

University of Toronto – Department of Sociology
SOC 363H1F: Sociology of Mental Health & Mental Disorders
Tuesday and Thursday 2:10-4:00pm
Summer 2023

Instructor: Brigid Burke
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Office hours: TBA via BB Collaborate on Quercus (or by appointment)
Course website: Access via U of T Quercus (q.utoronto.ca)
Class location: SS2111
Teaching Assistant: Soli Dubash

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the link between social inequality and inequality in distress, focusing on differences in mental health across social groups and the role of stress and coping resources in explaining group differences. Sociological approaches to mental health and mental disorders reveal how inequitable social conditions have important consequences on mental and emotional well-being. In the first half of the course, we will examine key conceptual issues and theoretical models in the field, as well as the impact of coping resources in helping individuals negotiate the experience of mental stress, distress and disorder. In the second half of the course, we will explore patterns in the social distribution of mental health, paying special consideration to how mental health varies across different axes of inequality, including: race, gender and sexuality. We will also evaluate the impact of neighbourhood, as a social context influencing exposure and vulnerability to stress and mental health consequences. Lastly, we will review efforts to carry out social control of mental disorders via chemical restraints.

Goals & Learning Outcomes

1. Acquire knowledge of relevant sociological theories and apply these to examine the role of stress and coping resources in explaining group differences.
2. Interrogate how social inequality shapes the social distribution of mental health/disorders.
3. Engage in critical thinking and apply course and lecture materials to develop a sociological analysis of current issues in the sociology of mental health and mental disorders.
4. Critically examine the social construction of mental health in the media and its implications for how we approach mental health interventions.

Course Format

This is an in-person class. The format will be a combination of lecture and active learning and participation activities. As such, students are expected to come to class with the readings completed, prepared to ask and answer questions and engage in group-work based on assigned material. Classes may also include the presentation of material above and beyond that covered in the assigned readings (video clips, theory, empirical data, etc.). Class discussion and debate are strongly encouraged, providing they follow the expectations set out in the class etiquette section of the syllabus.

Prerequisites: The prerequisite to take this course is 1 sociology FCE at the 200+ level. Please note, students without this prerequisite will be removed any time they are discovered and without notice. Students who have already completed SOC334H1 are not permitted to take this course. The class prerequisites and exclusions are firm and cannot be waived.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATIONS

1 Class Participation: Students will earn 10% of the final grade for attendance and participation in in-class activities. Instruction will be given in-class. Students should come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to complete the participation activities.

2 Reading Responses: The goal of the reading responses is to ensure that students stay on top of the readings, to allow students to demonstrate understanding of the readings, and think about the assigned material in a critical manner. Responses must be uploaded to Quercus (emailed submissions will not be accepted) by Friday (midnight) the week of the corresponding class. Responses can be presented as: a written memo (no more than 3 pages double-spaced), a video response (no more than 3 minutes long), or an infographic with an accompanying critical statement (no more than 1 page double-spaced). Students will be assigned to response groups in class 1 and must submit a total of 3 responses based on group assignments in the following schedule:

Assigned Group	Assigned Readings	Due Date
1	Class 2	May 12th
2	Class 3	May 19th
3	Class 4	May 19th
1	Class 5	May 26th
2	Class 6	May 26th
3	Class 8	June 2nd
1	Class 9	June 9th
2	Class 10	June 9th
3	Class 11	June 16th

Each reading response is worth 15% of the final grade. N.B. submitting a response does not guarantee a passing mark. A failing mark might be given if the response is incomplete or shows

little evidence of critical engagement with the material. Full details on grading are provided in the Reading Response Instruction Sheet posted on Quercus.

3 Mental Health Media Analysis: Students will select a mental health issue that has been covered in news media in the last 5 years and apply course and outside academic literature to analyze how this mental health issue has been socially constructed in media. Reports should demonstrate critical thinking about the social construction of mental health and reflect on implications for the design and potential of corresponding mental health interventions.

Students must draw on a minimum of 4 outside sociological peer-reviewed research articles/book chapters that are specific to their topic, in addition to a minimum of 3 course readings to support their arguments.

The Media Analysis should follow the following format:

1. Introduction (0.5 pages)
2. Background (1 page)
3. Literature Review (2 pages)
4. Analysis (2-2.5 pages)
5. Conclusion and Recommendations (0.5-1 page)

The assignment is worth 25% of their final grade, should be no more than 7 pages double-spaced and must be submitted to Quercus by midnight on June 8th. Detailed instructions and grading instructions will be posted to Quercus.

4 Media Analysis Poster Fair: Students will create posters to share their media analysis projects with the class. This will be presented in during the last class, which will be structured to simulate poster fairs at academic conferences. Students will be asked to complete an in-class written reflection addressing the questions and feedback they received during the fair, and how they might take this on board were they to revise and carry on their analysis. Participation in the fair and the written reflection are together worth 5% of the final mark. A rubric and instruction handout will be posted to Quercus with further information.

5 Group Work - Class Facilitation: For this assignment students will work in groups of up to 4 people. Each group will select a class week (weeks 2-11) and be tasked with designing and facilitating a class activity/discussion based on the assigned material. The goal of the assignment is not to summarize concepts/findings from the readings. In fact, prior knowledge of the material should be assumed. Rather, students will lead their peers in a discussion or activity designed to foster critical thinking about concepts from the assigned material and their value, limitations and/or applicability to current world events. As with all assignments, students are encouraged to consult with the Instructor and/or TA for support with this.

Groups will receive a baseline collective grade for peer facilitation. It is understood that students have diverse strengths and skillsets and that there are multiple ways of contributing to

successful peer facilitation. Groups should therefore work cooperatively to design and deliver their facilitation activities, and can choose to do so taking on whatever roles the group determines are most equitable and effective for them. I.e., Some students might contribute more to the design of facilitation activities, and others might take a more active role in leading the class in the activities/discussion. Baseline group grades will be adjusted based on peer evaluation to calculate individual student score. A handout will be posted to Quercus with full assignment guidelines and grading details.

GRADING SUMMARY

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
In-Class Participation	10 points	Ongoing
3 Reading Responses	45 points	Ongoing
Class Facilitation	15 points	Ongoing
Mental Health Media Analysis	25 points	June 8th
Media Analysis Poster Fair	5 points	June 15th
Total	100 points	

PROCEDURES AND RULES

Course Webpage

The course syllabus, links to all the readings, handouts, assignment submission links and course announcements will be posted on Quercus. You are responsible for all course content posted to Quercus. Please make sure to check your official utoronto.ca email addresses, Quercus Messages 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 electronic 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 online communication must be conducted through Quercus Messaging (not Outlook).
- All online communication must include the course code (i.e. SOC363) in the subject line.
- All online communication should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Online communication from students will generally be answered within 48 hours of receipt (except on weekends or holidays).
- All online course communication must maintain a respectful and professional tone.
- Online communication asking 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.
- Online communication must identify a specific question or concern. Students asking questions that are very involved or in-depth may be asked to attend office hours.

***Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

Grade Appeals

Students who are dissatisfied with their grades have one week to address their concerns, in writing, to the teaching assistant. Students contesting a grade will submit a 1-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

If a health, personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you should contact **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.

I understand students may experience difficulties in completing coursework. My priority is on you, your wellbeing and your learning *as people*, and in supporting your mastery on the material and overall success in the class. If you feel like you are falling behind or experiencing academic difficulties in the course, I encourage you to make an appointment with me so that I can assess the situation and recommend a strategy for moving forward. Again, if this is the case it's imperative you reach out as soon as possible, as the longer you wait the harder it will be for me to help you.

- There is no make-up opportunity for class facilitation. Students who do not contribute to the class-facilitation with their group may have their grades weighted down by low peer evaluation scores/feedback. Students who do not participate in the design, preparation or delivery of the group's peer facilitation activities will receive a grade of zero.
- Marked participation activities will be randomly distributed across the semester. Students can miss no more than 3 to receive full participation marks.
- Reading responses or essays that are submitted more than 2 weeks after the official deadlines will not be graded.
- Attendance at the poster fair during the final class is mandatory.

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](#)" for specific information on academic integrity at the U of T.

Use of Generative AI Technology

Students are encouraged to use technologies, including Generative Artificial Intelligence (E.g. GPT-4, ChatGPT, Bing, etc.) to contribute to their understanding of the course material.

N.B. Any assignment content created through the use of generative artificial intelligence must be identified and cited accordingly. Failure to identify and cite information/content generated by Gen. AI is considered plagiarism and will be treated as an academic offence. All students are responsible and accountable for the work submitted. If using Gen. AI, you are strongly encouraged to independently triangulate information and check original sources for accuracy.

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](#) 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.

ENGAGING WITH COURSE MATERIAL

To prepare yourself to engage with the class materials as critical and analytic consumers, you should ask yourself a few questions as you read the assigned materials: *What are the main points that the author is trying to make? How do each of the articles relate to each other or contradict each other? What are the common themes across the readings? What implications do these readings have for how we understand health from a sociological perspective? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the readings?* Being able to answer these questions will help you move beyond absorbing facts, to develop a critical lens. If you are unsure about how to approach a specific reading or you are confused about what you should be getting out of the reading, please come speak to me during office hours.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

I encourage students to engage in vibrant debate and discussion about the course material. Some topics covered may be sensitive in nature. Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally and be respectful of different opinions. If confronted with an opposing idea, my expectation is for students to engage in dialogue with each other to build understanding around these differences. It is important to recognize that each person in the class has valuable insights to contribute and that our learning as a group will be maximized when we each commit to sharing with and listening to each other as openly as possible.

During in-person lectures, for example, students will not only hear the instructor lecture, but they are also exposed to their classmates' questions (many of which they might not have thought of on themselves), opinions/responses (which they may or may not agree with to varying degrees), real life examples/experiences (which may resonate with them in a variety of ways: e.g. as relatable, reassuring, eye-opening, strange, or uncomfortable), etc. Regular

participation in class is therefore a vital element of your and your classmates' learning and should be prioritized.

The same level of respect and professionalism should be brought to group work. Students are expected to be respectful of others' time, ideas, and perspectives, and work dialectically to resolve any conflicts. Students are expected to be proactive in reaching out to the instructor as needed for additional problem-solving support (e.g. office hours, or by Quercus messages). As noted above, students may experience more disruptions than usual due to Covid-19. Please be patient and supportive of groupmates facing challenges. I have adopted flexible submission policies for precisely this reason.

Videotaping and recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- May 9th Class 1: Introduction &
1. Aneshensel, Carol S., Jo E. Phelan, and Alex Bierman. 2013. "The Sociology of Mental Health: Surveying the Field." Pp. 1-22 in [*The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*](#), 2nd Ed., New York: Springer. (Recommended)
- May 11th Class 2: Concepts, Measurements & Outcomes
1. Aneshensel, Carol S., Carolyn M. Rutter, and Peter A. Lachenbruch. 1991. "[Social Structure, Stress, and Mental Health: Competing Conceptual and Analytic Models](#)." *American Sociological Review* 56:166-78.
 2. Mirowsky, John and Catherine E. Ross. 2002. "[Measurement for a Human Science](#)." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 43:152-70.
 3. Wheaton, Blair. 2007. "[The Twain Meet: Distress, Disorder and the Continuing Conundrum of Categories \(comment on Horwitz\)](#)." *Health* 11(3):303-319.
- May 16th Class 3: Modeling Mental Health: The Stress Process
1. Wheaton, Blair, Marisa Young, Shirin Montazer, and Katie Stuart-Lahman. 2013. "Social Stress in the Twenty-First Century." Pp. 299-324 in [*The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*](#), 2nd Ed., New York: Springer.
 2. Pearlin, Leonard I. and Alex Bierman. 2013. "Current Issues and Future Directions into the Stress Process." Pp. 325-340 in [*The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*](#), 2nd ed., New York: Springer.
 3. McLeod, Jane D. 2012. "[The Meanings of Stress: Expanding the Stress Process Model](#)." *Society and Mental Health* 2:172-186.
- May 18th Class 4: Psychosocial Resources
1. Ross, Catherine E. and John Mirowsky. 2013. "The Sense of Personal Control: Social-Structural Causes and Emotional Consequences." Pp. 379-404 in [*The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*](#), 2nd Ed., New York: Springer.

2. Taylor, S. E., & Stanton, A. L. (2007). [Coping resources, coping processes, and mental health](#). *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 3, 377–401.
3. Thoits, P. A. (2011). [Mechanisms linking social ties and support to physical and mental health](#). *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 52, 145–161.

May 23rd

Class 5: Social Patterns of Mental Health

1. Kessler, Ronald. C. 2013. "Overview of Descriptive Epidemiology of Mental Disorders." Pp. 169-82 in [The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health](#), 2nd Edition, New York: Springer.
2. Turner, R. Jay, Blair Wheaton, and Donald A. Lloyd. 1995. "[The Epidemiology of Social Stress](#)." *American Sociological Review* 60: 104–25
3. Schieman, Scott., Karen van Gundy, and John Taylor. 2001. "[Status, Role, and Resource Explanations for Age Patterns in Psychological Distress](#)" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 42(1): 80-96.

May 25th

Class 6: Race, Discrimination and Cultural Safety

1. Brown, T. N. et al. 2013. "Race, Nativity, Ethnicity, and Cultural Influences in the Sociology of Mental Health." Pp. 255-276 in [The Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health](#), 2nd Ed., New York: Springer.
2. Taylor, J. & Turner, R.J. 2002. "[Perceived Discrimination, Social Stress, and Depression in the Transition to Adulthood: Racial Contrasts](#)." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 65:213-225.
3. Auger, M., Crooks, C. V., Lapp, A., Tsuruda, S., Caron, C., Rogers, B. J., & van der Woerd, K. (2019). [The essential role of cultural safety in developing culturally-relevant prevention programming in First Nations communities: Lessons learned from a national evaluation of Mental Health First Aid First Nations](#). *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 72(Complete), 188–196.

May 30th

Class 7: Methods Workshop & Media Analysis Consults

- Readings TBA

June 1st

Class 8: Gender

1. Simon, R. W. (2020). [Gender, Emotions, and Mental Health in the United States: Patterns, Explanations, and New Directions](#). *Society and Mental Health*, 10(2), 97–111
2. Thoits, P.A. & Longest, K.C. 2012. "[Gender, the Stress Process, and Health: A Configurational Approach](#)". *Society and Mental Health* 2(3): 187-206
3. Harnois, Catherine E., Băsto, Joao L. 2018. "[Discrimination, Harassment, and Gendered Health Inequalities: Do Perceptions of Workplace Mistreatment Contribute to the Gender Gap in Self-Reported Health?](#)" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59:283–99.

- June 6th Class 9: Sexuality
1. Caplan, Z. 2017. "[The Problem with Square Pegs: Sexual Orientation Concordance as a Predictor of Depressive Symptoms](#)". *Society and Mental Health* 7(2): 105-120
 2. Green, A. I. 2008. "[Health and Sexual Status in an Urban Gay Enclave: An Application of the Stress Process Model](#)", *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 49:436-451
 3. Hsieh, N. 2014. "[Explaining the Mental Health Disparity by Sexual Orientation: The importance of Social Resources](#)". *Society and Mental Health* 4(2):129-146
- June 8th Class 10: Neighbourhoods
1. Aneshensel, CS, Sucoff CA. 1996. "[The neighborhood context of adolescent mental health.](#)" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 37:293-310
 2. Turney, K., Kissane, R. & Edin, K. 2012. "[After Moving to Opportunity: How Moving to a Low-Poverty Neighborhood Improved Mental Health Among African American Women](#)". *Society and Mental Health* 3(1): 1-21
 3. Mesa Vieira, C. et al. (2020) [COVID-19: The forgotten priorities of the pandemic](#). *Maturitas*. 136: 38-41
***Media Analysis Due**
- June 13th Class 11: Mental Disorders and Social Control
1. Kilty, Jennifer. (2012). "[It's Like They Don't Want to Get Better: Psy Control of Women in Carceral Contexts.](#)" *Feminism & Psychology*, 22(2): 162-182
 2. Fitzgerald, T. D. (2009). "[Controlling the Black School-Age Male: Psychotropic Medications and the Circumvention of Public Law 94-142 and Section 504](#)". *Urban Education*, 44(2): 225–247.
 3. Freundlich, Naomi. (2011). "[“Atypical” Antipsychotics Misused As “Chemical Restraints” For Youthful Offenders](#)". *Health Beat* (online)
 4. Schweikart, Scott. (2019). "[April 2018 Flores Settlement Suit Challenges Unlawful Administration of Psychotropic Medication to Immigrant Children](#)". *AMA Journal of Ethics*, 21(1): E67-72
- June 15th Poster Fair