Fall 2010
SOC 3671-090 Sociology of Health
(ONLINE)

Course Information
Instructor: Holly Uphold
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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, discussions, 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 three exams in this course. Exams 1 through 3 cover the 3 units of material respectively. However, later tests may cover a small amount of material from lectures and assigned readings from previous units and tests. Each of the three exams 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.
• 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 fall break. You should then send me your research topic/outline and group members (if any) via email. Also, please send me a detailed description of each person’s responsibilities within the group. You can divide up the writing but remember to designate one group member to be in charge of proofreading and tying things together. It should not sound/read like 6 different people’s individual thoughts. 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 **November 23rd (Tuesday)** and should be an outline with conclusions etc. of your research paper. They will be posted on Blackboard/Vista, and will be evaluated by each student and the Instructor. Student evaluations are due by **10pm Wednesday 12/1**. External research is necessary for the project. The research paper should be no more than 6 pages (can be shorter) and will be due by 10pm on **November 23rd (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 30% of your final grade.

- **Class Participation: Discussion Boards**

Class participation is a required part of this course and constitutes 10% of your grade. In the past, students have had genuinely interesting and insightful discussions about topics covered in this class. You are expected to check in with the class regularly and to this end, posting to the discussion board is required for this class. There will be a discussion topic for each week of the class - you are required to post in 10 of the 16 weeks of the semester, but you should try to post at least once in each topic. You should post by Sunday at the very latest for the previous week. However, the discussion format works best when students post throughout the week, so I request that you please DON'T leave your posting till the very end of the week! The discussion board is accessed through the "Discussions" link on the course homepage. Guidelines for posting: Your posting must be relevant, substantive, and thoughtful, also (aside from your original post) posting on other comments is highly encouraged, but please keep them respectful. Below are guidelines for what constitutes an acceptable posting:

**Relevant:** The comment must be related to the course. You can comment on something in the course lecture notes, readings, or other assignments that caught your attention. Or you can comment on something related to what we've been discussing but that comes from outside material or experience. For example, you can write about an article you read in the newspaper last week.

**Substantive:** Your posting must be multiple sentences long - it should form at least a short paragraph. If you post, "I thought the section on xyz was really interesting," you will not receive credit. You should go into why you found that section interesting.

**Thoughtful:** It is pretty obvious when someone is just typing in filler and trying to meet the participation requirement. You will need to spend a few minutes composing what you write (preferably using something like Microsoft Word, so you can spell check it!).

**Important Dates:**

- **Unit 1 August 23 to September 25**
- **Exam I administered through UONLINE on Saturday 9/25**
- **Unit 2 September 27 to October 30**
- **Exam II administered through UONLINE on Saturday 10/30**
- **Unit 3 November 1 to December 10**
- **Exam III administered through UONLINE on Thursday 12/09**

- **Final Projects**

  Research paper and powerpoint presentation are due **November 23rd (Tuesday) at 10pm**

There will be no extra credit options in this course.

**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. Moreover, I will be “present” during your discussion sessions.

• Student participation and interaction: 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. 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 exams, the research project, and the discussion. Each component is weighted as follows.
Three Exams 60%
Research project 30%
Discussion 10%

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.
• I will retain unclaimed student exams and papers only until April 30th, 2011. 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 (Don’t forget to participate in 10 of the 16 week discussions)
- Week 1 8/23 Medical Sociology CH 1
- Week 2 8/30 Epidemiology CH 2
- Week 3 9/6 Social Demography of Health CH 3
- Week 4 9/13 Social Stress and Health CH 4
- Week 5 9/20 Watch the film:
  (1) Watch film “The Great Leveler”; available at the university media streaming:
  http://services.tacc.utah.edu/m/show_grouping.php?g=09742b93697e42788
  • Exam I administered through UONLINE on Saturday 9/25

UNIT 2: Health and Illness Behaviors (Don’t forget to participate in 10 of the 16 week discussions)
- Week 6 9/27 Health Behavior and Lifestyles CH 5
- Week 7 10/4 Illness Behavior CH 6 and Research Topic/Outline and Group responsibilities (if working in a group) are due on 10/8.
- Week 8 10/11 FALL BREAK
- Week 9 10/18 The Sick Role CH 7
  And read a journal article (posted on Blackboard/Vista):
  Week 10 10/25 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
  And read a journal article (posted on Blackboard/Vista):
  • Exam II administered through UONLINE on Saturday 10/30

UNIT 3: Mainstream and Alternative Health Care (Don’t forget to participate in 10 of the 16 week discussions)
- Week 11 11/1 Doctor-Patient Interaction CH 10
- Week 12 11/8 Physicians & the Physician in a Changing Society CH 9 & 11
- Week 13 11/15 Healing Options (Complementary & Alternative Medicine) CH 8
  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
- Week 14 11/22 Health Care & Social Policy in the United States CH 14
- Week 15 11/29 Health Care in Developed Countries CH 15
Week 16 12/6 Watch film “Sicko” available at the university media streaming: http://data.scl.utah.edu/fmi/xsl/stream/details.xsl?-recid=637&a::v=2iOia47E7i (2 hours)
• Exam III administered through UONLINE on Thursday 12/9
• Research presentation (powerpoint file) due by 10 pm November 23rd (Tuesday)
• Research paper due by 10 pm November 23rd (Tuesday)
  • Student evaluations of powerpoints due via email to Blackboard/Vista (see criteria below) by 10pm Wednesday 12/1.

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 10 pm November 23rd (Tuesday). Please email it to me on Blackboard/Vista.

V. The Presentation
Your presentation will be evaluated jointly by the other students and the instructor based on the content, organization, and rhetoric of the presentation. It should be an outline with conclusions etc. of your research paper. I encourage you to consider adding audio narratives for some of your slides to make your presentation more effective.

Powerpoint presentations are due by 10 pm November 23rd (Tuesday). Please email it to me on Blackboard/Vista and I will post it on Blackboard/Vista to be viewed the following week.

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.