

## Health Policy 780 – Sociology of Health & Medicine

### Fall 2008 Syllabus

#### Instructor:

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#### Course Description:

This class explores the social context of health, illness and the health care system in American society. Students will gain the ability to assess and analyze the relationships between the structure of society, the delivery of health, and the pursuit of health and will have the opportunity to focus on particular areas of interest to them (e.g., inequality in health care, women's health issues, chronic illness, medical technology).

The primary purpose of this course is to provide an overview of medical sociology and its pertinence to health policy. In doing so, this course introduces major topics in this subfield and provides the opportunity to develop knowledge on a particular topic. As part of this, the class will be held in a seminar format that will encourage interaction, both written and oral, between class participants. As a seminar is only as lively as its participants make it, the expectation will be that participants will all do the reading faithfully and come to class prepared to contribute.

#### Course Objectives:

After this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Understand and apply various sociological approaches to medicine and health care;
- 2) Collaborate with other course members and instructor in critical assessments of the course materials;
- 3) Use central themes introduced in the course to organize related research;
- 4) Write an in-depth review of the literature (8-10 pages) addressing a topic of interest related to medicine, sociology and health policy.

#### Course Grading:

The following criteria will be used to determine your final grade:

- Assignments related to class readings – 30%
- Preparation and Class Participation – 30%
- Final paper (10-12 pps) – 40%

#### Course Readings:

Most of the readings for the course are available on Angel. Angel (<http://angel.usp.edu>) is a web based classroom aide that will facilitate activities for this class, and the readings will be either in .pdf or .rtf format (the readings will also be available from the instructor on CD-ROM upon request). In addition, there are several books that will be read for this course, all of which should be widely available online and in local bookstores. These books are:

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization & Its Discontents* (also posted in its entirety on Angel)  
Peter Conrad, *The Medicalization of Society*  
Elizabeth Pisani, *The Wisdom of Whores*

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is at the center of the educational experience at USP. Students are therefore expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and not engage in nor tolerate academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, fabrication, cheating or plagiarism. Any violation of academic integrity will be investigated and, where warranted, the student will receive appropriate sanctions through the University's Student Conduct Process. Please familiarize yourself with the current USP Student Handbook. In particular, adherence to the Student Conduct Policy and Academic Integrity Policy will help to ensure that your learning and living experiences are founded on integrity.

## Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Statement

USP supports the educational endeavors of all students, including students with disabilities. ADA defines a disability as a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

If you believe that you have a disability that September impact your ability to fulfill your course or degree requirements, and you would like more information on applying for an accommodation under ADA, please contact the Assistant Dean of Students who serves as the ADA Coordinator at 215-596-8980.

## Course Calendar

This calendar provides a schedule for the course. Dates are subject to revision as needed.

### Week #1: August 28 – Introduction

Readings: Paul Edwards, *How to Read a Book*

### Week #2: September 4 – The Individual and Society

Readings: C. Wright Mills, chapter 1 of *The Sociological Imagination*  
Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Assignment #1 Due: 2-3 pages - summarize of each of the readings and compare/contrast the two.

### Week #3: September 11 - Medical Errors and Malpractice

Readings: Institute of Medicine, *To Err is Human* – Summary  
(<http://www.iom.edu/Object.File/Master/4/117/ToErr-8pager.pdf>)  
Charles Bosk, “Error, Rank & Responsibility” (chapter 2 of *Forgive & Remember*)  
Atul Gawande, “The Malpractice Mess”  
(<http://www.leighbureau.com/speakers/agawande/essays/malpractice.pdf>)  
Danielle Ofri, “M & M” (chapter 13 of *Singular Intimacies*)

Assignment #2 Due: to be announced

### Week #4: September 18 – The Sick Role

Readings: Talcott Parsons – The Sick Role  
William Cockerham – The Sick Role

Assignment #3 Due: Analyzing the Sick Role (handout to be distributed)

### Week #5: September 25 - Professions

Readings: Elliot Freidson, chapters 15 and 16 from *The Profession of Medicine*  
Herbert Swick, “Toward a Normative View of Medical Professionalism”  
Anton Chekhov, “Darkness”

Assignment #4 Due: Presentation on a health care profession (handout to be distributed)

### Week #6: October 2 – Mental Illness & Deinstitutionalization

Readings: David Rothman, “The New World of the Asylum”  
Erving Goffman, “Asylums”  
Christopher Jencks, “Emptying the Back Wards”

Assignment #5 Due: Deinstitutionalization summary (handout to be distributed)

Week #7: October 9 - Medicalization

Readings: Peter Conrad, *The Medicalization of Society*  
Assignment #6 Due: Writing on a medicalization topic (handout to be distributed)

Week #8: October 16 - Social Causes and Disease

Readings: Bruce Link & Jo Phelan, "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease"  
Howard Waitzkin, "The Social Origins of Illness: A Neglected History."  
Friedrich Engels, "The Results of Industrialization"  
Assignment #7 Due: To be announced

Week #9: October 23 – Stigma

Readings: Erving Goffman, chapter 1 of *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*  
Bruce Link & Jo Phelan, "Conceptualizing Stigma"  
Stephen Taylor, "You're Not a Retard, You're Just Wise"  
Assignment #8 Due: To be announced

Week #10: October 30 – Evidence Based Medicine

Readings: Mulrow & Lohr, "Proof and Policy from Medical Research Evidence"  
Timmermans & Angell, "Evidence Based Medicine, Clinical Uncertainty, and Learning to Doctor"  
Helen Lambert, "Accounting for EBM: Notions of Evidence in Medicine"  
Eileen Gambrill, "Evidence Based Practice: Sea Change or Emperor's New Clothes?"  
Term Paper Assignment: One-page draft overview of your seminar paper (bring enough copies for classmates).

Week #11: November 6 – Cultural Dimensions of Disease

Readings: Ian Hacking, "Madness: Biological or Constructed?"  
Carl Elliott, "A New Way to Be Mad"  
Joan Brumberg, "From Psychiatric Syndrome to Communicable Disease: The Case of Anorexia Nervosa"  
Maggie Jones, "Shutting Themselves In"  
John Wilmoth. *Citation Guide for Demography 126*. (optional)  
Term Paper Assignment: Sample of bibliographic references for your seminar paper (5+ entries).

Week #12: Social Responses to Disease

Readings: Paul Farmer, "Health, Healing and Social Justice"  
Bourgois, Lettiere & Quesada, "Social Misery and the Sanctions of Substance Abuse"  
Laurie Abraham, "One Hospitals Story: How Treating the Poor is Bad for Business"  
No assignment due (work on seminar paper)

Week #13: November 20 – Book Review

Reading: Elizabeth Pisani, *The Wisdom of Whores*  
Seminar paper drafts due

Week #14: November 27 – Thanksgiving (no class)

Week #15: December 4 - Paper presentations and review

Term Paper Assignment: Review of classmates seminar papers

Week #16: December 11 (finals week December 8-12)

Final seminar papers due in lieu of final exam by 5pm (**no class**)