Sociology of Health
Course 3671, Section 70
3 Credits/C-NC
No Prerequisites Required

Instructor: Jenni Tabler, Graduate Student
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Phone: 801-634-7913 Main Campus Office: BEHS 320

Meeting: Wednesday 6-8:45, SANDY 121

Course Description & Objectives:
This course introduces students to the field of medical sociology through lectures, discussions, and media depictions of major concepts, theories, and issues relating to the causes and consequences of health and illness. Examples of topics covered are conception of health, social stress and health, living and dying in the U.S. health system, doctor-patient relationship, controversial health practices, and issues in the U.S. health care delivery system.

By the end of the course students should feel comfortable:
1) Debating controversies with regard to the U.S. Health Care System
2) Identifying the main forms of stratification occurring in the U.S. in relation to health outcomes
3) Explaining/Identifying the main social theories of health as well as assessing the strengths and weaknesses of these theories
4) Reading and evaluating research articles

Lectures, discussions, in-class exercises, documentaries, and other forms of media will be utilized to achieve these learning objectives.

Seminar & Lecture Format:
This course will be executed in its primary form as a seminar; however, this course will include lecture style instruction. The seminar format means that students will be expected to share the burden of discussing and presenting the reading material. In other words, the success of the course depends on the hard work of our classroom community.

Course Website:
All course materials are available on Canvas. All course announcements will be made via Canvas and/or the University of Utah (umail) email lists. You are responsible for checking both regularly. If you need help navigating the course website, please contact me.

Link to Canvas: http://learn-uu.uen.org
Grading and Evaluations: Detailed descriptions and/or rubrics on the Final Project, Group Debate, Reaction Papers, and Quizzes will be available on the second day of class. I am open to changing my ideas on how the assignments, quizzes, and debates will look; we will discuss and establish the “fine print” on our first day. Final course grades will be assigned based on the following distribution of percentages:

- **Attendance & Participation**: 10%
- **2 Reaction Papers**: 5% each, totaling 10% (Due June 6th & June 27th)
- **2 In-Class Quizzes**: 10% each, totaling 20% (June 13th & July 11th)
- **In-Class Group Debate**: 25% (July 18th-August 1st)
- **Final Project/Health Portfolio**: 35% (Due August 1st)

Grading Scale:

- A: 94% and above
- A-: 93%-90%
- B+: 89-87%
- B: 86%-84%
- B-: 83%-80%
- C+: 79%-77%
- C: 76%-74%
- C-: 73%-70%
- D: 69%-60%
- E: 59% and below

Late Assignments and Attendance Policy: All assignments are due at the start of class on the day they are due. Late assignments may be accepted, with permission of instructor, but will be subject to a penalty. Make-ups for quizzes are available in permitted circumstances; however, students will be required to write a 6-8-page paper in lieu of the quiz. Although weekly attendance is mandatory, I want students' input; we will decide on a specific attendance and participation policy as a class on the first day.

Readings:

Required Texts: All readings should be completed before the class they are assigned. In addition to the two texts listed below, additional readings will be made available electronically. At first blush this might seem like a lot of reading; however, all of our central texts are intended to be relatively painless and interesting reads (which can be a rarity in Medical Sociology). The following books will be available for purchase at the University of Utah Book Store.

1) *Medical Sociology* 12th Ed., By William C. Cockerham; Published by Pearson  
ISBN: 9780205054183

2) *Momma Might be Better off Dead: The Failure of Health Care in Urban America*, By Laurie Abraham; Published by The University of Chicago Press.  
ISBN: 978-0226001395

Additional articles will be made available on Canvas (https://learn-uu.uen.org)
**Weekly Schedule:**

Part I: The History of the social organization of the U.S. Health Care System:

**Week 1 (May 16): Introduction to Medical Sociology. How Useful is Health Care for Health?**
*CH. 1 “Medical Sociology” Cockerham. pp 1-7 & 12-18*

**Week 2 (May 23): Power of the Medical Profession/Professionalization**
*CH. 10 “Physicians” Cockerham, pp. 207-228.

**Week 3 (May 30): Hospitals**
*CH. 13 Hospitals. Cockerham, pp 267-288
*Abraham ch. 7 (optional, please at least browse)

**Week 4 (June 6): Challenges to the Profession**
REACTIOn PAPER DUE: Health Care Profession
*CH. 11 The Physician in a Changing Society, Cockerham

Part II: The Patient in the Health Care System

**Week 5 (June 13): Social demography of health**
IN CLASS QUIZ ON SECTION 1
*Ch. 3: The Social Demography of Health, Cockerham.
*Abraham ch. 1-4
*Smjae “Race, ethnicity, and health.” In *Handbook of Medical Sociology* by Bird DE, Conrad P & Fremont AM (eds.). Upper Saddle River (online)

**Week 6 (June 20): Socio-economic Status and Health**
*CH 4. Social stress and health, Cockerham
*Abraham ch. 5-8, 10
* Fundamental Cause Theory Article (online, skim only)

**Week 7 (June 27): The Sick Role & Illness Behaviors**
REACTIOn PAPER DUE: Abraham
*Ch. 7 "The Sick Role" Cockerham
*Ch. 6 "Illness Behavior" Cockerham
*Crossley, “Sick role’ or ‘empowerment’? The ambiguities of life with an HIV positive diagnosis.” *Sociology of Health* 20:507-531. (online)

**Week 8 (July 4): Holiday NO-CLASS**
**Week 9 (July 11): Doctor Patient Interactions**

**IN CLASS QUIZ ON SECTION 2**

*Ch. 9 "Doctor Patient Interactions" Cockerham  
*Peter Conrad: “Medicalization and Social Control” (online, skim only)  
*Abraham Ch. 12 (online, skim)  
*Ch. 2 "The spirit Catches you and you fall down" Fadiman, Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. pgs 20-37(online)

**Part III: Controversies in Health Care** (You will be required to SKIM readings of other people’s debate sections, and are required to fully read the articles pertinent to your debate. These weeks should be dedicated to finishing your final project, rather than “memorizing” materials).

**Week 10 (July 18): Health Care Cost and Insurance Crisis: Should the US have Universal Health Care?**

**GROUP DEBATE #1**

*Ch. 14 Health Care Delivery, Cockerham  
*Donelan et al. “Whatever happened to the health insurance crisis in the United States?” *Journal of American Medical Association.* (online, skim)  
*Light, Donald “Comparative Models of ‘Health Care’ Systems,” in *The Sociology of Health and Illness*. Peter Conrad, ed. (online)  

**Week 11 (July 25): Death, Trauma, and Physician Assisted Suicide**

**GROUP DEBATE #2**

*Timmermans, The Sudden Death and the Myth of CPR. (online)  

**Week 12 (August 1): Contemporary and Alternative Medicine/Medical Technology: Comoditification of Health**

**GROUP DEBATE #3**

*Ch. 8 “Healing Options” Cockerham  
*Ch.1 Contemporary Alternative Medicine (online)  
*Abraham Ch. 11, 13

**Tentative Final Project Due Date: August 1**
Additional Information:

Americans with Disability Act (ADA):
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Academic Standards:
It is assumed that all work submitted for evaluation will be your own work. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, and falsification of information are serious offenses that warrant severe sanctions. Students should be familiar with the formal definitions of academic misconduct, as outlined in the University of Utah Student Code.

About the Instructor:
At the time in this course, I will be entering my second year as a PhD student at the University of Utah. My area of emphasis is Population and Health, specifically Medical Sociology. My own research revolves around social factors in the variation in health care practices for children with mental health conditions. As an undergraduate, I conducted an on site ethnography looking at identity development of street prostitutes in a recovery program. I received my Bachelors of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Applied Developmental Psychology, summa cum laude, in 2010 from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). I am indebted to the great works of Professor Stefan Timmermans who inspired me to pursue Medical Sociology while an undergrad. This course is loosely based on his Medical Sociology course. I am also intellectually indebted to the supports of Professors Robert Emerson and Rachel Fretz who taught me everything I know about qualitative research methods. I have two dogs named Bowie and Ziggy, both enjoy snuggling immensely.