

SYO 4400 Medical Sociology Spring 2022

Professor: Harvey L. Nicholson Jr., PhD
Course Location: Turlington 2322
Meeting Times: M, W, F (11:45am-12:35pm)
Office: 3333 Turlington Hall
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: hnicholson@ufl.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Medical sociology (also known as the sociology of health and illness) is a subdiscipline of sociology focused on the social causes and distribution of health and illness. We will explore numerous questions in this course. Why does your zip code matter more to your health than your genetic code? Why does the U.S. lead the way in health care spending yet fall behind many developing nations on indicators of population health such as infant mortality? Why do racial-ethnic minorities experience higher rates of sickness and disability? How do individuals experience chronic illness? How do social relationships, stress, and discrimination influence health? In this course, we will explore sociological viewpoints on each of these questions and more. Students will critically engage with high-quality peer-reviewed research on topics related to the social causes of health and illness.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the historical and present-day structure of medical sociology.
- See health and illness as a consequence of social rather than simply biological processes.
- Effectively apply a sociological interpretation to health and illness.
- Explain current trends in population health.
- Interrogate the social causes of health inequalities across various social groups.
- Critically engage with peer-reviewed research published in medical sociology.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Cockerham, W. C. (2017). *Medical sociology* 14th Edition. Routledge.

Hummer, R. A., & Hamilton, E. R. (2019). *Population health in America*. University of California Press.

Note: All other required readings are easily accessible via the UF Library database; when off-campus, students must use the following link to gain access to the readings:

<https://uflib.ufl.edu/using-the-libraries/off-campus-access/>

Students may also directly access many of the required readings via Google Scholar

COMMUNICATION

All inquiries concerning the course should be sent to hnicholson@ufl.edu, not Canvas. Emails must include SYD 4400 in the subject line. Please allow Professor Nicholson at least 24 hours during regular business hours (M-F, 9am-5pm) to respond to your email inquiries. If he does not respond within 24 hours, you may send a follow-up message.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Many of the topics we discuss in class may challenge the way you think. You may have different opinions about certain issues than the professor and/or your classmates. While it is fine to have a difference of opinion, it is crucial that each of us engage in respectful dialogue. Negative language or behavior will not be tolerated. People in violation of this expectation may be asked to leave class for the day.

ASSIGNMENTS

Exam (30%)

There will be an exam at the end of the semester; the exam will be cumulative. The exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions based on the readings, lectures, and/or videos shown in class throughout the semester. Therefore, it is highly recommended that students keep up with all assigned readings and maintain a proper record of notes.

Article Response (20%)

Students must write a critical response to one peer-reviewed article (e.g., empirical study, not a book review) published in an academic journal in Sociology. The article must be related to race, ethnicity, and/or racism in the United States. Students must choose an article (published within the last 10 years) in one of the following journals: *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Social Science & Medicine*, and *Society and Mental Health*. Your review must not simply summarize the article. It is expected that students critically engage with the article, discussing both the positive and negative aspects of the article. What were the main arguments of the article? What method(s) did the researchers use? Were the arguments made by the researcher(s) compelling? What are the pitfalls of the article? What are its strengths? What are your own personal thoughts about the article? It is expected that students answer these questions and devise other creative ways to craft their response. The article response must be a minimum of 3 pages and a maximum length of 4 pages (double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins). Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. The article must be formatted using American Sociological Association (ASA) guidelines. For more information, please see the following link:

https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_AS_A_Style.pdf

Book Review (25%)

Students must write a critical book review on a topic related to medical sociology. Students must choose from the list of books attached at the end of the syllabus. This is not simply a summary of a book. Your reviews must include a critical discussion of both the positive and negative aspects of each chapter of the book. Book reviews must be a minimum of 4 pages and a maximum length of 5 pages

(double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins). Students will be expected to write their book reviews consistent with standards seen in academic journals in Sociology. Absolutely no plagiarism will be tolerated. For examples on how to write a book review and how to format your paper consistent with ASA guidelines, please see the following examples:

Quick Tips for ASA Style:

https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_AS_A_Style.pdf

Example of book review:

Scott, S. (2008). the medicalization of society: on the transformation of human conditions into treatable disorders/sociology and medicine: selected essays by pm strong. Health Sociology Review, 17(1), 115.

Documentary Review (20%)

Students must complete a critical review of at least two documentaries which will be screened during class throughout the semester. Each review must be a minimum of 2 pages and a maximum length of 3 pages (double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins). It is expected that students construct a critical review of the documentary. What are the main arguments of the film? Were they compelling? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the film? What are your own personal thoughts about the film and why? Students will generally be graded based on (1) the overall accuracy and quality of your review and (2) the organizational structure of your writing, such as style and grammar.

Participation (5%)

Active participation is required for this class. Participation grades will be based more so on the quality of engagement with the class, not necessarily the quantity. Students who consistently fail to engage with class discussion when called upon will see a reduction in their participation grade. Students attending class but consistently fail to actively participate in other ways (e.g., small group discussions, taking notes, paying attention) will also receive a zero for final participation grade. I will assign your overall participation grade at the end of the semester.

Grading Scale

A	94.0–100	C	73.0–76.9
A-	90.0–93.9	C-	70.0–72.9
B+	87.0–89.9	D+	67.0–69.9
B	83.0–86.9	D	63.0–66.9
B-	80.0–82.9	D-	60.0–62.9
C+	77.0–79.9	E	≤ 59.9

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READINGS AND CLASS PREPARATION

Many of the readings in this course will be challenging. Several of the required readings are typically assigned to graduate level students. If you have trouble with the readings, please do not be discouraged. I will provide students with an overview of the readings during each class period. **Nevertheless, students are required to complete all assigned readings prior to coming to class. Students**

must bring the required book to each class until we have finished reading it for the semester. I encourage students to bring either a hardcopy or .pdf file of the required articles to each class. It is strongly recommended that students dedicate at least **three to four hours each week** for reading/class preparation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are required to follow the Student Honor Code, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” Please review the Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code>.

EDUCATIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If needed, please register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (352)392-8565 or www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/ early in the semester (please provide me with an accommodation letter from the DRC).

COURSE EVALUATIONS

UF has updated the student course evaluation guidelines, which states, “Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.”

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

Following UF policy, faculty, staff, and students are expected to wear masks indoors. If you fall ill from Covid-19, stay home, self-quarantine, and contact the Dean of Students’ Care Team Office (<https://care.dso.ufl.edu/instructor-notifications/>) to notify me about your excused absence.

LATE WORK

Late work is only permitted for the following reasons: an emergency, a religious holiday, an acute illness (officially documented), court-imposed legal obligation (documented formally), or to conduct official University business (officially documented) (e.g., attending a conference). Other reasons not listed here will be at the instructor's discretion.

CLASS RECORDING

According to state policy, “Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or

(3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish¹” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.”

¹ Note: publishing includes mediums like Dropbox, Google Drive, BOX, etc.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Students are expected to complete the *required* readings BEFORE coming to class each week. Any additional readings will be covered in class. If you are interested in the *recommended* articles, I highly encourage you to read them too.

Week 1: Course Introduction

Required readings:

None

Week 2: Introduction to Medical Sociology

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 1

Hill, T. D., Cockerham, W. C., Mcleod, J. D., & Hafferty, F. W. (2021). Medical Sociology and Its Changing Subfields. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*, 1.

Week 3: The Sick Role and Medicalization

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 8

Conrad, P. (1992). Medicalization and social control. *Annual review of Sociology*, 18(1), 209-232.

NO CLASS: January 17th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Week 4: Social Epidemiology

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 2

Link, B. G. (2008). Epidemiological sociology and the social shaping of population health. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 49(4), 367-384.

Week 5: Population Health

Required readings:

Hummer and Hamilton, Chapter 1, 2, 8

Week 6: Socioeconomic Status

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 3

Hummer and Hamilton, Chapter 4, 5

Week 7: Theories in Medical Sociology – Fundamental Cause Theory

Required readings:

Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. (1995). Social conditions as fundamental causes of disease. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 80-94.

Phelan, J. C., Link, B. G., & Tehranifar, P. (2010). Social conditions as fundamental causes of

health inequalities: theory, evidence, and policy implications. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51(1_suppl), S28-S40

Week 8: Theories in Medical Sociology – Health Lifestyles and Illness Behaviors

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 6 & 7

Cockerham, W. C. (2005). Health lifestyle theory and the convergence of agency and structure. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 46(1), 51-67.

Week 9: Theories in Medical Sociology – Cumulative Inequality and Constrained Choices

Required readings:

Ferraro, K. F., & Shippee, T. P. (2009). Aging and cumulative inequality: How does inequality get under the skin?. *The Gerontologist*, 49(3), 333-343.

Rieker, P. P., Bird, C. E., & Lang, M. E. (2010). Understanding Gender and Health. *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition, Old Patters, New Trends, and Future Directions*, 52-74.

Week 10: Spring Break (March 5 to March 12)

Required readings:

None

Week 11: Social Stress and Health

Due: Book review

Required readings:

Thoits, P. A. (2010). Stress and health: Major findings and policy implications. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51(1_suppl), S41-S53.

Wheaton, B., Young, M., Montazer, S., & Stuart-Lahman, K. (2013). Social stress in the twenty-first century. In *Handbook of the sociology of mental health* (pp. 299-323). Springer, Dordrecht.

Week 12: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Nativity Status

Required readings:

Hummer and Hamilton, Chapter 6, 7

Williams, D. R., & Sternthal, M. (2010). Understanding racial-ethnic disparities in health: sociological contributions. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 51(1_suppl), S15-S27.

Recommended:

Williams, D. R. (2012). Miles to go before we sleep: Racial inequities in health. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 53(3), 279-29

Week 13: Doctor-Patient Interaction

Due: Article response

Required Readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 8

Shim, J. 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.

Week 14: Hospitals and Physicians

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 10, 11, 14

Jenkins, T. M., & Reddy, S. (2016). Revisiting the rationing of medical degrees in the United States. *Contexts*, 15(4), 36-41.

Week 15: Health Care in the United States and Globally

Due: Documentary responses

Required readings:

Cockerham, Chapter 14, 15

Hummer and Hamilton, Chapter 8

Exam – APRIL 18th, 2022

I reserve the right to make edits to this syllabus at any time during the semester, if deemed necessary

Book review assignment options

Raudenbush, D. T. (2020). *Health care off the books: Poverty, illness, and strategies for survival in urban America*. Univ of California Press.

Jenkins, T. M. (2020). *Doctors' Orders: The Making of Status Hierarchies in an Elite Profession*. Columbia University Press.

Klinenberg, E. (2015). *Heat wave: A social autopsy of disaster in Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

Lembke, A. (2016). *Drug dealer, MD: how doctors were duped, patients got hooked, and why it's so hard to stop*. JHU Press.

Fadiman, A. (2012). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*. Macmillan.

Tweedy, D. (2015). *Black man in a white coat: A doctor's reflections on race and medicine*.