DEPARTMENT: Sociology & Social Work

COURSE PREFIX: SOC COURSE NUMBER:**347** CREDIT HOURS: 3

1. TITLE:

Sociology of Mental Health & Illness

Instructor: Dr. Xiaozhao Yousef Yang

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITE(S):

**Is mental health problems a medical condition or a behavioral disorder? Why do mentally ill people seem to be a menace (at least, why are they so weird)? Why do so many of us differ on our opinions on what constitute mental health? Where do these people all come from? How come you may have never personally encountered any mental illness patient? Sign up this course and let’s do the readings together, you will learn the cutting-edge research in the field of sociology of mental health with me.**

*Poor mental health and mental illness are often viewed as biological or genetic flaws. Sociological studies of mental illnesses, however, clearly laid out the logics that mental illness is socially constructed, and that population mental health is profoundly shaped by its corresponding social conditions. In this course, we will hold still to “sociological imperialism” and explore the sociological understanding of mental health and illness. We will focus on a range of topics, including (but not limited to): The medicalization of deviant behavior; and how the definition of mental illness changes across time and place; How sociologists think about, define, and measure mental health in research; The social determinants of stress and mental health; How inequalities in resources, power, and status “get under the skin” and influence the prevalence of mental health and well-being; Societal responses to the mentally ill and the stigma of mental illness; Innovative new research that brings together perspectives from multiple disciplines (sociology, psychology, epidemiology, public health, etc.)*

Student Discretion of Professional Assistance: I am NOT a professional psychotherapist or certified psychiatrist. DO NOT consult me about personal mental health conditions. The content of this class is academic in nature and cannot be used to serve students in need of expert mental health help. If you suspect you may be a victim of a degrading mental health condition, please seek SYSU’s professional service personnel immediately. Students are responsible for their own discretion in choosing professional medical services.

1. TEXT(S) AND RESOURCES:

All readings are included in the course packet shared via link on OneDrive. There is no required textbook to purchase, but the readings specified in the syllabus are REQUIRED content unless otherwise specified. Not all readings in the course packet are required readings, many are left in the folder since they were used in other courses before and may help you more in case of optional interest. Use DeepL.com to translate into Chinese if reading in English is taunting, but some originality and meanings may be lost in translation.

1. EVALUATION AND GRADING PROCEDURES:

Reading questions 30%, student-led seminar 25%, in-class writing prompt 20%, final essay (2500 words Max) 25%, extra credit 5% (active participation, subjectively evaluated by the instructor)

In-Class Writing Prompts/Activities: Most classes will include a brief (5-10 minute) writing prompt on the readings for the day OR a group writing prompt/activity. For instance, at any random point of the class, I may provide you with a prompt (perhaps a quote from a reading, or a topic) and you will need to reflect on that prompt based on the readings. You can only get credit for the writing prompts/activities if you are present on the day of class. If you are absent, you are not allowed to turn in the prompts via email.

Weekly Reading Questions: students will be expected to submit a brief response to the readings (300 words approximately) to the Rain Class forum BEFORE each week’s class session. The response should normally consist of two parts: 1, personal summary of the articles assigned for the week; 2, questions you have for the article or about the topic addressed in that week.

*After the midterm at the 10th week, I will publish a midterm grade for each of the students reflecting her/his concurrent total grade from the writing prompts and weekly reading questions on a 100 percentile.*

Student-led Discussion/Lecture (45 mins): students are divided into self initiated groups, each group will be responsible for leading a seminar discussion or lecture on the topic of their choice, for once during the semester. For the student-led seminar, each group choose one type of mental disorders from the DSM-V list of mental disorders. You may choose one broad category (bold and underscored) or a specific disorder. These criteria will be used in assessing the quality of your session:

1) introduction of the disorder in details about its physiological marks (if there is any), psychiatric traits, social/environmental impact. (25%)

2) the etiology of the disorder (why it happens), must involve some aspects of social/environmental etiology. (25%)

3) the application of theories learned in this class to understanding this disorder. (25%)

4) your engagement with the audience (25%)

Final Essay: should be structured like the academic journal articles we read in this class, but much shorter: 1) a short introduction to what mental health phenomenon do you want to study here and why it is important; 2) a literature review where you summarize prior research, identify the gap in the literature; 3) what theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence from this class have advanced your understanding of this mental health issue. 3000-4000/3-4

Extra credit: evaluated subjectively on the primary basis of active participation in the class. It means you must be an active participant in the class. This includes: 1) contributing to class discussion; 2) actively contributing to small group exercises. if you come into class, sit quietly every day, and do not contribute to class discussion you will not get any extra credit. Please note that this grade is separate from your writing prompt/activity grades. This part will be arbitrarily graded based on my impression of your participatory performance in the class, but I will be fair.

1. General content

*The scheduled content and reading materials may subject to future changes along the semester.*

Introduction

Overview of the field

Horwitz, Allan. 2010. “An Overview of Sociological Perspectives on the Definitions, Causes, and Responses to Mental Health and Illness.” Pp. 6-19 in A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health, edited by T.L. Schied and T.N. Brown. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

What is Mental Illness

Wakefield, J.C. (1992). The concept of mental disorder: On the boundary between biological facts and social values. American Psychologist, 47, 373-388

Bergner, R. M. (1997). What is psychopathology? And so what? Clinical Psychology: Science and

practice, 4, 235-271

Etiology

Monroe, S.M., & Simons, A.D. (1991). Diathesis-stress theories in the context of life stress research:

Implications for the depressive disorders. Psychological Bulletin, 110, 406-425.

Turkheimer, E. (2000). Three laws of behavior genetics and what they mean. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9, 160-164.

Classification

Bashfield, R., Keeley, J.W., & Burgess, D.R. (2009). Classification. In P. Blaney, & T. Millon (Eds.),

Oxford Textbook of Psychopathology (pp 35-57). New York: Oxford University Press.

measuring mental illness

Mirowsky, John and Catherine Ross. 2002. “Measurement for a Human Science.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 43:152-170

Wakefield, Jerome C. and Mark F. Schmitz. 2010. “The Measurement of Mental Disorder.” Pp. 20-45 in A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Constructionism:

Szaz, Thomas. 1960. “The Myth of Mental Illness” American Psychologist 15:113-118.

What’s a mental disorder? Even experts can’t agree. <http://www.npr.org/2010/12/29/132407384/whats-a-mental-disorder-even-experts-cant-agree>

Causation and selection

Dohrenwend, Bruce P. et al. 1992. “Socioeconomic Status and Psychiatric Disorders: The Causation-Selection Issue.” Science 255:946-952.

Costello, E. Jane, Scott N Compton, Gordon Keeler, and Adrian Angold. 2003. “Relationships Between Poverty and Psychopathology.” Journal of the American Medical Association 290:2023-2029.

Mental health policies

Rosenhan, D. “On Being Sane in Insane Places”. Science. 1973. 179 (4070)

Gionfriddo, Paul. 2012. “How I Helped Create a Flawed Mental Health System That’s Failed Millions— And My Son.” Health Affairs 31:2138-2142.

Stuckler, David and Sanjay Basu. 2013. Excerpts from The Body Economic: Why Austerity Kills: Recessions, Budget Battles, and the Politics of Life and Death. Pp. ix-xxi and 109-121. New York: Basic Books.

stress process

Pearlin, Leonard I. 1989. “The Sociological Study of Stress.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 30:241-256. Turner, R. Jay and Donald A. Lloyd. 1999. “The Stress Process and the Social Distribution of Depression.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 40:374-404.

stratification and social class

Link, Bruce and Jo Phelan. 1995. “Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 35:80-94.

Prins, Seth J., Lisa M. Bates, Katherine M. Keyes and Carles Muntaner. 2015. "Anxious? Depressed? You Might Be Suffering from Capitalism: Contradictory Class Locations and the Prevalence of Depression and Anxiety in the USA." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 37(8):1352-72

stratification and social class Part ii

Schieman, S., Whitestone, Y. K., & Van Gundy, K. (2006). The nature of work and the stress of higher status. Journal of health and social behavior, 47(3), 242-257.

Glavin, P., & Young, M. (2017). Insecure People in Insecure Places. Journal of Health and Social Behavior

race and mental health

Fanon, Franz. 1956. *Black Skin, White Masks.* (Introduction, Chapter 6)

Metzl, Jonathan M. 2009. The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease (Preface-Chapter 2) Boston: Beacon Press

Brown, Tony N. 2003. “Critical Race Theory Speaks to the Sociology of Mental Health: Mental Health Problems Produced by Racial Stratification.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 44:292-301.

gender and mental health

Perkin Gilman: the Yellow Wallpaper https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1952/1952-h/1952-h.htm. 杨译（不推荐）：https://wenku.baidu.com/view/d7d3152a58fafab068dc0214.html

Rosenfeld, Sarah and Dawne Mouzon. 2013. “Gender and Mental Health.” Pp. 277-298 in Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health, edited by C.S. Aneshensel, J.C. Phelan, and A. Bierman. New York: Springer

Hill, Terrence D. and Belinda L Needham. 2013. “Rethinking Gender and Mental Health: A Critical Analysis of Three Propositions.” Social Science & Medicine 92:83-91.

gender and mental health Part ii

Rawlings, Edna I and Dianne K. Carter. 1977. “The Intractable Female Patient” Pp. 77-86 in Psychotherapy for Women: Treatment Toward Equality. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas.

Pudrovska, Tetyana and Amelia Karraker. 2014. “Gender, Job Authority, and Depression.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 44:424-441

immigrant mental health

Portes, A., & Zhou, M. (1993). The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants. Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 530, 74-96.

X.Y. Yang, F Yang (2017): Acculturation versus cultural retention: the interactive impact of acculturation and co-ethnic ties on substance use among Chinese students in the U.S. Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health DOI: 10.1007/s10903-017-0598-0

Stigma

Pescosolido, Bernice. 2013. “The Public Stigma of Mental Illness: What Do We Think; What Do We Know; What Can We Prove?” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 54:1-21.

Link, Bruce G, Francis T Cullen, James Frank, and John F. Wozniak. 1987. “The Social Rejection of Former Mental Patients: Understanding Why Labels Matter.” The American Journal of Sociology 92:1461-1500.

1. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students are expected to adhere to the MSU Attendance Policy outlined in the current *MSU Bulletin*.

1. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

Murray State University takes seriously its moral and educational obligation to maintain high standards of academic honesty and ethical behavior. Instructors are expected to evaluate students’ academic achievements accurately, as well as ascertain that work submitted by students is authentic and the result of their own efforts, and consistent with established academic standards. Students are obligated to respect and abide by the basic standards of personal and professional integrity.

**Violations of Academic Honesty include:**

**Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized information such as books, notes, study aids, or other electronic, online, or digital devices in any academic exercise; as well as unauthorized com­munication of information by any means to or from others during any academic exercise.

**Fabrication and Falsification** - Intentional alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves changing information whereas fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information.

**Multiple Submission** - The submission of substantial portions of the same academic work, including oral reports, for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor.

**Plagiarism** - Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, creative work, or data of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise, without due and proper acknowledgement.

Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to the following:

1) Requiring the student(s) to repeat the exercise or do additional related exercise(s).

2) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) on the particular exercise(s) involved.

3) Lowering the grade or failing the student(s) in the course.

**If the disciplinary action results in the awarding of a grade of *E* in the course, the student(s) may not drop the course.**

1. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Policy Statement

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, or disability in employment, admissions, or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities. For more information contact the Executive Director of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Access/ Murray State University Title IX Coordinator, Murray State University, 103 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071 Telephone: (270) 809-3155 Fax: (270) 809-6887; TDD: (270) 809-3361; Email: [msu.titleix@murraystate.edu](mailto:msu.titleix@murraystate.edu)

Students with Disabilities

Students requiring special assistance due to a disability should visit the Office of Student Disability Services immediately for assistance with accommodations. For more information, students should contact the Office of Student Disability Services, 423 Wells Hall, Murray, KY 42071. 270-809-2018 (voice) 270-809-5889(TDD).