

Sociology 476:
“Sociology of Health, Illness, and Biomedicine”
Winter 2012

Mondays, 10:00-12:50 pm, in Parkes 222

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Drop-in office hours this quarter:

**Mondays, 2:30-3:30, and Thursdays, 11:00-12:00, in University Hall 020 (Garden Level);
847-467-1046**

A copy of this syllabus can be found on the Blackboard 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 Blackboard 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 medical sociology. 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 whenever possible to place developments in a global context. While the majority of the scholarship we will consider is sociological, some of it is drawn from other fields. Students from other disciplines are welcome.

Course Mechanics:

- ◆ This course will make use of the “**Blackboard**” course management system (<https://courses.northwestern.edu/webapps/login/>). 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 unforeseen circumstances. Announcements of changes will be posted on Blackboard and emailed to students.
- ◆ All required **course readings** are available for download from the Blackboard site in the form of PDFs. Please bring readings with you to class.

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

- ◆ We will use a **discussion format**. Typically I will make a short introductory presentation at the beginning. (I will post the PowerPoint afterward on Blackboard. 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 emailed 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.

It is everyone's responsibility to 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 Tuesday, March 13. Please submit the paper in two different ways: as a hardcopy in my mailbox in the Sociology department, and as a Word file sent by email attachment. I will read the hardcopy but do all my grading on the email attachment. I will then email the graded attachment back to you. (I will not return the hardcopy.)

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. 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, February 3 (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.

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.
- ◆ 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:

TUESDAY, JAN. 3 (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 readings, please think of them as different sorts of responses 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.

Farmer, Paul. 2003. *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and The New War on the Poor*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 29-41.

MON, JAN. 9 (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. 2009. "Dying Alone: The Social Production of Urban Isolation." Pp. 87-101 in *The Sociology of Health and Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 8th ed., edited by P. Conrad. New York: Worth.

Read, Jen'nan Ghazal, and Bridget K. Gorman. 2010. "Gender and Health Inequality." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 371-386.

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.

MON, JAN 16: NU HOLIDAY (NO CLASS)

MON, JAN. 23 (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.
- Moreira, Tiago. 2006. "Sleep, Health and the Dynamics of Biomedicine." *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 54-63.

MON, JAN. 30 (SESSION 4): CONSTRUCTING MEDICAL OBJECTS AND SUBJECTS

- Hirschauer, Stefan. 1991. "The Manufacture of Bodies in Surgery." *Social Studies of Science* 21 (2): 279-319.
- Thompson, Charis. 2005. *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 145-178.
- Berg, Marc, and Geoffrey Bowker. 1997. "The Multiple Bodies of the Medical Record: Toward a Sociology of an Artifact." *Sociological Quarterly* 38: 513-537.
- Fullwiley, Duana. 2008. "The Biologicistic Construction of Race: 'Admixture' Technology and the New Genetic Medicine." *Social Studies of Science* 38 (5): 695-735.

**REMINDER: PAPER TOPICS DUE FRIDAY, FEB. 3.

MON, FEB. 6 (SESSION 5): CULTURES OF RISK

- 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.

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

Shim, Janet K., Ann J. Russ, and Sharon R. Kaufman. "Risk, Life Extension, and the Pursuit of Medical Possibility." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 28: 479-502.

Collier, Stephen J., and Andrew Lakoff. "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, FEB. 13 (SESSION 6):

PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY, ILLNESS IDENTITIES, AND MEDICAL ENCOUNTERS

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

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

Gill, Virginia Teas, Anita Pomerantz, and Paul Denvir. 2009. "Pre-Emptive Resistance: Patients' Participation in Diagnostic Sense-Making Activities." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 32 (1): 1-20.

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, FEB. 20 (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.

Jennings, Elizabeth. 2006. "The Politics of End-of-Life Decision-Making: Computerised Decision-Support Tools, Physicians' Jurisdiction and Morality." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 28: 350-375.

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, FEB. 27 (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.

Heath, Deborah, Rayna Rapp, and Karen-Sue Taussig. 2004. "Genetic Citizenship." Pp. 152-167 in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, edited by D. Nugent and J. Vincent. London: Blackwell.

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.

MON, MAR. 5 (SESSION 9): POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH CARE

Quadagno, Jill. 2011. "Interest Group Influence on the Patient Protection and Affordability Act of 2010: Winners and Losers in the Health Care Reform Debate." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 36 (3): 449-453.

Timmermans, Stefan, and Hyeyoung Oh. 2010. "The Continued Social Transformation of the Medical Profession." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(S): S94-S106.

Sismondo, Sergio. 2009. "Ghosts in the Machine: Publication Planning in the Medical Sciences." *Social Studies of Science* 39 (2):171-198.

Petryna, Adriana. 2009. *When Experiments Travel: Clinical Trials and the Global Search for Human Subjects*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 89-138 (Ch. 3: "The Global Clinical Trial").

Lakoff, Andrew. 2004. "The Anxieties of Globalization: Antidepressant Sales and Economic Crisis in Argentina." *Social Studies of Science* 34: 247-269.

****REMINDER: PAPERS DUE BY NOON ON TUESDAY, MARCH 13 (HARDCOPIES IN MY BOX IN 1810 CHICAGO AVENUE AND WORD DOCUMENTS BY EMAIL ATTACHMENT).**