

Sociology 476:
“Sociology of Health, Illness, and Biomedicine”
Spring 2015

Mondays, 1:00-3:50 pm, in Parkes 222

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Drop-in office hours this quarter:

Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00, and Thursdays, 3:00-4:00, in 1808 Chicago Ave., Rm. 206

A copy of this syllabus can be found on the Canvas site for the course.

Summary:

This course will provide an introduction to central topics in the sociology of medicine while also suggesting how that field is being redefined and reinvigorated by science and technology studies. We will seek to understand health, health care, and biomedicine by exploring multiple domains: the work sites in which health professionals interact with one another and with their clients; the research settings where medical knowledge and technologies are generated; the cultural arenas within which ideas of health and disease circulate; the market relations that produce health care as a commodity; the institutions that transform social inequalities into health disparities; the social movements that challenge biomedical practices and the authority of experts; and the bodies and selves that experience and are remade by illness.

Needless to say, in a course with nine sessions, the assigned reading is a highly selective (and ultimately somewhat arbitrary) subset of relevant literature, and we will be leaving out many classics as well as many important recent works. I will be posting on Canvas a separate list of recommendations for further reading. This list should be helpful to you as you work on your papers for the course; it should also provide resources for students who seek a more thoroughgoing expertise in the sociology of health, illness, and biomedicine. The list will also contain recommendations about relevant journals in the field.

Although many of the themes we will address have a long history, the emphasis will be on developments of the last several decades. The course focuses largely (but not completely) on the United States, though we will try along the way to consider global and transnational contexts. While the majority of the scholarship we will consider is sociological (broadly construed), some of it is drawn from other fields. Students from other disciplines are very welcome.

Course Mechanics:

- ◆ This course will make use of the “**Canvas**” course management system (<http://www.it.northwestern.edu/education/learning-management/login.html>). Students are responsible for logging in, checking regularly for posted announcements, and obtaining readings and assignments from the site.
- ◆ Important course **announcements** may also be sent to students’ registered campus email addresses. You are responsible for monitoring those email accounts.
- ◆ This syllabus and schedule are **subject to change** in the event of circumstances unforeseen circumstances. Announcements of changes will be posted on Canvas and emailed to students.
- ◆ All required **course readings** are available for download from the Canvas site in the form of PDFs. Please bring readings with you to class (as printouts or in electronic form).

A list of **recommended readings**, organized by week, will be posted on Canvas.

- ◆ We will use a **discussion format**. Typically I will make a short introductory presentation at the beginning. (I will post the PowerPoint afterward on Canvas. However, these PowerPoints are not meant to stand alone.) The discussion that follows should be grounded in the reading, and it's taken for granted that everyone had done the reading carefully. We will also be guided by the discussion questions that students have prepared and distributed in advance (see below). To make discussions as participatory as possible (and welcoming to students coming from multiple disciplines), I discourage “name-dropping” and “-ism-dropping,” unless you take the time to explain the reference to the thinker or school.
- ◆ Your grade for the quarter will be based on the following **course requirements**:

1) Students (including auditors) are expected to attend the seminar regularly and **participate** actively in discussions.

2) In addition, each student will be asked to circulate **discussion questions** in advance of two class meetings during the quarter. (Auditors are asked to do this once.) These questions must be distributed to all participants in the seminar by 5:00 pm on the day before class. Students will sign up for specific weeks at the first meeting of the seminar.

Ideally, the questions should help frame the seminar discussion by asking about key arguments and concepts, juxtaposing and comparing readings, raising concerns, and beginning the process of articulating critiques. Please try to come up with two or three questions per reading, for at least three of the readings for the week. Please number your questions (to make it easier to refer to them in class), and please take the time to spell authors' names and terms correctly.

Everyone should read and think about the distributed discussion questions before class. I will try to make sure we address as many of them as possible during the seminar meeting. In addition, the students who prepare questions for the week are asked to take responsibility to help bring us back to those questions during the discussion.

3) Students taking the course for credit must submit a **paper** (around 20 pages in length, not including references) by noon on Monday, June 8. Please submit the paper as a Word file sent by email attachment to s-epstein@northestern.edu. I will do all my grading on the email attachment and then email it back to you.

I am relatively open about directions in which you might take your paper, provided that you get my approval for your topic as described below. Your paper may be empirical with a theoretical framing, or it may take the form of a critical review of the literature. In either case, the paper must draw on course materials but must also extend beyond course readings. (You may find the list of recommended readings helpful.)

Although in practice your paper may be a “first stab” at something you will develop in greater detail later (for example, a second-year paper, special field paper, or dissertation prospectus), it should stand on its own and not read like a rough draft. The paper should articulate an identifiable argument. (That is, even a paper that is just outlining a future

research project should still have a thesis statement up front.) It should be addressed to a general academic reader and should not assume a reader who attended the class. (It should not reference class discussions or refer informally to “the articles we read for this seminar”). Please proofread carefully and pay close attention to matters of style, grammar, syntax, and organization. (If your paper has a lot of careless errors and does not seem to have been proofread adequately, I will send it back to you.) The paper should include a title and should be broken into sections with headings. Use parenthetical citations for quotes and references to other texts. List all such texts in your bibliography. (You may use any standard bibliographic style, as long as you are consistent.) Please use a standard font and a ragged right margin (rather than right justification).

You must get my **approval of your proposed topic** for the paper by emailing me a written description by no later than Friday, April 17 (1-2 paragraphs plus a short reference list). If your paper will be thematically similar to, or will have any overlap in actual content with, any other paper you have written in the past or are writing this quarter, please also provide a clear description of the overlap as well as an explanation of how your paper for this class will differ. Such overlap is not necessarily a problem, but we need to come to a clear understanding about it in advance.

In addition, I request that every student come to my office hours at least once (either before or immediately after the submission of the topic) to discuss the paper.

- ◆ **Incompletes** are heartily discouraged.
- ◆ Any student with a documented **disability** who needs accommodations should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD; 847-467-5530) and should speak with me as early as possible in the quarter, ideally within the first week of classes. All discussions will remain confidential.

Please note that my office is on the second floor of a building without an elevator. Any student who cannot attend my office hours as a result is welcome to make an appointment with me to meet elsewhere.

- ◆ I am committed to very strict enforcement of university regulations concerning **academic integrity**, which means that I report all suspected violations of the policy (including suspicion of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, and aiding and abetting dishonesty) to campus authorities. Please be certain to familiarize yourself with the university’s policy on academic integrity (<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>), and ask me if you have any questions or concerns.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

MON, MARCH 30 (SESSION 1):

SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH, ILLNESS, AND BIOMEDICINE: GOALS, BOUNDARIES, AND DEFINITIONS

Bird, Chloe E., Peter Conrad, and Allen E. Fremont. 2000. "Medical Sociology at the Millennium." Pp. 1-10 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Fifth Edition*, edited by C.E. Bird, P. Conrad, and A. Fremont. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Note: As you read the following three articles, please think of each as a different sort of alternative to the agenda or vision of the field set forth by Bird, Conrad, and Fremont:

Timmermans, Stefan, and Steven Haas. 2008. "Towards A Sociology of Disease." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 30 (5): 659-76.

Rose, Nikolas. 2001. "The Politics of Life Itself." *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (6): 1-30.

Fassin, Didier. 2012. "That Obscure Object of Global Health." Pp. 95-115 in *Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Histories, Activisms, and Futures*, edited by M. C. Inhorn and E. A. Wentzell. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

MON, APRIL 6 (SESSION 2):

SOCIAL CONDITIONS, HEALTH DISPARITIES, AND THE EMBODIMENT OF INEQUALITIES

Link, Bruce, and Jo Phelan. 2010. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities." Pp. 3-17 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*, edited by C. E. Bird, P. Conrad, A. M. Fremont and S. Timmermans. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Klinenberg, Eric. 2002. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 14-36 ("Introduction: The City of Extremes").

Connell, Raewyn. 2012. "Gender, Health and Theory: Conceptualizing the Issue, in Local and World Perspective." *Social Science & Medicine* 74: 1675-1683.

Shim, Janet. 2005. "Constructing 'Race' Across the Science-Lay Divide: Racial Formation in the Epidemiology and Experience of Cardiovascular Disease." *Social Studies of Science* 35: 405-436.

Epstein, Steven. 2007. *Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-16 ("Introduction: Health Research and the Remaking of Common Sense").

MON, APRIL 13 (SESSION 3): CONSTRUCTING ILLNESS, MEDICALIZING SOCIETY

- Aronowitz, Robert. 2008. "Framing Disease: An Underappreciated Mechanism for the Social Patterning of Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 67: 1-9.
- Conrad, Peter. 2005. "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46 (1): 3-14.
- Clarke, Adele E., Janet K. Shim, Laura Mamo, Jennifer Ruth Fosket, and Jennifer R. Fishman. 2003. "Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine." *American Sociological Review* 68: 161-94.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth M. 1998. "Diagnosing Moral Disorder: The Discovery and Evolution of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome." *Social Science & Medicine* 47 (12): 2025-2042.
- Greenslit, Nathan. 2005. "Depression and Consumption: Psychopharmaceuticals, Branding, and New Identity Practices." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 29: 477-501.
- Moreira, Tiago. 2006. "Sleep, Health and the Dynamics of Biomedicine." *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 54-63.

****REMINDER: PAPER TOPICS DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 17**

MON, APRIL 20 (SESSION 4): CONSTRUCTING MEDICAL OBJECTS AND SUBJECTS

- Hirschauer, Stefan. 1991. "The Manufacture of Bodies in Surgery." *Social Studies of Science* 21 (2): 279-319.
- Berg, Marc, and Geoffrey Bowker. 1997. "The Multiple Bodies of the Medical Record: Toward a Sociology of an Artifact." *Sociological Quarterly* 38: 513-537.
- Thompson, Charis. 2005. *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 145-178 (Ch. 5: "Strategic Naturalizing: Kinship, Race, and Ethnicity").
- Timmermans, Stefan, and Mara Buchbinder. 2012. *Saving Babies? The Consequences of Newborn Genetic Screening*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 65-96 and 97-120 (Ch. 2: "Patients-in-Waiting"; Ch. 3: "Shifting Disease Ontologies").

MON, APRIL 27 (SESSION 5): CULTURES OF RISK AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Fosket, Jennifer Ruth. 2010. "Breast Cancer Risk as Disease: Biomedicalizing Risk." Pp. 331-352 in *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the U.S.*,

edited by A. E. Clark, L. Mamo, J. R. Fosket, J. R. Fishman and J. K. Shim.
Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lupton, Deborah. 2012. "M-Health and Health Promotion: The Digital Cyborg and Surveillance Society." *Social Theory & Health* 10 (3): 229–244.

Reich, Jennifer A. 2014. "Neoliberal Mothering and Vaccine Refusal: Imagined Gated Communities and the Privilege of Choice." *Gender & Society* 28 (5): 679-704.

Shostak, Sara. 2003. "Locating Gene-Environment Interaction: At the Intersections of Genetics and Public Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 56 (11): 2327-2342.

Collier, Stephen J., and Andrew Lakoff. 2010. "Health, Security, and New Biological Threats: Reconfigurations of Expertise." Pp. 363-379 in *Handbooks of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*, edited by C. E. Bird, P. Conrad, A. M. Fremont and S. Timmermans. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

MON, MAY 4 (SESSION 6):

PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY, ILLNESS IDENTITIES, AND MEDICAL ENCOUNTERS

Starr, Paul. 1982. *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books, 3-29.

Whooley, Owen. 2010. "Organization Formation as Epistemic Practice: The Early Epistemological Function of the American Medical Association." *Qualitative Sociology* 33: 491-511.

Bury, Michael. 1982. "Chronic Illness as Biographical Disruption." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4 (2): 167-182.

Barker, Kristin. 2002. "Self-Help Literature and the Making of an Illness Identity: The Case of Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS)." *Social Problems* 49 (3): 279-300.

MON, MAY 11 (SESSION 7):

MAKING MEDICAL PRACTICE SCIENTIFIC: EVIDENCE, DECISION-MAKING, AND STANDARDIZATION

Timmermans, Stefan. 2010. "Evidence-Based Medicine: Sociological Explorations." Pp. 309-323 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*, edited by C. E. Bird, P. Conrad, A. M. Fremont and S. Timmermans. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Fletcher, Isabel. 2013. "Defining an Epidemic: The Body Mass Index in British and US Obesity Research 1960–2000." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 20 (10): 1-16.

Tutton, Richard. 2012. "Personalizing Medicine: Futures Present and Past." *Social*

Science & Medicine 75: 1721-1728.

Lakoff, Andrew. 2005. "Diagnostic Liquidity: Mental Illness and the Global Trade in DNA." *Theory and Society* 34 (1): 63-92.

Cambrosio, Alberto, Peter Keating, Thomas Schlich, and George Weisz. 2006. "Regulatory Objectivity and the Generation and Management of Evidence in Medicine." *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 189-199.

MON, MAY 18 (SESSION 8): HEALTH ACTIVISM: BODIES, EXPERTISE, AND BIOCITIZENSHIP

Epstein, Steven. 1995. "The Construction of Lay Expertise: AIDS Activism and the Forging of Credibility in the Reform of Clinical Trials," *Science, Technology & Human Values* 20: 408-437.

Klawiter, Maren. 1999. "Racing for the Cure, Walking Women, and Toxic Touring: Mapping Cultures of Action within the Bay Area Terrain of Breast Cancer." *Social Problems* 46 (1): 104-126.

Nelson, Alondra. 2011. *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1-22, 115-152 ("Introduction: Serving the People Body and Soul"; Ch. 4: "Spin Doctors: The Politics of Sickle Cell Anemia").

Best, Rachel Kahn. 2012. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." *American Sociological Review* 77 (5): 780-803.

Murphy, Michelle. 2012. *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 150-176 (Ch. 4: "Traveling Technology and a Device for Not Performing Abortions").

MON, MAY 25: NU HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

MON, JUNE 1 (SESSION 9): POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

Quadagno, Jill. 2014. "Right-Wing Conspiracy? Socialist Plot? The Origins of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 39(1): 35-56.

Sismondo, Sergio. 2015. "Pushing Knowledge in the Drug Industry: Ghost-Managed Science." Pp. 150-164 in *The Pharmaceutical Studies Reader*, edited by S. Sismondo and J. A. Greene. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Fisher, Jill A. 2007. "'Ready-to-Recruit' or 'Ready to Consent' Populations? Informed

Consent and the Limits of Subject Autonomy,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 13: 875–894.

Kenny, Katherine E. 2015. “The Biopolitics of Global Health: Life and Death in Neoliberal Time.” *Journal of Sociology* 51 (1): 9-27.

Lezaun, Javier, and Catherine M. Montgomery. 2014. “The Pharmaceutical Commons: Sharing and Exclusion in Global Health Drug Development.” *Science, Technology & Human Values* 40 (1):3-29.

****REMINDER: PAPERS DUE BY NOON ON MONDAY, JUNE 8 (BY EMAIL ATTACHMENT).**