Sociology of Mental Health
SOCl 443/843: Fall 2014
Tues. and Thurs. 3:30-4:45 p.m.
Burnett, room 102

Professor: Dr. Christina Falci
Office: 714 Oldfather Hall
Office Phone: 472-3762
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., and by appointment
E-mail: cfalci2@unl.edu (e-mail is the best way to reach me)

Course Description: This course will first review the conceptualization and operationalization of mental health as well as different approaches to study mental health (e.g., sociological, psychological and biological). Following this introduction the course will cover three broad topics in the sociology of mental health and illness. Importantly, sociologists focus less on individual experience and more on social conditions that determine why so much experience is common to different people or common among particular groups of individuals within a society. Part two of the course will cover the social origins of mental health and illness and focus on identifying social factors that influence mental health. Part three will assess the social distribution of mental health across various status groups such as race, class, and gender in the US. The final part of the course will consider the social construction and consequences of mental health. This section will examine labeling and stigmatization theories of mental health and illness as well as healthcare utilization and the criminal justice system. In two sections of this course, personal memoirs will be used to illustrate sociological perspectives of mental health and illness.

Course Format: Weekly class meetings will consist of lecture followed and small/large group discussions on the course material. I welcome questions and comments at any point during the lecture. Your questions will help clarify ambiguities and help everyone deepen their understanding of the course material. Furthermore, your comments will add to the intellectual breadth and depth of this course. As an upper-level course, this class will incorporate a considerable discussion component. Therefore, it is imperative that you read the assigned readings for the day before coming to class.

Required Course Material:
- Journal articles and book chapters will be posted on blackboard
  - note: empirical journal articles are indicated with an “*”
- Memoirs can be purchased on-line and in some retail bookstores
Undergraduate Student Course Requirements: I expect students to show up for class on time, come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, participate in the class discussions and take good class notes.

- **Class Participation (100 points):** A participation grade will be assigned to each student based on demonstration of completion of readings, contributions to the class discussion, and overall attendance.

- **Reaction Paper / Discussion Leader (2 – 150 points each):** At two times during the semester, you and one or two other students will be responsible for leading a 20 minute discussion on the assigned empirical journal article. At the beginning of this class period, a 3 to 4 page (double spaced) reaction statement to all the assigned readings will be due. The end of your reaction statement should have two discussion questions that you will ask during class. You should meet with the other students to coordinate leading the class discussion.

- **Individual Memoir Paper and Class Discussion (150 points):** Once during the semester, you will write a 4-page paper on an approved memoir. You will also have to provide the class with a brief synopsis of the book and describe one scenario from the book that illustrates a sociological perspective on mental health and illness. The paper will be due the class prior to your in-class presentation. Students who select the same memoir will be expected to meet outside of class and coordinate on the class discussion.

- **Exams (3 – 100 points each) and Final Exam (150 point):** After the end of the first three sections in the course you will take an exam comprised of short answer questions. The final exam will cover both the fourth and fifth sections of the course and will also be short answer. For each exam, I will distribute a list of short answer questions one week prior to the exam and the questions on the exam will only be drawn from this list of questions.

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<th>Grade Basis</th>
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<tr>
<td>A 930 - 1000</td>
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<td>A - 900 – 929</td>
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<tr>
<td>B + 870 – 899</td>
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<td>B 830 – 869</td>
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Absences, Make-Ups, Late Work, Pass/Fail, Honor System: If you have a conflict with taking any of the exams, you must inform the instructor at least two weeks ahead of time to see if other arrangements are possible. Missed exams may only be made-up with documented evidence of illness or emergency. Grades on your assignments will drop 5 percentage points for every day it is late (including weekends). Students may take this class pass/fail, but must complete all assignments and take all quizzes. Furthermore, those taking the course Pass-No Pass will need a C or better to obtain a Pass (a C minus is a No Pass). Finally, I will take all necessary steps to enforce the Honor System for the sake of fairness to all students, and I expect you to report any suspected misconduct by others.
Graduate Student Course Requirements

❖ **Class Participation and Discussion Leading (20%)**: A participation grade will be assigned to each student based on demonstration of completion of readings, contributions to the class discussion, and overall attendance. At three times during the semester, you and one or two other students will be responsible for leading a 20 minute class discussion on the assigned empirical journal article. You should meet with the other students to coordinate leading the class discussion. You should have prepared at least two discussion questions that you will ask during class.

❖ **Review / Reaction Papers (50%)**: At the end of each section of the course, you will write a 6-page (not counting references) review/reaction paper to the material presented in that section of the course. In addition to discussing the assigned material from class, you are responsible for finding and incorporating into the paper a minimum of five additional peer-reviewed sources.

❖ **Term Paper (30%)**: Each student has one of three choices for the final paper in this class: a) an extensive and critical literature review on a focused topic, b) a research proposal for a set of research questions, or c) an empirical research paper on a specific research question. The choice of mental health topic for your paper must be approved by the instructor. The paper should be 15-20 pages double spaced, not counting references or tables. A proposal paper topic will be due Tuesday, September 23rd and the final paper will be due on Monday, December 15th.

**Course Schedule** – * indicate an empirical journal article

**Part 1: Disciplines, Concepts, and Measurement**

1: Tues., Aug. 26th  **Introduction**
   o *Handbook*: p. 1-5 & chapter 1

2: Thurs., Aug. 28th  **Sociological Approaches to Mental Health**
   o *Handbook*: chapter 6

3: Tues., Sept. 2nd  **Biological and Psychological Approaches to Mental Health**
   o *Handbook*: chapter 4

4: Thurs., Sept. 4th  **Concepts and Measurement of Mental Health**
   ➢ chapter 7, Pp. 115-141 “Issues in Mental Health Assessment.” 2013. Switzer, Galen E., Mary Amanda Dew, and Evelyn J. Bromet in *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental*


5: Thurs., Sept. 9th **Prevalence of Mental Disorder**
   - *Handbook*: chapter 3

6: Tues., Sept. 11th **Concepts and Measurement of Well-Being**
   - *Handbook*: chapter 7

7: Tues., Sept. 16th **Cultural Variation in Mental Health**

8: Thurs., Sept. 18th **Undergraduate Test #1**
   - Graduate Student Short Paper #1 DUE

**Part 2: Social Causes of Mental Health**

9: Tues., Sept. 23rd **Stress Exposure in Adults**
   - *Handbook*: p. 163-170 & chapter 9

   **Graduate Student Final Paper Topic Statement DUE**

10: Thurs., Sept. 25th **Stress Exposure in Youth**
   - *Handbook*: chapter 17

11: Tues., Sept. 30th **Social Integration**
   - *Handbook*: chapter 10

12: Thurs., Oct. 2nd  Social Networks


13: Tues., Oct. 7th  Stress Process Theory: Moderation and Mediation


14: Thurs., Oct. 9th  Memoir Presentations

15: Tues., Oct. 14th  Undergraduates Test #2

Graduate Student Short Paper #2 DUE

Part 3: Mental Health across Institutional Contexts

16: Thurs., Oct. 16th  Neighborhoods


*Tuesday, October 21st - Fall Break*

17: Thurs., Oct. 23  Work and the Economy


18: Tues., Oct. 28th  Family: Marriage

- *Handbook*: chapter 10

19: Thurs., Oct. 30th  Family: Parenthood


20: Tues., Nov. 4th  Religion


21: Thurs., Nov. 6th  Memoir Presentations

22: Tues., Nov. 11th  Undergraduates Test #3

Graduate Student Reaction Paper #3 DUE

23: Thurs., Nov. 13th  Social Class

- Handbook: chapter 12


24: Tues., Nov. 18th  Race

- Handbook: chapter 14


25: Thurs., Nov. 20th  Gender

- Handbook: chapter 13

26: Tues., Nov. 25th **Intersectionality**
   o Handbook: chapter 15


* Thursday, November 27th – Thanksgiving

27: Tues., Dec. 2nd **Age and the Life course**
   o Handbook: chapter 19


   **Graduate Student Reaction Paper #4 DUE on Tuesday, December 9th**

   **Part 5: Social Construction and Consequences of Mental Illness**

28: Thurs., Dec. 4th **Labeling and Stigma**
   o Handbook: chapter 29


29: Tues., Dec. 9th **Mental Health Utilization**
   o Handbook: p. 407-419 and chapter 21


30: Thurs, Dec. 11th **Criminal Justice**
   o Handbook: chapter 24


**Final Exam:** Monday, December 15th from 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm

**Graduate Student Term Paper Due:** Monday, December 15th by 5pm