



## SOC307: Sociology of Health Fall 2024

Friday 1:00-3:59pm  
Nicolls Building (NIC) 002

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Office hours: By appointment

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### Official course description

This course seeks to examine the place of health and illness in society, the relationship between bio-medical problems and the social, political and economic realities that help shape them. Topics will include poverty and health, mental illness, aging, death and dying, professionalism, health service organization, inequalities in health service access and use, recent policies and difficulties with health care reform.

### Course policies

**Presence in class:** Students are expected to be seated and ready for lecture on time. I reserve the right to admit or not students who come in after the beginning of class or after we are back from break. If you miss a lecture, you are responsible for catching up on the materials. If you know in advance that you will miss a lecture or that you will be late, please let me know as soon as possible.

**Respect:** Health is intimate and personal. With that in mind, I require that everyone pays special attention to how they formulate and express their views in class. While everyone is entitled to their own opinion, views should be formulated with the utmost respect for the experience and opinion of others. Being respectful in the classroom also includes general class etiquette, like raising your hand before speaking, avoiding packing your things before the class is over, chatting while your colleagues are speaking, etc. Everyone deserves a positive experience in this course.

**Emails:** When sending me emails, please include "SOC 307" and your name in the email object. I reserve the right not to answer to your email if you ask about something that is clearly stated in the syllabus. The course policy on respect (see previous rubric) obviously also applies to emails. I usually respond to my emails within 48 hours.

**Accommodations:** I will do my very best to accommodate students who need it in this course. If you need any type of accommodation (health condition, disability, religious holiday, etc.), please let me know as early as possible.

**Grade appeals:** As an instructor, I take the marking of assignments seriously and strive to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Despite this, I still make mistakes. If you would like to appeal your grade, please follow these procedures:

- a) If the error deals with mathematical calculations of the grade, send me an email.
- b) For substantive appeals, you must wait at least 24 hours after having received your grade before contacting me. When that delay is passed, you may write me an email within a week detailing why you believe your grade should be modified. If I choose to regrade your assignment, note that your grade can go up, down, or stay the same.

**Electronic devices:** Research has shown that the use of electronic devices in class, including when taking notes on laptops, reduces comprehension and retention for the user and other students. Here are two resources to support this claim:

Mueller, Pam A., and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking." *Psychological Science* 25(6):1159–68.

Hall, Amanda C. G., Tara T. Lineweaver, Eileen E. Hogan, and Sean W. O'Brien. 2020. "On or off Task: The Negative Influence of Laptops on Neighboring Students' Learning Depends on How They Are Used." *Computers & Education* 153:103901.

Given this, I advise against using an electronic device to take notes in class. With that said, there will be plenty of opportunities in class for you to make a productive use of those tools!

**Language of instruction:** In accordance with the University's policy on Language of instruction, students have the option to submit individual written work in English or French.

**Academic misconduct:** Bishop's University values academic integrity and has zero tolerance towards academic misconduct. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating and plagiarism under the University Regulations (see Academic Calendar / Academic Integrity).

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, including but not limited to the following, is prohibited:

- Using another's work without acknowledgement
- Copying material without quotation marks
- Paraphrasing too closely the exact words of the originating author
- Submitting as one's own work written in whole or in part by another individual
- Submitting in whole or in part work for which the student has received credit in another course unless the permission of the instructor has been obtained
- Submitting any statement of fact known to be false or providing a fabricated reference to a source.

Plagiarism will be addressed in accordance with the procedures for academic integrity.

**Use of AI:** According to Bishop's University's policies on Academic Integrity, it is prohibited for students to submit any work that is not entirely their own creation. This includes submissions that are either entirely or in part generated by AI tools. The use of

AI for assignments will be regarded as a breach of academic honesty and will be addressed in accordance with the procedures for academic integrity.

A good rule of thumb: if you wouldn't ask a class colleague to do it for you, then you shouldn't ask ChatGPT to do it.

## Evaluations

Evaluation	Worth	Due date
Case study report I	20%	October 7 <sup>th</sup>
Case study report II	20%	November 11 <sup>th</sup>
Case report III	20%	December 9 <sup>th</sup>
Final exam	40%	December 9 <sup>th</sup> -16 <sup>th</sup> (TBD)

**Case study reports:** At the end of each section of the course, we will hold a case study session. In groups of around 5 students, you will discuss the case study prompts posted on Moodle using all course materials from the section. You will produce a written summary of your discussions and will be graded as a group for this assignment.

Note that the due date for assignments is set a few days after our in-class session. This hopefully leaves you time to organize and polish your work. Absence to the in-class part of this assignment will result in a 0 grade. Lack of participation in group discussions may result in deducted points.

**Final exam:** The final exam will be held during the exam period (December 9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>) and will last 3 hours. All course materials, i.e., contents of lectures and assigned readings, may be subject to examination.

## Course schedule and readings

- Readings should be completed before lectures. Lectures will complement and not simply restate what is included in the readings.
- I advise reading in the suggested order (see below).
- Readings that are posted on Moodle are in the “Readings” file in the general rubric.
- Readings that are *not* posted on Moodle can be retrieved on Sofia through the [Bishop online library](#).

### Week 1 (September 6<sup>th</sup>) – Introduction

Presentation of the course and key concepts in the sociology of health

## SECTION I. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HEALTH

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### **Week 2 (September 13<sup>th</sup>) – Medical knowledge and medicalization**

- Conrad, Peter, and Joseph W. Schneider. 1992. "Deviance, Definitions, and the Medical Profession," Pp. 1–16 in *Deviance and Medicalization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. On Moodle.
- Conrad, Peter. 2005. "The Shifting Engines of Medicalization." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 46(1): 3–14.
- Best, Rachel Kahn, and Alina Arseniev-Koehler. 2023. "The Stigma of Diseases: Unequal Burden, Uneven Decline." *American Sociological Review* 88(5): 938–969.

***September 17<sup>th</sup>: Add/drop deadline***

### **Week 3 (September 20<sup>th</sup>) – Disease entities**

- Horwitz, Allan V. 2011. "Creating an Age of Depression: The Social Construction and Consequences of the Major Depression Diagnosis." *Society and Mental Health* 1(1): 41–54.
- Mulder, Roger, and Peter Tyrer. 2023. "Borderline Personality Disorder: A Spurious Condition Unsupported by Science That Should Be Abandoned." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 116(4): 148–150.
- Smith, R. Tyson, and Owen Whooley. 2015. "Dropping the Disorder in PTSD." *Contexts* 14(4): 38–43.

### **Week 4 (September 27<sup>th</sup>) – Patients and physicians**

- Oh Nelson, Hyeyoung. 2021. "Doctor–Patient relationship." Pp. 495–515 in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*, edited by W. C. Cockerham. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell. On Moodle.
- Tan, Catherine D. 2018. "‘I’m a Normal Autistic Person, Not an Abnormal Neurotypical’: Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis as Biographical Illumination." *Social Science & Medicine* 197: 161–167.
- Timmermans, Stefan, and Hyeyoung Oh. 2010. "The Continued Social Transformation of the Medical Profession." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(1\_suppl): S94–106.

### **Week 5 (October 4<sup>th</sup>) – CASE STUDY I: Fat acceptance and the “obesity epidemic”**

- Saguy, Abigail C., and Kevin Riley. 2005. "Weighing Both Sides: Morality, Mortality, and Framing Contests over Obesity." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 30(5): 869–921.
- Jutel, Annemarie. 2006. "The Emergence of Overweight as a Disease Entity: Measuring up Normality." *Social Science & Medicine* 63: 2268–2276.
- "The Body Mass Index," *Maintenance Phase*. [Podcast available on all platforms](#).

## SECTION II. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

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### **Week 6 (October 11<sup>th</sup>) – Fundamental causes of health inequalities and the social gradient in health**

- Clouston, Sean A. P., and Bruce G. Link. 2021. "A Retrospective on Fundamental Cause Theory: State of the Literature and Goals for the Future." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47: 131–156.
- Blane, David. 2006. "The Life Course, the Social Gradient, and Health." Pp. 54–77 in *Social Determinants of Health*, edited by M. Marmot and R. G. Wilkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [\*On Moodle\*](#).
- Bowleg, Lisa. 2012. "The Problem with the Phrase Women and Minorities: Intersectionality—an Important Theoretical Framework for Public Health." *American Journal of Public Health* 102(7): 1267–1273.

### **Week 7 (October 18<sup>th</sup>) – Individual behavior, lifestyles and social capital**

- Kawachi, Ichiro and Lisa F. Berkman. 2014. "Social Capital, Social Cohesion, and Health," Pp. 290–319 in *Social Epidemiology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press. [\*On Moodle\*](#).
- Cockerham, William C. 2021. "Health Lifestyles. Bringing Structure Back," Pp. 150–170 in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*. Newark, UK: John Wiley & Sons. [\*On Moodle\*](#).

### **Week 8 (October 25<sup>th</sup>) – Fall Reading Week (no class)**

### **Week 9 (November 1<sup>st</sup>) – Physical and work environments (\*Online\*)**

- Stafford, Mai, and Mark McCarthy. 2006. "Neighbourhoods, Housing, and Health." Pp. 297–318 in *Social Determinants of Health*, edited by M. Marmot and R. G. Wilkinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [\*On Moodle\*](#).
- Berkman, Lisa F., Ichiro Kawachi and Töres Theorell. 2014. "Working Conditions and Health," Pp. 153–181 in *Social Epidemiology* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press. [\*On Moodle\*](#).

### **Week 10 (November 8<sup>th</sup>) – CASE STUDY II: Stress and mental health**

- Thoits, Peggy A. 2010. "Stress and Health: Major Findings and Policy Implications." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51(1\_suppl): S41–53.
- Gariépy, Geneviève, Helena Honkaniemi, and Amélie Quesnel-Vallée. 2016. "Social Support and Resilience to Depression over the Life Course: A Systematic Review of Current Findings and Future Research Directions." *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 209: 284–293.
- Alang, Sirry M. 2016. "Black Folk Don't Get No Severe Depression': Meanings and Expressions of Depression in a Predominantly Black Urban Neighborhood in Midwestern United States." *Social Science & Medicine* 157: 1–8.

### SECTION III. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH

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#### **Week 11 (November 15<sup>th</sup>) – Prevention**

- Armstrong, David. 2012. "Screening: Mapping Medicine's Temporal Spaces." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 34(2):177–193.
- Lupton, Deborah. 1995. "Introduction," Pp. 1–15 in *The Imperative of Health. Public Health and the Regulated Body*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE. *On Moodle*.

#### **Week 12 (November 22<sup>nd</sup>) – Care**

- Quesnel-Vallée, Amélie, Jaunathan Bilodeau, and Kaitlin Conway. 2021. "Social Policies and Health Inequalities." Pp. 322–45 in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*, edited by W. C. Cockerham. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell. *On Moodle*.
- Beckfield, Jason, Sigrun Olafsdottir, and Benjamin Sosnaud. 2013. "Healthcare Systems in Comparative Perspective: Classification, Convergence, Institutions, Inequalities, and Five Missed Turns." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39:127–146.

#### **Week 13 (November 29<sup>th</sup>) – Mobilizations**

- Armstrong, Elizabeth M., Daniel Carpenter, and Marie Hojnacki. 2006. "Whose Deaths Matter? Mortality, Advocacy, and Attention to Disease in the Mass Media." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 31(4): 729–772.
- Epstein, Steven. 2008. "Patient Groups and Health Movements." Pp. 499–539 in *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. *On Moodle*.

#### **Week 14 (December 6<sup>th</sup>) – CASE STUDY III: The Opioid Crisis**

- Thombs, Ryan P., Dennis L. Thombs, Andrew K. Jorgenson, and Taylor Harris Braswell. 2020. "What Is Driving the Drug Overdose Epidemic in the United States?" *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 61(3): 275–289.
- King, Lawrence, Gábor Scheiring, and Elias Nosrati. 2022. "Deaths of Despair in Comparative Perspective." *Annual Review of Sociology* 48: 299–317.
- Health Canada. 2024. Opioid- and Stimulant-related Harms in Canada. <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/substance-related-harms/opioids-stimulants/maps.html>. *Browse key findings, maps and graphs*.
- Tierney, Allison. How the Opioid Crisis Is Different in Small Communities, February 12, 2018, Vice, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/how-the-opioid-crisis-is-different-in-small-communities-canada/>.
- Browne, Rachel. Sault Ste. Marie residents are mobilizing against the city's opioid crisis, February 13, 2018, Vice, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/sault-ste-marie-residents-are-mobilizing-against-the-citys-opioid-crisis/>.

***December 9<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>: In-person final exam (date TBD)***