

THE SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS (SOC 230)

Time: TuThF, 10:00AM-10:50AM

Location: Calloway S101

Instructor: Allison Roberts

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10-1 (use Scheduler)

Office Location: Tarbutton 223

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INTRODUCTION

“The conditions in which people live and die are...shaped by political, social, and economic forces.”

--World Health Organization (2009)

This course explores the social aspects of health and illness. While the study of health and illness spans a broad range of fields, from medicine to literature, we focus on social influences: How does society determine health? And, conversely, how does health affect society? We address these questions from a variety of perspectives, using sociological theory and research, as well as key findings from other fields. Each section of the course builds on the insights gained from the previous one. We consider the individual's experience of health and illness before zooming out to expose the vast web of societal influences surrounding the individual—a web that inevitably shapes personal experience and understanding.

Section 1 focuses on the individual. We investigate the impact of chronic illness on personal identity, stigma and shame associated with illness, the influence of cultural beliefs on illness symptoms and treatment, and the role of relationships with health. We examine how social support and strain affect both how people view their health and how they recover from illness. Finally, we discuss the impact of the physician-patient relationship on patient care and outcomes. This section addresses questions such as: How does the experience of illness vary from person to person? How can our friends improve our health? What role does emotional support play in a doctor's visit?

Section 2 introduces health institutions. Attention first focuses on the role of the healthcare system, examining how its structure emerged and the consequences of that structure on health outcomes. Though we largely consider the American healthcare system and its recent changes, we will also address international systems. Second, we study public health. We define what public health means, and ask how cultural and economic factors affect its aims and successes. We use historical studies, cross-national comparisons, and relevant theoretical frameworks to address the topics. Specific questions include: What did the recent Affordable Care Act do, or fail to do, for our healthcare system? What role does public health play in controlling the Zika virus, and how does this compare to past diseases, like tuberculosis?

Section 3 addresses population health and its social determinants. We look at the national level, comparing trends across countries and other key demographic differences (race, gender, age).

This section explicates how scholars measure the health of a population, and why health varies across social groups. We ask: Why do some groups enjoy much longer life-spans than others? What role does income or geographic location play? How does religion factor in?

While this course provides a social understanding of health, it also aims to deliver several practical skills. First, students should learn how to read and critically evaluate a research paper. Throughout the course, students will interpret findings (both in charts and graphs), and investigate weaknesses within presented studies. In addition, students should come away with a clear understanding of the basic American healthcare system, which should help them use and evaluate insurance and hospitals in their daily lives. Finally, students studying for the MCAT should gain an understanding of the type of “social” questions they will be expected to understand. To that goal, many classes will start with an example MCAT question and discussion.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition*. Basic Books.

Reid, T. R. 2010. *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care*. Penguin.

Wilkinson, Richard. 2005. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. Bloomsbury Press.

All other readings will be posted on Canvas.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Attendance will be measured through in-class participation exercises, described below. You are responsible for completing these—no make-ups will be allowed.

Technology: I allow use of laptops in my class. However, I will revoke this privilege if they cause any disruptions in my class (distracting you or other students). If *any* of your devices (cell phones, laptops, tablets) make noise, I will ask you to put your laptop away for the day. This means that if your phone isn't on silent, you lose the privilege to use a laptop. In general, please do not use cell phones in my class.

Contacting Me: If you'd like to meet in person, schedule a meeting with me using the Meeting Scheduler on Canvas during my office hours. I will try to respond to all emails within 24 hours on weekdays—if you haven't heard from me by then, please feel free to remind me to respond! After 5PM on Fridays, however, I will not respond to emails until Monday morning.

Exam Review: The day before a large exam or assignment, I will open a discussion group on Canvas for everyone in the class to post questions, answer those questions, or discuss tough issues. That night, I will log on for one hour to answer any unresolved questions.

Accessibility: Students with disabilities should contact or visit Emory's Access, Disability Services and Resources (ADSR) to obtain proper documentation if accommodations are needed. Students who receive an accommodation letter from ADSR must show it to me at the beginning of the term or as soon as possible after the letter is received. The ADSR can be reached at 404-727-9877 or via the web at <http://www.ods.emory.edu>

Honor Code: The Emory Honor Code fully applies to this course. I will report any violations to the Honor Council. When you submit an exam or assignment, you are pledging to abide by the honor code. More information can be found here:

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

ASSESSMENT

ASSIGNMENTS

Exams: This class will have two exams, a midterm and final. Both will feature multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final will be longer, and will be cumulative.

Try-its: We will have approximately 10-12 in-class assignments throughout the semester. These will vary in format, including worksheets, group activities, and writing prompts. These assignments function in lieu of an attendance policy, and cannot be made up or substituted. The two lowest grades will be dropped.

Guided Research Project: Throughout the semester, I will assign three guided research projects. You will be required to do **one** of these projects. In the first week of class, I will distribute a sign-up sheet, and one-third of the class will sign up for each project. To receive full credit for the assignment, you will present your results in class. Brief descriptions of the assignments are provided below (in-depth instructions will be distributed later).

Project One: Understanding Illness Through Qualitative Interviews. In order to put the idea of a “sick role” to the test, students will interview 3-4 individuals about their experience with illness and their relationships with physicians.

Project Two: Advertising Health and Illness. In this project, students will conduct a guided “content analysis” of either television commercials or hospital websites. In the first case, students will focus on advertisements for prescription medication. In the second, students will look at whether and how advertising appears in hospital websites.

Project Three: Using Big Data for Small Questions. Students will be given an Excel spreadsheet with real data from a national health survey. Looking at the available variables, they will develop 3-4 hypotheses that can be tested using simple visualizations (bar graphs, scatterplots, etc.). A guide for how to produce various graphs will be provided. Students will turn in a final write-up.

| Final Grade Composition | |
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| Midterm Exam | 25% |
| Final Exam | 35% |
| In-class work | 20% |
| Guided Research Project | 20% |

A=93% or above, A-=90-92.99%, B+=87-89.99, B=83-86.99, B-=80-82.99, C+=77-79.9, C=73-76.99, C-=70-72.99, D=67-69.99, F=67 or below

LATE GRADE POLICIES

Late Grades: For each day that any assignment is late, you will lose 10% of your possible score. Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by **11:59 PM** on the due date. Submitting at 12:01 AM will be considered one day late.

DETAILED SCHEDULE

| Welcome to the Course | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 8/24/2017 (Thurs) | Syllabus Day |
| 8/25/2017 (Fri) | What is Sociology? What is Health? -Mills, C Wright. 1959. "Chapter One: The Promise." <i>Sociological Imagination</i> . |

| Part One: The Individual | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 8/29/2017 (Tues) | Conceptions of Illness -Kleinman, Ch. 1-2 |
| 8/31/2017 (Thurs) | Illness in Daily Life -Kleinman, Ch. 3-4 |
| 9/1/2017 (Fri) | Primary Evidence: Documenting Chronic Illness -Charmaz, Kathy. 1995. "The Body, Identity, and Self: Adapting To Impairment." <i>The Sociological Quarterly</i> . |
| 9/5/2017 (Tues) | Stigma - Kleinman, Ch. 10 -Mustillo, Sarah, Kimber Hendrix, Markus Schafer. 2012. Trajectories of body mass and self-concept in black and white girls: the lingering effects of stigma. <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 53(1): 2-16. |
| 9/7/2017 (Thurs) | The Reality of Disease: Cases of Blurred Lines -Barker, Kristin K. 2008. "Electronic Support Groups, Patient-Consumers, and Medicalization: The Case of Contested Illness." <i>Journal of Health & Social Behavior</i> 49(1):20-36. -Saguy, Abigail. "Introduction." <i>What's Wrong With Fat</i> . -Skim Kleinman, Chapters 12-13 |
| 9/8/2017 (Fri) | Death and Dying -Steinhauser KE et al., Factors Considered Important at the End of Life by Patients, Family, Physicians, and Other Care Providers. <i>JAMA</i> 2000; 2476-2482 -Kleinman, Ch. 9 (pp. 146-157) |
| 9/12/2017 (Tues) | Hurricane Day |
| 9/14/2017 (Thurs) | The Physician/Patient Relationship -Kleinman, Introduction -Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> (pgs 1-11, 69-71, 75-77, 140-153, 171-180) |
| 9/15/2017 (Fri) | Narrative Medicine and Health Literacy -Charon, Rita. <i>Narrative Medicine</i> . Ch. 2 - Fadiman, <i>The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down</i> (pgs 257-288) |
| 9/19/2017 (Tues) | Social Support --Kleinman, Ch. 11 - Idler, Ellen, David Boulifard, Richard Contrada. 2012. "Mending broken hearts: Marriage and survival following cardiac surgery." <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 53(1): 33-49. |

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| 9/21/2017 (Thurs) | <p>Social Networks</p> <p>-Christakis, Nicholas and James A. Fowler. 2009. <i>Connected: How your Friends' Friends' Friends Affect Everything You Feel, Think, and Do</i>. New York: Little, Brown and Company. Chapter 4</p> <p>- Cohen, Sheldon, William J. Doyle, David P. Skoner, Bruce S. Rabin, and Jack M. Gwaltney. 1997. "Social Ties and Susceptibility to the Common Cold." <i>Journal of the American Medical Association</i> 277:1940-1944</p> |
| 9/22/2017 (Fri) | <p>Stress</p> <p>- Theorell, Töres, A. Tsutumi, J. Hallqvist, C. Reuterwall, P. Fredlund, N. Emlund et al. 1998. "Decision Latitude, Job Strain, and Myocardial Infarction: A Study of Working Men in Stockholm." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 88:382-388.</p> |
| 9/26/2017 (Tues) | <p>Social Support in the Medical World</p> <p>"Why do Physicians Commit Suicide?"</p> <p>https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/05/opinion/why-do-doctors-commit-suicide.html?mcubz=1&_r=0</p> <p>Project One Due</p> |

| Part Two: Healthcare Systems | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 9/28/2017 (Thurs) | <p>Healthcare Institutions as Social Structures</p> <p>-Reid, Prologue (1-4)</p> <p>-Starr, Paul. 1982. <i>The Social Transformation of American Medicine</i>. Harper Collins.</p> <p>Read "Prologue," <i>selections</i>.</p> |
| 9/29/2017 (Fri) | <p>Types of Hospitals/Care</p> <p>-Reid, Chapter 1 (pg. 5-15), Chapter 3 (pg. 29-45)</p> |
| 10/3/2017 (Tues) | <p>Who Pays?</p> <p>-Santerre R. & Neun S. <i>Health Economics: Theories, Insights and Industry Studies</i>, Sixth Edition, South-Western Publishing, 2013. Read: Chapter 4, "Health Care Systems and Institutions"</p> |
| 10/5/2017 (Thurs) | <p>Healthcare Reform</p> <p>-Starr, Paul. 2008. "Introduction." <i>Remedy and Reaction</i>.</p> <p>- Reid, "An Afterword" (p. 244-252)</p> |
| 10/6/2017 (Fri) | <p>What Does the Future Hold?</p> <p><i>Reading TBA: Selection of current articles</i></p> |
| 10/10/2017 (Tues) | FALL BREAK |
| 10/12/2017 (Thurs) | <p>Healthcare Around the World</p> <p>-Reid, Chapter 2 (pg. 15-27), Chapter 8 (p. 126-142)</p> |
| 10/13/2017 (Fri) | <p>Healthcare Around the World Cont'd</p> <p>Either Reid, Chapter 5 (p. 66-85) OR Chapter 7 (p. 105-125)</p> |
| 10/17/2017 (Tues) | Evaluating Healthcare |

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| | -Reid, Appendix: The Best Healthcare System in the World |
| 10/19/2017 (Thurs) | Origins of Public Health -Johnson, Stephen. 2007. <i>The Ghost Map</i> . New York: Riverhead Books. Read: p. 1-55 |
| 10/20/2017 (Fri) | The Unique Impact of Public Health - Muñoz-Laboy, Miguel, Laura Murray, Natalie Wittlin, Jonathan Garcia, Veriano Terto, Richard Parker. 2011. "Beyond faith-based organizations: Using comparative institutional ethnography to understand religious responses to HIV and AIDS in Brazil." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 101(6):972-978. -McKinlay, John, and Sonja McKinlay. 1977. "The questionable contribution of medical measures to the decline of mortality in the United States in the twentieth century." <i>Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly</i> 55:405-428. |
| 10/24/2017 (Tues) | Medicalization -Horwitz, Allan, and Jerome Wakefield. 2007. <i>The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder</i> . Oxford University Press. Read: <i>selections</i> . -Conrad, Peter. 2005. "The shifting engines of medicalization". <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 46: 3-14 Project Two Due |
| 10/26/2017 (Thurs) | Institutionalizing Mental Health Watters, Ethan. 2010. <i>Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche</i> . New York: Simon and Schuster. Chapter 1, "The rise of anorexia in Hong Kong" |
| 10/27/2017 (Fri) | Exam Review |
| 10/31/2017 (Tues) | Exam One |

| Part Three: Population Health | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 11/2/2017 (Thurs) | Measurement and Study Design -McFalls, Joseph A. 2003. Population: A lively introduction. <i>Population Bulletin</i> 58(4): 1-44 |
| 11/3/2017 (Fri) | Reducing Error and Getting Funding |
| 11/7/2017 (Tues) | The Demographic Transition -Fuchs, Victor. 1974. <i>Who Shall Live? Health, Economics, and Social Choice</i> . New York: Basic Books. Chapter 2: Who Shall Live? Pp.30-55 -Christensen, Kaare, G. Doblhammer, R. Rau and James Vaupel. 2009. "Ageing populations: the challenges ahead". <i>Lancet</i> 374: 1196-208. |
| 11/9/2017 (Thurs) | Gender and Population Health |
| 11/10/2017 (Fri) | The Role of Inequality - Wilkinson, Chapters 1-2 |
| 11/14/2017 (Tues) | Inequality Continued: Obesity and Teenage Births Wilkinson, Chapters 3, 7 and 9 |
| 11/16/2017 (Thurs) | The Role of Race and Ethnicity - Wilkinson, Ch. 4 |
| 11/17/2017 (Fri) | Designing a Good Study -No reading |
| 11/21/2017 (Tues) | The Role of Social Ties and Education -Wilkinson, Ch. 8, 12 |
| 11/23/2017 (Thurs) | THANKSGIVING BREAK |
| 11/24/2017 (Fri) | THANKSGIVING BREAK |
| 11/28/2017 (Tues) | The Role of Religion -Kark, Jeremy D., Galia Shemi, Yechiel Friedlander, Oz Martin, Orly Manor, and S. Blondheim. 1996. "Does religious observance promote health? Mortality in secular vs. religious kibbutzim in Israel." <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 86: 341-46. Project Three Due |
| 11/30/2017 (Thurs) | Can We Fix It? -Wilkinson, Ch. 14 |
| 12/1/2017 (Fri) | Modern Methods: Using Locations -No reading |
| 12/5/2017 (Tues) | Wrap-Up Day |
| 12/13/2017 | Final Exam, 3-5:30 PM |