Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Ming Wen
Office: 428 BEH S
Phone: 801-581-8041
Office Hours: Wednesday 11-12 (Feel free to stop by during my office hours!)
Email: Blackboard/Vista Mail (preferred) or ming.wen@soc.utah.edu
Teaching assistant: Peter Dien, peter.dien@utah.edu

Course Goal:
This course is designed to acquaint students with important issues in sociology of health. This course offers a broad introduction to the study of illness, health and medicine from sociological perspectives. It surveys the social meanings of health and illness, the social distribution and social causes of health and illness, and the social structuring of the medical encounter. It also examines systems of healthcare to understand the social and political factors related to the quality, cost and accessibility of healthcare.

Course Text:

Lectures:
Power point lectures will be released on the Monday by noon of every week of class.

Blackboard/Vista:
All course materials including lecture notes, quizzes, and additional documents are posted on Blackboard/Vista. Weekly email messages will be sent to you on Monday via email on Blackboard/Vista highlighting what to expect during the week. Please check the course Blackboard/Vista and your email on Blackboard/Vista on a regular basis.

System Requirements:
This class can be "attended" from wherever there is an Internet connection. With the exceptions of the exams, all assignments are completed via the Internet. Students must take the exams at an approved and proctored testing center. Competence in using an Internet browser is the only technical expertise required.

Course Requirements:
- **Exams:** There will be four exams in this course. Exams 1 through 3 cover the 3 units of material respectively. Exam 4 is an OPTIONAL cumulative final to be given in the exam week. The highest 3 of 4 test grades are counted. This means if you are satisfied with your first 3 test grades, you do not have to take the cumulative final exam. You must take the first three exams in order to use the cumulative final option. Each of the three exams or the final exam will be worth 20% of your final grade. Together, the exams will make up 60% of your grade.
- Each exam will involve multiple choice, true/false, definitions and essay questions. Questions will test a combination of reading materials and films. Study guides will be posted before each exam.
- **Weekly Quizzes:** Students will be expected to complete about 1 quiz per week corresponding to the week’s course material. Quizzes are open book, limited to 30 minutes, and are administered on Blackboard/Vista. You can access weekly quizzes from 5pm on Wednesday to 10pm on Sunday each week. You can take the quizzes earlier than the deadline. But, once the deadline passes, you will not be able to access the quiz. **Do not open the quiz before you plan on taking it!** Once you begin a quiz, the timer
starts and you will be unable to stop it. Make sure you are ready to take the quiz and you are in a stable computer environment before you start it. Your quiz score will constitute 15% of your final grade. Please note that no make-up quizzes will be given even under emergency situations, but I will drop your lowest quiz score from your final grade.

- **Research Project:** Students are required to work on a research project. You can choose to work alone or work in a group of no more than 6 students. The group should be formed by the time of the fall break. You should then send me your research topic and group members (if any) via email. Topics of the research project should be related to Sociology of Health. You are welcome to talk with me regarding your research topic either via email or in person during my office hours. The end product of the project is a research paper and a powerpoint presentation. Powerpoint presentations will be due by 10pm on December 11 (Friday) and will be posted on Blackboard/Vista; they will be evaluated by the other students, the instructor, and the course teaching assistant with equal weights. External research is necessary for the project. The research paper should be no more than 6 pages (can be shorter) and will be due on December 15 (Tuesday). Please email me your presentation and paper on Blackboard/Vista. Your grade on the research project will be based on your powerpoint presentation (10%) and your research paper (90%). More description of the research project is enclosed in the end of the syllabus. Research project will constitute 15% of your final grade.

- **Discussion Postings:** Students will be assigned to small discussion groups and be expected to participate in one discussion postings per unit. So students will participate in 3 discussions over the course of the semester. Each student is expected to post at least one comment on the discussion thread and respond to two other students’ comments. This activity will be evaluated based on the quantity and quality of student comments in the discussion thread and will constitute 15% of your final grade.

- **Completion of Discussion Activities:** The discussion threads will be open for about a week and will be shut down after the exam corresponding to each unit. Past discussion threads will be archived and posted on Blackboard/Vista. The schedule will be as follows which is also available in the course schedule:
  - **Unit 1 August 24 to September 26**
    - Discussion 1 released on Monday 9/21; discussion closed on Saturday 9/26
    - Exam I administered through UONLINE on Saturday 9/26
  - **Unit 2 September 28 to November 2**
    - Discussion 2 released on Monday 10/26; discussion closed on Saturday 10/31
    - Exam II administered through UONLINE on Saturday 10/31
  - **Unit 3 November 2 to December 11**
    - Discussion 3 released on Monday 11/30; discussion closed on Thursday 12/10
    - Exam III administered through UONLINE on Thursday 12/10
  - **Final Exam Week December 14th to December 18th**
    - Optional final cumulative exam through UONLINE on Tuesday 12/15

- **Online Chat Session**
  - You can earn up to 5 additional points by attending a live online chat session with me. It is scheduled for an hour from 10:00 am to 11:00 am on Friday 12/11. The chat session can be extended if necessary. During the chat session, we will talk about the most impressive messages you have learned from this course and discuss issues related to sociology of health. Within Blackboard/Vista you will see a Wimba Classroom. We are going to use this tool to run our online chat session.

**Communication & Interaction:**
One strong point of online courses is a certain amount of flexibility in time and space. Their main drawback is insufficient interaction or communication between the instructor and the students or among students. Active use of email and discussion board can address this weakness.

- **Communication between the instructor and the students:** You are welcome to send me questions and comments via email. I will check Blackboard/Vista e-mail daily so you should get good response time. I will
also communicate with you on course questions and developments using Blackboard/Vista Mail. It will be 
very helpful if you set up your “Profile” in the “Settings” to forward e-mail to an account that you check 
often. Alternatively, you can check Vista Mail often. You are also welcome to stop by my office hours on 
Wednesdays. Moreover, I will be “present” during your discussion sessions and during the online chat 
session toward the end of the semester.

- **Student participation and interaction:** Students will be assigned to smaller groups for the three discussion 
sessions. Students are required to work on a research project and can choose to work in a group in which 
case frequent interaction among group members is essential for a successful group project. Students are 
also encouraged to participate in the online chat session which is scheduled at the end of the semester. In 
addition to these “formal mechanisms” for student participation and interaction, you can post questions or 
comments about the course contents on the discussion board. Student-student interaction is one of the 
most effective ways of learning material.

**Grading Policy:**
Grades will be based upon the quizzes, the exams, the research project, the discussion, and the online chat 
session for extra credit. Each component is weighted as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Exams</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online chat session (12/11)</td>
<td>5% (extra credit)</td>
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</table>

**Things to Remember (Please read it carefully!):**
- This is an online course but I am nearby! Please feel free to email, telephone, or even come and see me! If 
you email me, please use the mail function within Blackboard/Vista. I will regularly check there. My department 
email address serves as a backup. Emails will be responded within 48 hours.
- All exams will be arranged through UOnline. Make-up exams will be given only if you have a very good 
reason and have notified the instructor before the exam. Otherwise, no credit will be given for the exam. All 
make-up exams will be arranged through UOnline.
- An incomplete will only be granted if you can justify to the instructor that you cannot finish the course 
because of circumstances beyond your control and if the majority of course work is already completed.
- Cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean. The penalty for cheating is an 
automatic failing grade for the course, in addition to other potential penalties decided by the Dean’s Office.
- If you are a member of a university athletic team and want accommodations, you must provide me with a 
schedule of games and team commitments during the first two weeks of the semester.
- I will retain unclaimed student exams and papers only until April 30th, 2010. Please make a note of this for 
your records.
Disclaimers:

“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 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.”

(www.hr.utah.edu/oeo/ada/guide/faculty/)

It is your responsibility to maintain your computer and related equipment in order to participate in the online portion of the course.

Equipment failures will not be an acceptable excuse for late or absent assignments.

Classroom equivalency: Discussion threads, e-mails, and chat rooms are all considered to be equivalent to classrooms, and student behavior within those environments shall conform to the Student Code. Specifically:
- Posting photos or comments that would be off-topic in a classroom are still off-topic in an online posting.
- Off-color language and photos are never appropriate.
- Using angry or abusive language is called "flaming", is not acceptable, and will be dealt with according to the Student Code.
- Do not use ALL CAPS, except for titles, since it is the equivalent of shouting online, as is overuse of certain punctuation marks such as exclamation points !!! and question marks ?????.

Course e-mails, e-journals, and other online course communications are part of the classroom and as such, are University property and subject to GRAMA regulations and the Student Code. Privacy regarding these communications between correspondents must not be assumed and should be mutually agreed upon in advance, in writing.

“Note: The syllabus is not a binding legal contract. It may be modified by the instructor when the student is given reasonable notice of the modification.”
**COURSE EVENT SCHEDULE**

**UNIT 1:  *The Convergence of Social Science and Medicine***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/24</td>
<td>Medical Sociology</td>
<td>CH 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>CH 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>Social Demography of Health</td>
<td>CH 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Social Stress and Health</td>
<td>CH 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Watch two films</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Watch film “The Great Leveler”; available at the university media streaming: [http://services.tacc.utah.edu/m/show_grouping.php?g=09742b93697e42788](http://services.tacc.utah.edu/m/show_grouping.php?g=09742b93697e42788)

- Discussion 1 released on Monday 9/21; discussion closed on Saturday 9/26
- Exam I administered through UONLINE on Saturday 9/26

**UNIT 2: *Health and Illness Behaviors***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Health Behavior and Lifestyles</td>
<td>CH 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>Illness Behavior</td>
<td>CH 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>FALL BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>The Sick Role</td>
<td>CH 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And read a journal article (posted on Blackboard/Vista):


And watch a video:

Dr. Thatcher’s presentation “Revisiting the Call to Action on Obesity: A Focus on Healthy Lifestyles” online podcast; available at [http://www2.utah.edu/podcast/category.php?id=4](http://www2.utah.edu/podcast/category.php?id=4)

And read a journal article (posted on Blackboard/Vista):


- Discussion 2 released on Monday 10/26; discussion closed on Saturday 10/31
- Exam II administered through UONLINE on Saturday 10/31
### UNIT 3: Mainstream and Alternative Health Care

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Doctor-Patient Interaction</td>
<td>CH 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>Physicians &amp; the Physician in a Changing Society</td>
<td>CH 9 &amp; 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>Healing Options (Complementary &amp; Alternative Medicine)</td>
<td>CH 8</td>
</tr>
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</table>

And watch film “Talking with Patients about Complementary Therapies” available at the university media streaming: [http://services.tacc.utah.edu/m/show_grouping.php?g=09742b93697e42788](http://services.tacc.utah.edu/m/show_grouping.php?g=09742b93697e42788)

| Week 14 | 11/23 | Health Care & Social Policy in the United States                      | CH 14   |
| Week 15 | 11/30 | Health Care in Developed Countries                                    | CH 15   |
| Week 16 | 12/7  | Watch film “Sicko” available at the university media streaming:       |         |
|         |       | [http://data.scl.utah.edu/fmi/xsl/stream/details.xsl?-recid=637&a::v=2iOia47E7i](http://data.scl.utah.edu/fmi/xsl/stream/details.xsl?-recid=637&a::v=2iOia47E7i) (2 hours) |

- Discussion 3 released on Monday 11/30; discussion closed on Thursday 12/10
- Wimba online chat session from 10am to 11am on Friday 12/11
- Exam III administered through UONLINE on Thursday 12/10
- Final exam administered through UONLINE on Tuesday 12/15
- Research presentation (powerpoint file) due by 10pm on Friday 12/11
- Research paper due by 10pm on Tuesday 12/15
Sociology of Health Research Project

I. Topics

Your topic should be related to Sociology of Health. Possible topics are:

- Social inequalities in health status
- Racial and ethnic disparities in health and health care
- Neighborhood and health
- Religion and health
- Social factors of adolescent risk behaviors
- The sick role
- Cultural factors in doctor-patient interaction
- Ethics in the new genetics
- Alternative Medicine: practices and practitioners
  - Acupuncture
  - Faith Healing
  - Hypnosis
  - Homeopathy
  - Chiropractic
- Medical Malpractice Issues (medical errors)

Additional material on the selected topics can be found in online databases such as MEDLINE. Go to www.lib.utah.edu and find MEDLINE and then search for the published articles on the related topics. Prominent journals in Medical Sociology include but not limited to Social Science & Medicine, Sociology of Health and Illness, Journal of Health and Social Behavior, Health Services Research. Some specialized journals such as Ethnicity and Disease, Ethnicity and Health, Journal of Adolescent Health, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Journal of Gerontology Social Sciences, Gerontology may also contain useful articles.

II. The Paper

A. The paper should be no more than 6 pages and should be 12 point, double-spaced, and single-sided in typing.

B. It will have a minimum of 8 references (no more than 2 of the required 8 can be non-academic internet references).


D. Do not plagiarize

D1. Any material where an author's words are used verbatim should be enclosed in quotation marks and the appropriate reference should be cited.

D2. Any ideas that are taken from the works of others (books, periodicals, etc.) should be cited by using appropriate references.
III. You will either work alone or work in a group of no more than 6 students on the research project.

IV. Research papers are due by 10pm on Tuesday 12/15. Please email it to me on Blackboard/Vista.

V. The Presentation

Your presentation will be evaluated jointly by the other students, the instructor and the teaching assistant based on the content, organization, and rhetoric of the presentation. I encourage you to consider adding audio narratives for some of your slides to make your presentation more effective. Powerpoint presentations are due by 10pm on Friday 12/11. Please email it to me on Blackboard/Vista and I will post it on Blackboard/Vista.
Criteria for Grading the Research Paper

Research papers will be strictly graded based on the following criteria.

**Organization and Coherence (30%):** Your research problem should be clearly introduced in the very beginning. Discussions on why the problem is important and worthy of research should follow the introduction of the problem. Next, you need to explain the research method you will use to do research on the problem. Then in the result section, you should present the evidence you find with regard to the research problem. The last section of the paper should consist of conclusions drawn from your own research. Overall, the paper should be coherently organized to present evidence and argument with regard to your research question.

**Literature review (20%):** Literature review is essential to find previously existing evidence supportive of or against your hypotheses. You ought to have a critical review of the relevant literature. Discuss what they have said, what they have left unanswered, and what should be further explored in the future.

**Your personal opinions (20%):** A good paper not only presents a good summary of the literature but also provides clearly argued views the authors hold with regard to the topic being researched. I will look for your own words discussing the problem and evaluating the evidence you are presenting. It would be a plus if you discuss policy implications of the research findings you presented.

**Writing (20%):** Clear and coherent writing is essential for a good paper. Grammar, spelling, and rhetoric will all be considered.

**Format (10%):** Formatting citations and bibliography consistently is important. All borrowed words should be cited and references should be listed alphabetically in the bibliography separately put in the end of the paper. No reference that is not cited in the text should appear in the bibliography and vice versa. At least 8 references with no more than 2 online non-academic references are required for the paper. The text should be twelve points, double-spaced, and single-sided. The paper should be no more than 6 pages. Page numbers should be inserted.