

University of Toronto – Department of Sociology  
**SOC 243H1F: Sociology of Health and Illness**  
**Fall 2018**  
Thursday 10:00-12:00

Instructor: Brigid Burke  
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Classroom: MS2172 - Medical Sciences Building, 1 King's College Circle  
Office hours: Wednesdays 10-11, Rm 335 (Dpt. of Soc. – 725 Spadina Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor)  
Course website: Quercus (q.utoronto.ca) and TopHat (www.tophat.com)  
Teaching Assistant: Jina Lee ([jinasarah.lee@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:jinasarah.lee@mail.utoronto.ca))

### **Course Description**

In this course will examine the social causes of illness and disease, the sociology of illness experience, and the social distribution of health. We will begin the first half of the course with an introduction to the sociology of health and illness and explore different theoretical approaches within this field. We will discuss medicalization as a process that influences how illnesses are defined and addressed and, interrogate the relevance of the sick role in delimiting the rights and responsibilities of both patients and medical professionals. We will then explore how the meanings of disease and illness may differ based on social location, paying particular attention to differences across patients and doctors, and cross-culturally. In the second half of the course we will emphasize socio-political aspects of health, beginning with a consideration of structural and political violence. We will then discuss social determinants of health, exploring how health risks and protections are distributed based on class, race, gender and sexual orientation. Our last two weeks will focus on the sociology of the body, and address how bodies are experienced and acted upon in relation to dominant ideas about health and illness.

*Prerequisites:* Completion of either SOC101Y1, SOC102H1 or SOC100H1 is required to take this course. Students without prerequisites can be removed at any time without notice. In addition, it is *recommended* that students have completed SOC150H1 as preparation for this course.

### **GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

In this course, students will learn how to:

1. Think critically about health as a social issue, both in terms of its outcomes & antecedents.
2. Explore how understandings of health and illness can differ based on social location.
3. Interrogate the role of different axes of inequality in shaping individual/population health.
4. Engage in critical thinking, apply course and lecture materials to engage in a sociological analysis, and develop recommendations for addressing urban health problems.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS

1. *Reading Assignments:* Students will complete 4 reading assignments on Quercus which will test their comprehension of the course material. These reading assignments are timed and can only be attempted once. Be sure you have done the readings and are fully prepared before beginning the online assignments.
2. *In-Class Exercises and Participation:* We will use TopHat as an online platform to facilitate in-class participation. Each class there will be TopHat participation questions posted, and throughout the course students will have the opportunity to participate in in-class assignments using the platform. The goal is to assess students' attendance and participation, and to provide an opportunity to practice applying the weekly readings to analyse lecture material. *N.B. TopHat is a paid service and you will have to register to use it before class. The cost however is lower than what you would generally pay for a textbook. If you do not want to register for TopHat an alternative will be provided. More details on TopHat and alternative assignments will be given the first class.*
3. *Research Paper:* Students will identify a health campaign and write a research paper assessing how the health issue and intervention can be understood from a sociological perspective. They will ground their analysis using four to six academic research articles that are specific to their topic, in addition to those covered as part of the course. In addition to their analysis of the problem, they will use a critical lens develop a sociological argument for what, if any, adjustments can be made to improve the intervention. The assignment must be between 6 pages double spaced and must be submitted to Quercus by the start of class on November 15<sup>th</sup>. (A class handout will provide more details.)
4. *In-class Tests.* Students will write 2 in-class tests assessing their ability to think critically about the readings and lecture materials. The tests will consist of 4 questions, of which students will provide written answers to 2. The format for these questions will be an expanded version of the in-class exercise questions, where students are asked to apply the reading/lecture material to think critically about a topic. Test 1 will primarily cover material from Section 1. Test 2 will primarily cover material from Section 2.

## GRADING SUMMARY

In-Class Exercises/Participation	10 points	Ongoing
Reading Assignments	15 points	Multiple (see below)
Test 1	25points	October 11 <sup>th</sup>
Research Paper	25 points	November 15 <sup>th</sup>
Test 2	25 points	November 29 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>	

## CLASS FORMAT AND ATTENDANCE

This class will be based on lecture and discussion. The instructor will present and explain the relevant points and major arguments of the weekly materials. Students must come to class having read the assigned material and are encouraged to participate by either asking questions or providing commentary. In this way, the class can become an intellectual dialogue or conversation among class participants.

Attendance is mandatory. Students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who are unable to attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class as well as notes on the material covered from their classmates.

*N.B. There will be no make-ups for missed in-class participation or exercises.*

## PROCEDURES AND RULES

### Course Webpage

The course syllabus, links to all the readings that are in journal article form, handouts, and course announcements will be posted on Quercus. You are responsible for all the course materials and for all announcements. Please make sure to check your official utoronto.ca email addresses as well as the course Quercus page regularly. You might want to review your Quercus settings to ensure that course notifications are turned on.

### Electronic communication and electronic learning technology

You are encouraged to use email communication to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is essential that you follow a few rules:

- Assignments will not be accepted via email. See above for how to submit them.
  - All course communication should be conducted through Quercus.
  - All emails must include the course code (i.e. SOC243) in the subject line.
  - All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
  - Emails from students will generally be answered within 48 hours of receipt (except on weekends or holidays).
  - All emails should be treated as a form of professional communication.
  - Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., "how much is assignment X worth; when is the assignment due; when is the test...") will not receive a response.
  - Emails must identify a specific question or concern. Students asking questions that are very involved or in-depth may be asked to visit office hours to receive a full response.
- \*Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

### Grade Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with their test grades have one week to address their concerns, in writing, to the teaching assistant. Students contesting a grade will submit a 1-2 page typed document to the TA, outlining why the grade is believed to be inappropriate. The teaching assistant will then review the claim and respond in writing, either by email or hard copy. Students who remain unhappy with the response should make an appointment with me to review the case.

### Missed Deadlines

Late work will receive a **5% late penalty off the assignment grade for each day past the due date. Assignments more than 1 week late will not be accepted.**

In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed **Verification of Student Illness or Injury form** (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)) or a completed doctor's note. The original form must be given to me in person, within 10 business days, with the opportunity for me to make a Xerox copy. Forms that are scanned or Xeroxed will not be accepted.

If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a **letter from your college registrar**. It is recommended you always advise your registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies. Should this occur, I advise you to inform both me and your registrar as soon as possible so we can coordinate any needed accommodations. If you delay, it becomes more difficult to put accommodations in place.

If you feel like you are falling behind or experiencing academic difficulties in the course, I encourage you to make an appointment with either me or the course TA so we can assess the situation and recommend a strategy for moving forward. Again, if this the case it is imperative you reach out as soon as possible, as the longer you wait the harder it will be for us to help you.

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to know and adhere to the University's principles of academic integrity. Any act of plagiarism or other unethical behavior will be addressed in accordance with University guidelines. Please see the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" 6 (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) for specific information on academic integrity at the U of T.

### Accessibility and Student Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and visit the Accessibility Services Office (<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>) as soon as possible.

### Writing Support

Students are urged to seek assistance from the University of Toronto writing centre should they anticipate problems in this area. The writing centre can be visited on the web at: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/centres.html>

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### SECTION 1

- Sept 6<sup>th</sup>      Lecture 1: Introduction  
*Recommended Readings:*
1. Armstrong, D. (2000). Social theorizing about health and illness. In G. L. Albrecht R. Fitzpatrick & S. C. Scrimshaw: *Handbook of social studies in health and medicine* (pp. 24-35). London: SAGE Publications
- Sept 13<sup>th</sup>      Lecture 2: Medicalization
1. Conrad, P. (1992). Medicalization and social control. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 18(1): 209-232.
  2. Conrad, Peter. (2005). "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46: 3-14.
- Sept 20<sup>th</sup>**      Lecture 4: The Sick Role
1. Cockerham, William (2001) The Sick Role. In *Medical Sociology*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Pp.160-178 Prentice Hall.
  2. Glenton, C. (2003). Chronic back pain sufferers—striving for the sick role. *Social Science and Medicine*, 57(11), 2243-2252
  3. Burnham, J. (2014). Why sociologists abandoned the sick role concept. *History of the Human Sciences*, 27(1), 70-87
- \*Reading Assignment 1 Due**
- Sept 27<sup>th</sup>      Lecture 3: Illness as Soc. Experience and Narrative
1. Kleinman, Arthur (1998) *The Illness Narratives* (Chapter 1). USA: Basic Books
  2. Behrendt, Kathy (2017) "Narrative Aversion: Challenges for the Illness Narrative Advocate." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 42(1):50-69.
- Oct 4<sup>th</sup>      Lecture 5: Cultural and Medical Pluralism
1. Lock, M., & Kaufert, P. (2001). Menopause, local biologies, and cultures of aging. *American Journal of Human Biology*, 13(4), 494-504
  2. Fadiman, A. (1997) *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. (Chapters 3 and 5)
- \*Reading Assignment 2 Due**
- Oct 11<sup>th</sup>**      **Test 1**
- Oct 18<sup>th</sup>      Lecture 6: Structural and Political Violence
1. Farmer, Paul (1996) "On Suffering and Structural Violence: A view from Below." *Daedalus*. 125(1): 261-283.

2. Willen, S. S. (2012). Migration, "illegality," and health: Mapping embodied vulnerability and debating health-related deservingness. *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(6), 805-811

Oct 25<sup>th</sup>

Lecture 7: Social Determinants of Health I

1. Raphael, Dennis (2004) Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health. Pp. 1-17 In. *Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.
2. Link & Phelan (2005) Fundamental Sources of Health Inequalities. In: Mechanic, D. (Ed) *Policy challenges in modern health care*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.

Nov 1<sup>st</sup>

Lecture 8: Social Determinants of Health II

1. Williams, David R & Michelle Sternthal. (2010). Understanding Racial-ethnic Disparities in Health: Sociological Contributions. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. Vol. 51 Pp 15-28
2. Bird, C. E., & Rieker, P. P. (1999). Gender matters: An integrated model for understanding men's and women's health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 48(6), 745-755
3. Logie, C. (2012) The case for the world health organization's commission on the social determinants of health to address sexual orientation. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102(7), 1243-6.

**\*Reading Assignment 2 Due**

Nov 8<sup>th</sup>

**Reading Week (no class)**

Nov 15<sup>th</sup>

Lecture 9: Embodied Health

1. Charmaz, K. (1995). The Body, Identity, and Self: Adapting to Impairment. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 36(4), 657-680
2. Gimlin, D. (2007). Accounting for cosmetic surgery in the USA and great Britain: A cross-cultural analysis of women's narratives. *Body & Society*, 13(1), 41-60

**\*Research Paper Due**

Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>

Lecture 10: Health Practices & Interventions

1. Clark, S. L. (2018). Fitness, fatness and healthism discourse: Girls constructing 'healthy' identities in school. *Gender and Education*, 30(4), 477-493
2. Firth, J. (2012). Healthy choices and heavy burdens: race, citizenship and gender in the 'obesity epidemic'. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 13(2), 33+

**\*Reading Assignment 4 Due**

Nov 29<sup>th</sup>

**Test 2**