

“HEALTH, MEDICINE, AND SOCIETY”
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: M 12-2, W 11:30-12:30, & Thu 11-12

SOC1 252
TR 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.
Burnett 102
Prereq: 3 hrs of SOC1 /related soc. sci.

Required Materials

- Text: *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care: A Critical Approach, 6th Edition* by Rose Weitz
- PDF readings as indicated in the course schedule
- The syllabus, readings, assignments, etc. will be available online via Blackboard. Power Point presentation outlines will also be posted chronologically.

Course Description

The sociological study of health and medicine places human well-being in social context. It focuses on the relationship between social conditions and physical and mental health, differences in health across social groups, as well as medical care and health care policies. Throughout the course, we will be discussing the concepts, approaches, and terminology of the sociology of health and medicine by way of lectures, discussions, group activities, and media.

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the sociological approach to understanding health and medicine, through an array of topics, ideas, issues, and terms used by those who study health and health care.
- To foster student understanding of the social factors linked to physical and mental health, including acute illness, chronic conditions, and mental illness.
- To engage critical debates on health care issues, such as medical care and public policies.
- To develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills involved in “doing” sociology.
- To illustrate to students how their sociological knowledge about health issues can be used in the “real world.”

Course Policies

- **Attendance:** Your attendance is expected by university policy and by me. Regular attendance is the best way to pass the course. My PowerPoint presentations will be posted online, but these postings only provide you an outline. You are responsible for any material you miss. This includes notes, films, and assignments. **I do not share my notes.** Habitual absences, tardiness, and/or early departures will be noted and will be considered in determining final grades.
- **Non-Threatening Environment:** Harassment of any kind is against university and classroom policy. I expect you to show respect for others. This means thoughtfully listening to others, without judging them. Keeping an open mind is the key! This creates a positive learning environment for everyone. Thoughtful debate is welcomed and encouraged. However, harassment and disrespectful behavior **will not** be tolerated. All faculty, staff and students are responsible for understanding and complying with harassment policies. For more information, visit <http://www.unl.edu/equity>.
- **Academic Integrity:** When you place your name on an assignment or exam, I interpret this to mean that you have received no unauthorized assistance on an assignment or test. Unauthorized assistance includes but is not limited to: cheating on an exam, turning in assignments/exams as your own work when it is not, and plagiarism (presenting someone else’s published ideas as your own). These acts **will not** be tolerated and will be handled according to university policy. For more information, visit http://www.unl.edu/ous/academic_tips/integrity.shtml.

- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation 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 the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office (<http://www.unl.edu/ssd/>), 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.
- **Technology Issues:** If you are experiencing a problem with Blackboard (e.g., accessing materials, uploading information), please let me know as soon as possible. Don't wait until 30 minutes before something is due: I won't be able to help you then. For any technical or computing questions, you can contact UNL Help Desk (<http://www.unl.edu/helpdesk>).
- **Other Classroom Policies:** (1) Please be courteous and **turn off** cell phones, iPods, and other gadgets before you enter class. This includes removing ear-buds, Bluetooth devices, etc. *I consider texting in class unnecessary and disrespectful, as is using your phone to surf the web.* (2) If you choose to use a laptop/tablet in class, you should **ONLY** be using it for class purposes. *Your privileges can be revoked.* (3) Food and beverages are fine, unless you can't eat quietly. (4) Please be respectful of me and your classmates and limit talking/chatting during class.
 - If, for any reason, you are distracting or disrespectful to your classmates, I may deduct points from your discussion grade and/or ask you to leave class for the day.

Course Requirements

- **Class Participation.** Participation is an important part of the course. Your attendance is expected; your participation in class discussion is required. In order to participate fully, you must be prepared. Simply reading/skimming the assignment is not sufficient. Rather, you should be attentive and critical, which will prepare you to contribute relevant ideas, reactions, and questions to the conversation. Your participation grade will be based on: demonstrated familiarity with the readings, contribution to the conversation, and class attendance.
 - To facilitate discussion, I encourage you to bring topical news stories, magazine clippings, web links, commercials, etc., to class.
- **Unit Essays/Mini-Projects.** These assignments are an opportunity to reflect on, react to, and discuss reading assignments and class activities. They will be due at the end of each unit. Assignments are submitted on-line via Blackboard. No hard copies please! Please follow the directions and written work policies that are posted with the assignments.
- **Group Project.** You will work with a team of classmates to create a "dashboard" that places an illness, disorder, or health care issue into social context. Grading will be based on: (1) an individual submission of your portion of the project, (2) the group dashboard, and (3) in-class presentation.

Grading

Specification:

Class Participation	30%
Unit Essays (4)	40%
Group Project	30%

Grading scale:

97 – 100% = A+			
93 – 96% = A	83 – 86% = B	73 – 76% = C	63 – 66% = D
90 – 92% = A-	80 – 82% = B-	70 – 72% = C-	60 – 62% = D-
87 – 89% = B+	77 – 79% = C+	67 – 69% = D+	0 – 59% = F

Other Information

Navigating Blackboard

- Please make sure your email address is up-to-date. This is my only method of contacting you for course-related announcements.
- Under “Course Documents,” there is a link for each of the Units. Click on the link to view and print: PDF files, PowerPoint outlines, handouts, websites, etc.
- Under “Assignments,” there is a link for each of the assignments. Click on the link to view of copy of the instructions for the assignment and directions for uploading your completed assignment.
- Under “External Links,” I have listed links to various health-related websites that may be of interest.

Deadlines: Deadlines are deadlines! Work *must* be submitted by the posted date and time, or it will *not* be graded and you will receive a *zero*. The on-line environment allows you the opportunity to submit work any time prior to the due date. If you wait until the last minute and do not finish on time or experience technical difficulties, that is your responsibility. I take seriously my role in preparing you for future employment. Employers do not want excuses; they want competent people who can get the job done. I have the same expectations for my students.

Adverse Weather: If bad weather threatens, I will notify you as soon as reasonably possible if class is cancelled (regardless of what the University does). Please monitor your email.

Dates to Note

- Jan. 23 = Last day to drop a class. After this date, a “W” will appear on your transcript.
- Mar. 6 = Last day to change to Pass/No Pass grade.
- Apr. 10 = Last day to withdraw from a class.

Schedule of Readings, Exams, & Due Dates

(The dates listed are the dates I expect you to have read the assigned material.)

Introduction	Jan. 13
Unit 1: Social Factors and Illness	
Ch. 1 (W) The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care	Jan. 15
Ch. 2 (W) The Social Sources of Modern Illness	Jan. 20
(PDF) Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities, by Phelan et al.	Jan. 22
Ch. 3 (W) The Social Distribution of Illness in the United States.	Jan. 27
(PDF) Disease and Disadvantage in the United States and in England, by Banks et al.	Jan. 29
Ch. 4 (W) Illness and Death in Developing Nations	Feb. 3
(PDF) Greater Equality: The Hidden Way to Better Health and Higher Scores, by Wilkinson & Pickett	Feb. 5
<i>Class Cancelled...</i>	
Unit 1 Essay: post to Blackboard by	Feb. 10
Unit 2: The Meaning and Experience of Illness	
Ch. 5 (W) The Social Meanings of Illness	Feb. 12
(PDF) Morality and Health: News Media Constructions of Overweight and Eating Disorders, by Saguy & Gruys	Feb. 17
Ch. 6 (W) The Experience of Disability, Chronic Pain, and Chronic Illness.	Feb. 19
Ch. 7 (W) The Sociology of Mental Illness	Feb. 24
(PDF) Transforming Normality into Pathology, by Horwitz	Feb. 26
<i>Class Cancelled...</i>	
Unit 2 Essay: post to Blackboard by	Mar. 3
Unit 3: Health Care Providers and Bioethics	
Ch. 11 (W) The Profession of Medicine	Mar. 5
(PDF) The Continued Transformation of the Medical Profession, by Timmermans & Oh	Mar. 10
Ch. 12 (W) Other Mainstream and Alternative Health Care Providers	Mar. 12
(PDF) From Quackery to 'Complementary' Medicine: The American Medical Profession Confronts Alternative Therapies, by Winnick	Mar. 17
Ch. 13 Issues in Bioethics	Mar. 19
Spring Break	Mar 24/26
<i>Class Cancelled...</i>	
Unit 3 Essay: post to Blackboard by	Mar. 31
Unit 4: Health Care Systems, Settings, and Technologies	
Ch. 10 (W) Health Care Settings and Technologies	Apr. 2
(PDF) MRI as Cultural Icon, by Joyce	Apr. 7
(PDF) Sociology of Health Care Reform: Building Research and Analysis to Improve Health Care, by Mechanic & McAlpine	Apr. 9
Ch. 8 (W) Health Care in the United States	Apr. 14
Ch. 9 (W) Health Care around the Globe	Apr. 16
(PDF) Politicizing Health Care, John McKnight	Apr. 21
Reading TBD	Apr. 23
Group presentations, round 1	Apr. 28
Group presentations, round 2	Apr. 30
Unit 4 Essay: post to Bb by 12 noon	May 8

Please note that I reserve the right to modify the syllabus to meet the needs of the course