

Sociology of Mental Health
SOCI 443/843: Spring 2019
Tues. and Thurs. 11:00am to 12:15 p.m.
Burnett 203

Professor: Dr. Christina Falci

Office: 714 Oldfather Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2pm to 3pm and Thursday 1pm to 2pm

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Course Description: This course will cover topics in the sociological study of mental health and illness. The first part of the course will provide an introduction and overview to the field reviewing the conceptualization, operationalization, and prevalence of mental health and illness as well as distinctive theoretical/disciplinary approaches to the study mental health and illness. Following this introduction, the course will cover two broad topics in the sociology of mental health and illness. Importantly, sociologists focus less on individual experience and more on conditions that determine why so much experience is common to different people or common among particular groups of individuals within a society. In part 2 of the course, we will explore the social factors (e.g., stressors, social integration) that shape the development of mental health problem. In part 3 of the course, we assess the social distribution of mental health across various social groups in the US (e.g., race, class, and gender) as well as explanations for what produce the social group differences in mental health outcomes.

Weekly class meetings will consist of lecture, large group discussions and small group work. I welcome questions and comments at any point during the lecture. Your questions will help clarify ambiguities that students may have and help everyone deepen their understanding of the course material. Furthermore, your comments will add to the intellectual breadth and depth of this course. In general, 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.

Required Course Material:

- Scheid, Teresa and Tony Brown. 2017. A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health: Social Contexts, Theories and Systems, 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- journal articles are posted on Canvas

Course Requirements

- ❖ **Journal Article Discussion Exercises (30%):** In part 2 & 3 of the course, students will complete several discussion exercises on an assigned journal article reading. These assignments are worth 10 points each and will be completed during class within impromptu small groups or on your own outside of class. If you miss a class day discussion exercise, then it is the student's responsibility to make-up it on your own by submitting responses to the discussion questions on Canvas.
 - The class schedule below identifies when a discussion exercise will occur and for what reading with the designation of "DE" placed in front of the journal article.

Only for Undergraduate Students

- ❖ **Take-Home Essay Exams (40%):** After the end of the first two sections of the course there will be a take-home essay exam. These exams will be open book and open note. Students will have a 5-day window for completing each exam. Students will submit their essay responses on Canvas.

- ❖ **Final Paper (30%):** At the end of the semester, students will write a 6-page paper providing an analysis of a person suffering from mental health problems. You may choose to focus on yourself, someone in your life that you know very well, or you may select a memoir to read or movie to watch that has a primary focus of reviewing the life of a person with mental health problems. In any approach, your task will be to apply the concepts and theories learned in this course to the subject of your paper. An additional handout will be provided with full guidelines.

Only for Graduate Students

- ❖ **Review / Reaction Papers (40%):** At the end of the first two sections 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. The reaction papers should cite as many of the assigned readings as feasible as well as five additional sources of your choosing. An additional handout will be provided with all assignment guidelines as well as possibilities for additional sources.
- ❖ **Final Paper (30%):** I am open to student suggestions as to what final paper might be most beneficial to you at this stage in your graduate career, but I start by offering the following two options: a) an extensive and critical literature review or b) an empirical research paper. For any approach, the paper must be 15-20 pages double-spaced (not counting references or tables). Students are required to submit a paper proposal and have your topic approved by the instructor before making substantial progress on the paper. The proposal is due by Friday, February 8th at midnight. If you want to pursue something other than a literature review or empirical paper, then please speak with me before turning in your paper proposal.

Grade Basis

A +	97 -100	B +	87 – 89.9	C +	77 – 79.9	D +	67 – 69.9
A	93 – 96.9	B	83 – 86.9	C	73 – 76.9	D	63 – 66.9
A -	90 – 92.9	B -	80 – 82.9	C -	70 – 72.9	D-	60 – 62.9

Course Policies

Late Work and Make-Ups: Assignments turned in late will lose points (5 points per weekday) unless there is documentation of illness or emergency. Missed exams may only be made-up with documented evidence of illness or emergency.

Taking the Class Pass/Fail: Students may take this class pass/fail, but students must complete all course requirements in order to receive a passing grade. 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”).

Honor System: Students are required to abide by UNL’s student code of conduct - see information here <https://studentconduct.unl.edu/academic-integrity>. I will take all necessary steps to enforce the Honor System for the sake of fairness to all students. I will report code violations to UNL’s Judicial Affairs. Moreover, all paper assignments will be checked for plagiarism using the “Turnitin” feature in Canvas. Plagiarism is taking someone else’s ideas/work/words and using them as your own. To better understand how to avoid plagiarism by paraphrasing and using proper citation please take advantage of this UNL resource: <https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity#plagiarism>.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me (the instructor) for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation as determined by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). This includes students with mental health disabilities like depression and anxiety. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate

in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with SSD, which is located in 232 Canfield Administration (472-3787).

Classroom Visitors and Recordings: According to the University's Trespass Policy (Regents' Policy 6.4.7) only the instructor and the students registered for the course are "authorized" to be in the classroom during the scheduled class period. Only the instructor has the discretion to allow visitors into the classroom. Moreover, so as to create a classroom environment in which everyone may feel comfortable participating in discussions, it is expected that no audio or video recordings of class will be made without the prior knowledge and consent of the instructor. Students with disabilities for which reasonable accommodation would include making such recordings should work with the Services for Students with Disabilities office and the instructor to make arrangements.

Part 1: Theories, Concepts, and Measurement

- 1: Tues., Jan. 8th Introduction**
 - Schwalbe, Michael. "Sociological Mindfulness"
- 2: Thurs., Jan. 10th Sociological Overview**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 1
- 3: Tues., Jan. 15th Sociological Approaches**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 7
- 4: Thurs., Jan 17th (continued)**
 - Aneshensel, Carol. 2015. Sociological Inquiry into Mental Health: The Legacy of Leonard I. Pearlin." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 56(2) 166–178.
- 5: Tues., Jan. 22nd Biological Approaches**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 6
- 6: Thurs., Jan. 24th Prevalence and Measurement**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 2
- 7: Tues., Jan. 29th (continued)**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 5
- 8: Thurs., Jan. 31st Well-Being**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 4
- 9: Tues., Feb. 5th Medicalization**
 - *Handbook*: chapter 3
- 10: Thurs., Feb. 7th catch-up**
 - Undergraduate Take Home Exam #1**
 - Opens*: Thursday, February 7th
 - Due*: Tuesday, February 12th at 8am
 - Graduate Student Reaction Paper #1** due Monday, February 11th by 8am

Part 2: Social Causes

11: Tues., Feb. 12th Introduction and Reading Empirical Journal Articles

- White, Lynn. 2005. "Writes of Passage: Writing an Empirical Journal Article." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 67:791-798.

12: Thurs., Feb. 14th Stressors

- *Handbook*: p. 173 - 179 & chapter 9

13: Tues., Feb. 19th (continued)

- **DE:** Young, Marisa and Scott Schieman. 2012. "When Hard Times Take a Toll: The Distressing Consequences of Economic Hardship and Life Events within the Family-Work Interface." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 53(1): 84–98.

14: Thurs., Feb. 21st Social and Personal Resources

- *Handbook*: chapter 10

15: Tues., Feb. 26th (continued)

- **DE:** Turner, Heather, Anne Shattuck, David Finkelhor, and Sherry Hamby. 2017. "Effects of Poly-Victimization on Adolescent Social Support, Self-Concept, and Psychological Distress." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 32(5): 755–780.

16: Thurs., Feb. 28th Stress Process: Mediation and Moderation

- MacKinnon, David P. and Linda J. Luecken. 2008. "How and for whom? Mediation and moderation in health psychology." *Health Psychology* 27(2, Supp): S99-S100.

17: Tues., March 5th (continued)

- **DE:** Acevedo, Gabriel A., Christopher G. Ellison, and Xiaohe Xu. 2014. "Is It Really Religion? Comparing the Main and Stress-buffering Effects of Religious and Secular Civic Engagement on Psychological Distress." *Society and Mental Health* 4(2): 111–128.

18: Thurs., March 7th (continued)

- **DE:** Drentea, Patricia and J. R. Reynolds. 2015. "Where Does Debt Fit in the Stress Process Model?" *Society and Mental Health* 5(1): 16–32.

19: Tues., March 12th (continued)

- **DE:** Dupéré, Véronique, Tama Leventhal, and Frank Vitaro. 2012. "Neighborhood Processes, Self-Efficacy, and Adolescent Mental Health." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 53: 183-198.

20: Thurs., March 14th student time for working on exams and papers

Undergraduate Take-Home Exam #2

Opens: Wednesday, March 13th

Due: Sunday, March 17th by midnight

Graduate Student Reaction Paper #2: due Monday, March 25th by 8am

March 18th to 22nd Spring Break

Part 3: Social Distribution

21: Tues., March 26th

Introduction to Social Distribution

- McLeod, Jane. 2015. "Why and How Inequality Matters" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 56(2) 149–165.

22: Thurs., March 28th

Social Class, Work and the Economy

- *Handbook*: chapters 11 and 12

23: Tues., April 2nd

(continued)

- **DE:** Turner, R. Jay, and William Avison. 2003. "Status variations in stress exposure: Implications for the interpretation of research on race, socioeconomic status, and gender." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44: 488-50.

24: Thurs., April 4th

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- **DE:** Koltai, Jonathan and Scott Schieman. 2015. "Job Pressure and SES contingent Buffering: Resource Reinforcement, Substitution, or the Stress of Higher Status?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 56(2):180–198.

25: Tues., April 9th

Race

- *Handbook*: chapter 14
- **DE:** Walsemann, Katrina M., Gilbert C. Gee, and Arline T. Geronimus. 2009. "Ethnic Differences in Trajectories of Depressive Symptoms: Disadvantage in Family Background, High School Experiences, and Adult Characteristic." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 50: 82 – 98.

26: Thurs., April 11th

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- **DE:** Miller, B., Rote, S. M., & Keith, V. M. 2013. "Coping with Racial Discrimination: Assessing the Vulnerability of African Americans and the Mediated Moderation of Psychosocial Resources." *Society and Mental Health* 3(2): 133–150.

27: Tues., April 16th

Gender

- *Handbook*: chapter 13
- **DE:** Elliot, Marta. 2013. "Gender Differences in the Determinants of Distress, Alcohol Misuse, and Related Psychiatric Disorders." *Society and Mental Health* 3(2) 96–113.

28: Thurs., April 18th

(continued)

- **DE:** Taylor, J. 2015. Gender Orientation and the Cost of Caring for Others. *Society and Mental Health* 5(1): 49–65.

29: Tues., April 23rd

Age and the Life Course

- *Handbook*: chapter 17
- **DE:** Bierman Alex and Leonard I. Pearlin. 2011. "SES, Trajectories of Physical Limitations, and Change in Depression in Late Life." *Society and Mental Health* 1(3): 139-15.

30: Thurs., April 25th

Family

- *Handbook*: chapter 16
- **DE:** Kalmijn, Matthijs and Paul M. De Graaf. 2013. “Life Course Changes of Children and Well-being of Parents.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74: 269 – 280.

Final Papers Due: Monday, April 29th at midnight