agree, or do not agree with in his/her response. This response also needs to be a minimum of FIVE sentences long. 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.

3.5 Mid-Term Exam (30%). There is one mid-term exam. The exam is 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. 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.

3.6 Final Paper (30%). You are expected to produce one research paper with at least 20-pages long (excluding references, double spaced, 12-point font size, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins). This paper is designed to offer you the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of a particular area in medical sociology and exploration of current issues in that area. Final paper should be structured like the academic journal articles we read in this class, including a short introduction of your research questions, a literature review, a method section that states what would you like to do to answer your research questions, and a concluding section summarizing your study. Please note that you don't have to analyze data or do fieldwork in this paper.

3.7 Grading

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

4. Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1

August 26 Welcome and Course Overview

- Lecture: introduction; course logistics; requirements
- Readings: syllabus

August 28 Introduction to Sociology of Health and Illness

- Lecture: overview of the scope of medical sociology; health differentials over time and across populations; why social characteristics matter for health
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 1
 - Timmermans, Stefan and Steven Haas. 2008. "Towards a Sociology of Disease." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 30(5):659–76.

Assignments: WS-01; DB-01 (due 8/30)

Week 2

September 2 Labor Day (no class)

September 4 Key Theories of Medical Sociology (I)

- Lecture: paradigm shift; social conditions as fundamental causes of disease
- Readings:
 - Cockerham, William C. 2013. "Sociological Theory in Medical Sociology in the Early Twenty-First Century." *Social Theory & Health* 11(3):241–55.
 - Link, Bruce G. and Jo Phelan. 1995. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 35:80–94.
 - Phelan, Jo C., Bruce G. Link, and Parisa Tehranifar. 2010. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities: Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51:S28–40.

Week 3

September 9 Key Theories of Medical Sociology (II)

- Lecture: stress process theory; health lifestyle theory
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 5
 - Thoits, Peggy A. 2010. "Stress and Health: Major Findings and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51:S41–53.

- Cockerham, William C., Christine M. Snead, and Derek F. DeWaal. 2002. "Health Lifestyles in Russia and the Socialist Heritage." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43(1):42–55.

September 11 Key Theories of Medical Sociology (III)

- Lecture: life course theory; age patterns in morbidity and mortality
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 4 (pp. 129-136)
 - Textbook, Chapter 5
 - Elder, Glen H., Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Robert Crosnoe. 2003. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory." Pp. 3–19 in *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
 - Willson, Andrea E., Kim M. Shuey, and Glen H. Elder. 2007. "Cumulative Advantage Processes as Mechanisms of Inequality in Life Course Health." *American Journal of Sociology* 112(6):1886–1924.

Assignments: WS-02; DB-02 (due 9/13)

Week 4

September 16 Social Inequalities in Health: Class

- Lecture: class differences in morbidity and mortality
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 3
 - Miech, Richard, Fred Pampel, Jinyoung Kim, and Richard G. Rogers. 2011. "The Enduring Association between Education and Mortality: The Role of Widening and Narrowing Disparities." *American Sociological Review* 76(6):913–34.
 - Lutfey, Karen and Jeremy Freese. 2005. "Toward Some Fundamentals of Fundamental Causality: Socioeconomic Status and Health in the Routine Clinic Visit for Diabetes." *American Journal of Sociology* 110(5):1326–72.

September 18 Social Inequalities in Health: Gender

- Lecture: gender differences in morbidity and mortality
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 4 (pp. 79-91)
 - Read, Jen'nan Ghazal and Bridget K. Gorman. 2010. "Gender and Health Inequality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:371–86.
 - Courtenay, Will H. 2000. "Constructions of Masculinity and Their Influence on Men's Well-Being: A Theory of Gender and Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 50:1385–1401.

Assignments: WS-03; DB-03 (due 9/20)

Week 5

September 23 Social Inequalities in Health: Race/Ethnicity

- Lecture: racial/ethnic differences in morbidity and mortality

- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 4 (pp. 94-106)
 - Williams, David R. and Michelle Sternthal. 2010. "Understanding Racial-Ethnic Disparities in Health: Sociological Contributions." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S):S15-27.
 - Monk, Ellis P. 2015. "The Cost of Color: Skin Color, Discrimination, and Health among African-Americans." *American Journal of Sociology* 121(2):396-444.

September 25 Social Inequalities in Health: Nativity

- Lecture: Hispanic paradox; assimilation
- Readings:
 - Palloni, Alberto and Elizabeth Arias. 2004. "Paradox Lost: Explaining the Hispanic Adult Mortality Advantage." *Demography* 41(3):385-415.
 - Hummer, Robert A., Daniel A. Powers, Starling G. Pullum, Ginger L. Gossman, and W.Parker Frisbie. 2007. "Paradox Found (Again): Infant Mortality among the Mexican-Origin Population in the United States." *Demography* 44(3):441-57.
 - Wadsworth, Tim and Charis E. Kubrin. 2007. "Hispanic Suicide in U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Examining the Effects of Immigration, Assimilation, Affluence, and Disadvantage." *American Journal of Sociology* 112(6):1848-85.

Assignments: WS-04; DB-04 (due 9/27)

Week 6

September 30 Social Roles and Health: Worker

- Lecture: job loss; job strain; demands and control
- Readings:
 - Strully, Kate W. 2009. "Job Loss and Health in the U.S. Labor Market." *Demography* 46(2):221-46.
 - Schnittker, Jason. 2007. "Working More and Feeling Better: Women's Health, Employment, and Family Life, 1974-2004." *American Sociological Review* 72(4):221-38.
 - Schieman, Scott, Yuko Kurashina Whitestone, and Karen Van Gundy. 2006. "The Nature of Work and the Stress of Higher Status." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 47:242-57.

October 2 Social Roles and Health: Family - Spouse

- Lecture: marital status; marital quality; marital transitions
- Readings:
 - Thomas, Patricia A., Hui Liu, Debra Umberson, and J.Jill Suiitor. 2017. "Family Relationships and Well-Being." *Innovation in Aging* 1(3):1-11.
 - Williams, Kristi and Debra Umberson. 2004. "Marital Status, Marital Transitions, and Health: A Gendered Life Course Perspective." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 45(1):81-98.
 - Liu, Hui and Linda Waite. 2014. "Bad Marriage, Broken Heart? Age and Gender Differences in the Link between Marital Quality and Cardiovascular Risks among Older Adults." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 55(4):403-23.

Assignments: WS-05; DB-05 (due 10/4)

Week 7

October 7 Social Roles and Health: Family – Intergenerational Relationship

- Lecture: parent-child relationship
- Readings:
 - Caputo, Jennifer. 2019. “Crowded Nests: Parent – Adult Child Coresidence Transitions and Parental Mental Health Following the Great Recession.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 60(2):204–21.
 - Torssander, Jenny. 2013. “From Child to Parent? The Significance of Children’s Education for Their Parents’ Longevity.” *Demography* 50(2):637–59.
 - Polenick, Courtney A., Nicole DePasquale, David J. Eggebeen, Steven H. Zarit, and Karen L. Fingerman. 2018. “Relationship Quality Between Older Fathers and Middle-Aged Children: Associations with Both Parties’ Subjective Well-Being.” *Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences* 73(7):1203–13.

October 9 Mid-Term Exam Review

First Draft of Final Paper (due 10/11)

Week 8

October 14 Mid-Term Exam

October 16 Illness Experience

- Lecture: biographical disruption; narrative re-construction
- Readings:
 - Bury, Michael. 1982. “Chronic Illness as Biographical Disruption.” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 4(2):167–83.
 - Williams, Gareth. 1984. “The Genesis of Chronic Illness: Narrative Re-Construction.” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 6(2):175–200.
 - Perry, Brea L. and Bernice A. Pescosolido. 2012. “Social Network Dynamics and Biographical Disruption: The Case of ‘First-Timers’ with Mental Illness.” *American Journal of Sociology* 118(1):134–75.

Week 9

October 21 Illness Management

- Lecture: self-care; health care; help-seeking behaviors
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 7
 - Gengler, Amanda M. 2014. “‘I Want You to Save My Kid!’: Illness Management Strategies, Access, and Inequality at an Elite University Research Hospital.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 55(3):342–59.
 - Kugelmass, Heather. 2016. “‘Sorry, I’m Not Accepting New Patients’: An Audit Study of Access to Mental Health Care.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 57(2):168–83.

October 23 Physician-Patient Interaction

- Lecture: experiences in medical setting; unequal treatment
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 9.
 - Heritage, John and Douglas W. Maynard. 2006. "Problems and Prospects in the Study of Physician-Patient Interaction: 30 Years of Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 32:351–74.
 - Shim, Janet K. 2010. "Cultural Health Capital: A Theoretical Approach to Understanding Health Care Interactions and the Dynamics of Unequal Treatment." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(1):1–15.

Assignments: WS-06; DB-06 (due 10/25)

Week 10

October 28 Healthcare Industry (I)

- Lecture: types of healthcare service; history of modern hospitals
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 14
 - Best, Rachel Kahn. 2012. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." *American Sociological Review* 77(5):780–803.
 - Livne, Roi. 2014. "Economies of Dying: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):888–911.

October 30 Healthcare Industry (II)

- Lecture: health insurance; policy options
- Readings:
 - Reid, T. R. 2010. *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care*. Penguin Books.

Assignments: WS-07; DB-07 (due 11/1)

Week 11

November 4 Healthcare Providers: Physicians

- Lecture: history of medical profession; physical authority; medical education
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapters 10 & 11
 - Timmermans, Stefan and Alison Angell. 2001. "Evidence-Based Medicine, Clinical Uncertainty, and Learning to Doctor." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 42(4):342–59.
 - Timmermans, Stefan. 2005. "Suicide Determination and the Professional Authority of Medical Examiners." *American Sociological Review* 70(4):311–33.

November 6 Healthcare Providers: Nurses, Physician Assistants, and Others

- Lecture: emergence of new medical professions; long-term care for elderly
- Readings:

- Textbook, Chapter 12.
- Dill, Janette and Melissa J. Hodges. 2019. "Is Healthcare the New Manufacturing?: Industry, Gender, and 'good Jobs' for Low- and Middle-Skill Workers." *Social Science Research* 84(July):102350.
- Kaye, H. Stephen, Charlene Harrington, and Mitchell P. Laplante. 2010. "Long-Term Care: Who Gets It, Who Provides It, Who Pays, and How Much?" *Health Affairs* 29(1):11–21.

Assignments: WS-08; DB-08 (due 11/8)

Week 12

November 11 Social Contexts and Health: Social Networks/Capital

- Lecture: mechanisms through which social relationships improve health
- Readings:
 - Thoits, Peggy A. 2011. "Mechanisms Linking Social Ties and Support to Physical and Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52(2):145–61.
 - Song, Lijun. 2011. "Social Capital and Psychological Distress." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 52(4):478–92.
 - Cornwell, Benjamin and Edward O. Laumann. 2015. "The Health Benefits of Network Growth: New Evidence from a National Survey of Older Adults." *Social Science & Medicine* 125:94–106.

November 13 Social Contexts and Health: Neighborhood/Community

- Lecture: neighborhood effects on health
- Readings:
 - Population Reference Bureau. 2017. "How Neighborhoods Affect the Health and Well-Being of Older Americans." *Today's Research on Aging* (35).
 - Kim, Joongbaeck. 2010. "Neighborhood Disadvantage and Mental Health: The Role of Neighborhood Disorder and Social Relationships." *Social Science Research* 39(2):260–71.
 - Boylan, Jennifer Morozink and Stephanie A. Robert. 2017. "Neighborhood SES Is Particularly Important to the Cardiovascular Health of Low SES Individuals." *Social Science & Medicine* 188:60–68.

Assignments: WS-09; DB-09 (due 11/15)

Week 13

November 18 Medicalization (I)

- Lecture: social construction of illness
- Readings:
 - Conrad, Peter and Kristin K. Barker. 2010. "The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S):S67–79.
 - Conrad, Peter. 2005. "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46:3–14.

- Navon, Daniel and Gil Eyal. 2016. "Looping Genomes: Diagnostic Change and the Genetic Makeup of the Autism Population." *American Journal of Sociology* 121(5):1416–71.

November 20 Medicalization (II)

- Lecture: contested illness; biomedicalization
- Readings:
 - Barker, Kristin K. 2008. "Electronic Support Groups, Patient-Consumers, and Medicalization: The Case of Contested Illness." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 49:20–36.
 - Clarke, Adele E., Janet K. Shim, Laura Mamo, Jennifer Ruth Fosket, and Jennifer R. Fishman. 2003. "Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine." *American Sociological Review* 68(2):161–94.
 - Watkins, Elizabeth Siegel. 2007. "The Medicalization of Male Menopause in America." *Social History of Medicine* 20(2):369–88.

Assignments: WS-10; DB-10 (due 11/22)

Week 14

November 25 Q&A Session (No Lecture)

November 27 Thanksgiving Break (No Class)

Week 15

December 2 Social Movement and Health

- Lecture: how health epidemics take shape and garner attention
- Readings:
 - Brown, Phil, Stephen Zavestoski, Brian Mayer, Rachel Morello-, and Rebecca Gasior Altman. 2004. "Embodied Health Movements: New Approaches to Social Movements in Health." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 26(1):50–80.
 - McCormick, Sabrina, Phil Brown, and Stephen Zavestoski. 2003. "The Personal Is Scientific, the Scientific Is Political: The Public Paradigm of the Environmental Breast Cancer Movement." *Sociological Forum* 18(4):545–76.
 - Goldner, Melinda. 2004. "The Dynamic Interplay between Western Medicine and the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Movement: How Activists Perceive a Range of Responses from Physicians and Hospitals." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 26(6):710–36.

December 4 Health Policy and Reforms

- Lecture: health policy and reforms in the United States; summary of the course
- Readings:
 - Textbook, Chapter 15.
 - Mechanic, David and Donna D. Mcalpine. 2010. "Sociology of Health Care Reform: Building on Research and Analysis to Improve Health Care." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51:S147–59.

- Hankin, Janet R. and Eric R. Wright. 2010. "Reflections on Fifty Years of Medical Sociology." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51:S10–14.

Final Paper (due 12/9)

5. Others

5.1 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](#).

5.2 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 resource, try using a campus computer in the meantime – visit the UMD library website (<https://www.lib.umd.edu>) to find available computers near you.

5.3 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.