

Medical Sociology

SOC 205 – G

Professor Information

Dr. J. Sumerau
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Class Information

Place: COB 175
Time: MWF 1:00 – 2:10
Office Hours: T 4:00 – 7:00 pm
Or by appointment

OVERVIEW

How do people make sense of healthcare options, practices, needs, and experiences? How does your social environment continuously influence the way you think and feel about health and illness? How might your position within society influence your health-related choices and the healthcare options available to you over the course of your life? On the other hand, how do your own experiences, practices, beliefs, and identities concerning health or illness influence other social relationships and the larger social world? These are simply a few of the questions sociologists ask while investigating health and medicine.

In this class, we will explore these questions and others by focusing on what sociological research has found concerning health. Critical to an understanding of social life and the development of personhood, medical sociology offers explanations for the wide variety of health and illness related meanings and behaviors embedded within the social world, and provides insights into the ways human beings individually and collectively negotiate both the larger world and their place within it. While studying health and medicine may be challenging or difficult at times, those who approach this course with an open mind and a positive attitude may find the material to be incredibly rewarding, and gain an appreciation for the ways health and medicine influence all aspects of social life.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to teach this class because this material has helped me to make sense of my self, my everyday life, and my relationships with others in a meaningful and coherent fashion. I hope that each of you will also find ways to make medical sociology relevant to your personal lives and social worlds. I have designed this course to facilitate this possibility not only through my choice of readings, but also through a number of participation activities to be undertaken in class. I encourage each of you to talk with me in order to clarify course material and assignments, further explore ideas that the course may evoke, and share your experience in this class more generally.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of the course, students who are successful will be able to:

1. Discuss the social context of health, illness, and health care.
2. Apply sociological theories and methods to the scientific study of health, medicine, and illness.
3. Understand, analyze, contrast, and critique the political, economic, and

- environmental circumstances that impact health.
4. Evaluate the ways people make sense of and describe their subjective experiences of health and illness.
 5. Critically consider the societal forces that shape medical systems and people's responses to illness.

BACCALAUREATE GOALS

1. To learn to communicate effectively through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and observing, so as to acquire, develop, and convey ideas and information.
2. To examine issues rationally, logically, and coherently.
3. To understand the foundations of science, scientific methods, and the impact of science upon society.
4. To understand both the commonality and diversity of human social existence in an increasingly interdependent world.

REQUIRED READINGS

Academic Articles that may be accessed online in the "content" area of the course website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

All course requirements must be completed for a passing grade in this course. Grades will be posted on the course website. Final Grades will not be rounded up.

Course Requirements:

Participation Activities	100 Points	20%
Midterm Review	100 Points	20%
Final Review	100 Points	20%
Group Project	100 Points	20%
Journal Project	100 Points	20%
Total	500 Points	100%

Grading Scale:

A	92 – 100%	4.0
AB	89 – 91%	3.5
B	82 – 88%	3.0
BC	79 – 81%	2.5
C	72 – 78%	2.0
CD	68 – 71%	1.5
D	60 – 67%	1.0
F	<60%	0.0

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES (20%)

Participation Activities: Participation activities will include a variety of individual and group assignments. These will generally consist of short-answer or multiple-choice questions concerning the reading or videos for that day, short writing assignments concerning topics discussed in class previously, or creative exercises employing concepts discussed in class, readings, or videos. Each of these activities will be timed and graded as PASS or FAIL (Students may expect between 10 and 30 participation activities in a semester, and to calculate grades, I will divide your total number of participation activity points by the number of participation activities offered in the course). During these exercises students may not use notes, books, or personal computers. Moreover, students will not be able to talk to others during individual assignments or members of other groups during group assignments. Violation of either of these stipulations will result in a fail grade for the activity. I will drop your **TWO** lowest participation activity scores, which may include any zeros you receive as a result of absences.

REVIEW ESSAYS (40%)

Students will be required to complete **TWO** review essays for this class. These essays will be in response to writing prompts handed out two weeks prior to the due date, and will require students to fashion a coherent, clear, and concise summary and argument concerning medical topics, theories, concepts, and behaviors covered in class. Students will complete these essays outside of class, and submit them electronically.

GROUP PROJECT (20%)

You may choose your own groups. Groups must contain five people, and should be agreed upon by the beginning of the second week of the course. If you cannot find a group, I will put you in one.

You will be required to complete one group project in this course. This project will involve working with your group members to (1) gather data (content based) outside the classroom, (2) collectively analyze this data for recurring themes, (3) situate the data you have gathered and analyzed with existing medical, public health, and sociological literature as well as readings from the course, (4) present the findings from your group project with your classmates in a professional manner, and (5) use your data in combination with literature and course readings to compose a 7 – 10 page research report on your project.

In this group project (detailed instructions and a grading rubric for this assignment will be available on the course website), group members will choose a medical issue (such as sexual and reproductive health, cancer, healthcare coverage, etc.) that interests them and seek to gain knowledge about how others see this issue. To accomplish this, group members will conduct an analysis of media content collected from different sources. I will demonstrate what counts as “media content” and methods for analyzing this content

in class so students are properly equipped to handle this assignment. Group members will then gather scientific literature to compare their findings with what other studies have shown. In so doing, they will see how media outlets respond to and shape health-related issues, and compare these responses to the findings in the sociological literature.

For this project, group members will also assign a grade to each member of their group indicating the quality of participation in the project. I will use these grades along with the grade assigned to the finished project and presentation to assign individual grades (how I adjust group members' grades is up to me). Generally, if everyone in your group says you didn't do anything, you will get 0 points. If they say you didn't do much more than zero, you get a lowered grade. If they say a couple people did most of the work, those members may get more points. Grading your group members will count as 5% of the total project, and these grades will be due at the same time as the project – **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

You will have some time in class for group work, but this will not be enough time to plan or complete your project. This project will require group members to work individually and collectively outside of class. This means you need to communicate with your group members outside of official class meetings.

JOURNAL PROJECT (20%)

You will be required to complete one journal project in this course. This project will involve each student individually (1) obtaining and keeping a journal throughout the semester, (2) completing **AT LEAST TWO** journal entries each week of the semester that explore health-related issues, concepts, readings, lived experiences, and ideas in more detail as well as specific activities outside of class, (3) participating in **THREE** course meetings where we share, discuss, and debate journal entries in relation to our other course offerings, (4) using their accumulated journal entries to compose an 5 – 7 page report wherein they integrate their own observations and experiences with existing medical literatures, and (5) turning in their journals at the end of the semester for evaluation.

Specifically, (detailed instructions, a grading rubric, examples of “good” journal entries and topics, and suggestions for participating in journal discussion and debate sessions will be available on the course website) each student will procure a journal (this may be anything from a simple notebook to an ornate “journal” sold in any store), and keep this journal throughout the semester. This journal assignment will then proceed throughout the semester in **THREE PHASES**.

First, students will be required to complete **AT LEAST TWO** journal entries each week of the semester. One of these entries should analyze one or more of the course readings for that week in light of the student's own experiences, opinions, or ideas. This will allow students to (1) go deeper into the course materials and (2) develop questions they want to ask in class. The other required entry each week should document the student's experience with health, medicine, or illness in the larger social world (this could involve,

for example, summarizing and discussing a medical advertisement the student saw or heard, a health-related debate the student witnessed or read about in the news, a health-related experience the student had during the week either individually or with another person, health-related song lyrics or sermons or media the student came across during the week, or any other ways that health entered the student's life that week), and explore what sociological concepts covered in class might say about this experience. Alongside regular journal entries, students will also be required to engage in **FIVE** specific health-related activities outside of class, and compose journal entries concerning their experiences in these activities. While students will be required to do at least these two entries each week and the five outside of class activities (read this as a passing grade depends upon at least two entries per week and the five activities), they may do as many entries as they wish, and cover as many topics as they so choose during the semester (it is your journal, do with it as you please – also keep in mind that while you may pass with the minimum, you might want to do more than simply pass, such as gain an A).

Secondly, we will have **THREE** separate course meetings where we share, debate, and discuss journal entries. **STUDENTS WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHARE ANYTHING THEY DO NOT WANT TO WITH THE CLASS – WHAT YOU SHARE IN THESE SESSIONS IS UP TO YOU.** In these sessions, students will bring their journals to class, and together we will discuss any experiences, questions, issues, concerns, or ideas that students **CHOOSE** to share. Further, we will be able to see what similarities and differences are to be found when students in the same class keep different records of their experiences. In so doing, we will use these classes to expand beyond the course offerings to any issues students face or think about not covered in the course. It is my intention that this will be a practical exercise where students may gain information they can apply to their own lives.

Finally, students will each analyze their own journals in order to create a research report. Specifically, this part of the assignment will involve students working individually to (1) examine what themes are present in their own journals (what did you notice, what were you interested in, what was different or similar about the readings you chose to focus on), (2) situate these themes within medical sociology literatures covered in the course and available via the library (for example, if your journal focused a lot on media coverage, what does your journal say that is similar to or different from the course), and (3) compose a 3 – 5 page paper discussing these findings.

CLASSROOM CULTURE

Organization of Class Time: During class sessions, I will give lectures on the readings, but my goal is to facilitate discussions that allow students to apply sociological insights into health, medicine, and illness to real life or fictional situations. In this manner, we may use sociological concepts together in discussion and group activities. Since my goal is to engage students in active discussions, you will be required to take notes on issues as we discuss them and be responsible for asking clarifying questions when necessary.

Classroom Courtesy: Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have

the opportunity to learn without distractions. Here are some basic rules of conduct for our class meetings. Students must not be late or leave early. You should be sitting in your seat as class begins. If this is a problem, drop this class immediately. Cell phones, mp3 players, laptops, and other electronic devices must be turned off before class begins. Students should not be reading other materials, talking or whispering with each other when others are talking, or sleeping during class. Importantly, no student should attack other students for their political or religious beliefs, personal appearance, race / ethnicity, gender, gender identification, sexuality, age, or abilities. Moreover, students should not come up to the front of the room to ask me questions during class time (do so before and after the class meeting). If you require a cell phone to receive emergency calls from children, partners, or family members, keep it on vibrate throughout the class. **Consistently violating the rules will affect your participation grade and may lead to your dismissal from the class.**

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity: In the event that a student violates any provision of the University of Tampa's policy on academic integrity spelled out in the student handbook, I reserve the right to assign any grade for the course I deem to be appropriate (including an F) without regard for a student's accumulated points in the class. Any violation of academic integrity will be handled in accordance with the University's policies. **You are responsible for knowing and observing the University's Academic Integrity Policy**, which you may find at <http://www.ut.edu/provost>.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Plagiarism consists of passing off the work and / or ideas or someone else as your own. As such, you are committing plagiarism if you copy someone else's work and turn it in as your own. This means that if you wish to quote someone else, you must reference or cite them in your papers. It is **YOUR** responsibility to properly cite any materials you use in your writing assignments (for example, the articles and books used in this course are properly cited in this syllabus), and to be aware that I may use software to see whether portions of writing assignments have been taken from other places (such as books, journals, and websites). If you do plagiarize, you will receive **ZERO credit and I WILL REPORT YOU.**

Attendance: I do not take attendance in my classes, but I do give regular, random participation activity assignments over the course of the semester. Basically, participation activities serve as an informal method for taking attendance. It is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to come to class. Therefore, you **CANNOT MAKE UP** participation activities. If you do miss class, it is **YOUR** responsibility to keep up with happenings in the course. Specifically, you are responsible for all materials covered in class while you were gone as well as any in-class exercises, videos schedule changes, and / or deadlines announced or given during the class you missed. **REMEMBER**, everything we do in class is fair game on the exams.

Blackboard: I use blackboard to facilitate materials for this class. Specifically, I will post the syllabus, lecture notes before each class, and anything else I think will be useful

for the course on the course website. Further, some of your reading assignments must be downloaded from the blackboard website (these are titled Online Article in the schedule below). You will thus need to enroll in Blackboard ASAP!!! To accomplish the best results in this class, you should make a regular habit of checking blackboard before each class for my lecture notes and any other postings, announcements, or materials. If I do not post my notes (usually in the form of a powerpoint) before a class, email me because I have probably just forgotten to do so.

Assignment Submission Procedure: Your written assignments (both the group project and the written report of the journal project) **MUST** be turned in electronically. **I DO NOT ACCEPT HARD COPIES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Late Papers: If you are unable to turn in a paper on time, it will only be accepted if (1) you contact me by phone, email, or in person BEFORE the due date, and (2) you provide a written doctor's note stating that you were incapacitated and unable to turn in the paper. As stated above, I DO NOT accept hard copies of papers, and thus you should not attempt to slip a paper in my mailbox or under my door. I will not accept paper copies! That said, you will know the deadlines on all assignments well before the deadline, and thus if you miss the deadline you will not receive credit.

Extra Credit: I generally do not offer or allow extra credit in my classes. That said, I may occasionally offer an extra credit opportunity. When this does happen, I will give the assignment in class and only those in class that day will be allowed to gain extra credit. My advice to each of you, however, is to do things right the first time because I am not likely to offer many (if any) opportunities to make up points on tests or exams.

Accommodations: If there is a student who has special needs because of any disability, please go to the Academic Success Center in North Walker Hall for information regarding registering as a student with a disability. You may also call (813) 257-5757 or email disability.services@ut.edu. Please feel free to discuss this issue with me, in private, if you need more information.

Email: If you wish to reach me via email, you should allow for at least 24 hours for a response. This time may be even longer during weekends or vacations, although sometimes I may respond sooner. Please keep in mind that email is not the best way to discuss course material at length, and thus you should come to my office hours or schedule an appointment if you need to go over course materials and / or grades. **For clarity, you should include the course designation (MEDSOC) in the subject line of any email you send me.**

Adverse Weather/Emergency Situations: In case of any adverse condition or situation that could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access www.ut.edu for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to ut.blackboard.com for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Syllabus Change Policy: Changes to the Syllabus Topics may vary a bit from the

schedule, below, depending upon the pacing of lectures and the interests of the class. However, students should keep up with the posted reading schedule unless I instruct you otherwise. I also reserve the right to modify this syllabus as conditions warrant. ***You are responsible for schedule or assignment changes whether or not you are in class when they are announced.*** All schedule, assignment, or other syllabus-related changes will be posted on our Blackboard site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment
January 21	Course Introduction	Syllabus
January 23	What is Medical Sociology?	No Required Reading
January 26	The Social Foundation of Health Disparities	Rosich, Katherine and Janet Hankin. 2010. "Executive Summary: What Do We Know? Key Findings from 50 Years of Medical Sociology." <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> , Extra Issue, 51:S1-S9.
January 28		Link, Bruce G. and Jo Phelan. 2010. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities." Pp. 3–17 in <i>Handbook of Medical Sociology, 6th Edition</i> , edited by C. Bird, P. Conrad, A. Fremont, and S. Timmermans. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
January 30	Social Patterning of and Health and Illness	No Required Reading
February 2		Burdette, Amy and Terrence Hill. 2008. "An examination of processes linking perceived neighborhood disorder and obesity." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> 67:38-46.
February 4		Taylor, Miles G. 2008. "Timing, Accumulation, and the Black/White Disability Gap in Later Life: A Test of Weathering." <i>Research on Aging: Special Issue on Race, SES, and Health</i> 30: 226-250.
February 6	Understanding Healthcare	Ross, Catherine and John Mirowsky. 2000. "Does Medical Insurance Contribute to Socioeconomic Differentials in Health?" <i>The Milbank Quarterly</i> 78:291–321.
February 9		Busfield, Joan. 2006. "Pills, Power, People: Sociological Understandings of the Pharmaceutical Industry." <i>Sociology</i> 40(2):297-314.
February 11		Rier, David A. 2000. "The missing voice of the critically ill: a medical sociologist's firstperson account." <i>Sociology of Health & Illness</i> 22(1):68-93.
February 13	Experiencing Healthcare	Cahill, Spencer and Robin Eggleston. "Managing Emotions in Public." <i>Social Psychology Quarterly</i> 57: 300-312.
February 16		Smith, Allen and Sherryl Kleinman. 1989. "Managing Emotions in Medical School." <i>Social Psychology Quarterly</i> , 52:6-69.
February 18	Organizing Health Care	No Required Reading
February 20		No Required Reading
February 23		No Required Reading

February 25		No Required Reading
February 27	No Class	No Class
March 2	Journal Discussion	No Required Reading
March 4	Journal Discussion	No Required Reading
March 6	Group Presentations	No Required Reading Group Projects Due by 11pm Sunday March 8th
March 8 – 15	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
March 16	Sexual and Gendered Health	Rieker, Patricia, Chloe Bird, and Martha Lang. 2013. "Understanding Gender and Health: Old Patterns, New Trends, and Future Directions." Pp. 52–74 in <i>Handbook of Medical Sociology, 6th Edition</i> , edited by C. Bird, P. Conrad, A. Fremont, and S. Timmermans. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
March 18		Chrisler, Joan and Paula Caplan. 2002. "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde: How PMS became a Cultural Phenomenon and Psychiatric Disorder." <i>Annual Review of Sex Research</i> 13:274-306.
March 20		Ueno, Koji. 2010. "Mental Health Differences Between Young Adults With and Without Same-Sex Contact: A Simultaneous Examination of Underlying Mechanisms." <i>Journal of Health and Social Behavior</i> 51(4):391-407.
March 23	Treating Sex and Gender	"The Socio-Medical Construction of Transsexualism: An Interpretation and Critique." by Dwight Billings and Thomas Urban.
March 25	No Class	No Class
March 27	No Class	No Class
March 30		"'But we have to do Something': Surgical Correction of Atypical Genitalia." by Katrina Roen.
April 1	Sexual and Gendered Experiences	"Queering the Birthing Space: Phenomenological Interpretations of the Relationships between Lesbian Couples and Perinatal Nurses in the Context of Birthing Care." by Lisa Goldberg, Ami Harbin, and Sue Campbell
April 3		Akers, Aletha Y., Melvin R. Muhammad, and Giselle Corbie-Smith. 2011. "'When you got nothing to do, you do somebody': A community's perceptions of neighborhood effects on adolescent sexual behaviors." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> 72:91-99.
April 6		"Not Just Bodies - Strategies for Desexualizing the Physical Examination of Patients." by Patti. A. Giuffre and Christine L. Williams.
April 8		Dillaway, Heather E. 2005. "Menopause is the 'Good Old': Women's Thoughts About

		Reproductive Aging.” <i>Gender & Society</i> 19: 398-417.
April 10	Contraception	“The Condom – why more people don’t put it on.” by Jan Browne and Victor Minichiello.
April 13		“(Mis) Understanding Abortion Regret” by Katrina Kimport.
April 15	Sexually Transmitted Diseases	“But Nice Girls Don't Get It’: Women, Symbolic Capital, and the Social Construction of AIDS.” by Kathleen A. Grove, Donald P. Kelly, and Judith Liu.
April 17		“Redefining Sex and Intimacy: The Sexual Self-images, Outlooks, and Relationships of Gay Men Living with HIV/AIDS.” by Kent Sandstrom
April 20	Gendered and Sexual Health Industries	Tiefer, Lenore. 2006. “The Viagra Phenomenon.” <i>Sexualities</i> 9:273-294.
April 22		No Required Reading
April 24		No Required Reading
April 27	Reproductive Technologies	“‘Everybody’s Got a Dad...’. Issues for Lesbian Families in the Management of Donor Insemination.” By Erica Haines and Kate Weiner
April 29		“‘Dealing with sperm’: Comparing Lesbians’ Clinical and Non-clinical Donor Conception Processes.” by Petra Nordqvist
May 1	Special Topics in Medical Sociology	No Required Reading Final Review Essay due by 11pm on Sunday May 3rd
May 4	Special Topics in Medical Sociology	No Required Reading
Wednesday May 6 th 1:30 – 3:30	Final Class Meeting Journal Discussion	No Required Reading Journal Due in Class Journal Report Due by 11pm