

Sociology 230: Social Aspects of Health & Illness
Spring 2015

Elizer Hall 157
M/W/F – 10:45-11:50am

Instructor: Alexandra Vinson

Email: alex.vinson@emory.edu

Office hours: Fridays 9am-10am and 12pm-1pm, or by appointment

Office location: Modular Unit 1, Room 4

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will cover classic topics in medical sociology, such as changing medical professional dynamics, medicalization, and health social movements. You will also learn about major topics in public health, such as health disparities, dieting and obesity. We will use sociological perspectives to examine certain diseases and conditions, such as breast cancer, erectile dysfunction, and HIV/AIDS. The course will be a mix of lecture and discussion, and you will be evaluated on the basis of four written exams and in-class participation, including small group work and informal presentations.

COURSE MATERIALS

All assigned readings can be found on the Soc 230 Course Reserves site.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

It is important to be in class because lecture expands upon, rather than replaces, assigned readings. It is also your responsibility as a member of this class to show up and contribute what you know in order to enrich our class discussion. In light of the importance of your presence, each absence above three will reduce your total score by one point. Please arrive on time and ready to learn.

Academic Integrity

The Oxford College Honor Code and Conduct Code are in full effect for every aspect of Soc 230. Each time you sign your name to any required work, including the attendance sheet, you are pledging yourself to the Honor Code. Signing another student's name on any attendance sheet is a violation of the Honor Code.

Accessibility & Accommodations

Please send me an email or come to my office hours before the Add/Drop/Swap period ends if you need assistance arranging accommodations through the Office of Disability Services or if you would like to discuss accessibility issues as they relate to your performance in this course.

GRADING POLICY

Your grade in this course will be based on the sum of four test scores (20pts each), in-class participation (10 pts), and in-class work/homework (10 pts). The exams will be composed of short answer and essay questions. Full participation credit will be given to students who attend every class session, have done the reading, participate actively in discussion and small group work, and make comments that contribute to the quality of the discussion. Class work and homework may include short presentations on readings or film worksheets; these will be discussed in advance. Extensions and late assignments will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
B-	80-82	F	below 60

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1: FOUNDATIONS

Jan 14—Introduction to Course
Jan 16—Brief History of American Medicine
Jan 19—NO CLASS
Jan 21—Allied Health Professions
Jan 23—Medical-Industrial Complex
Jan 25—Macrosocial Forces & Health
Jan 28—The Epidemiological Transition

COURSE READINGS (Full citations below)

During this unit we will read selections from Paul Starr's (1982) *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*

Armelagos, Brown & Turner (2005)

Unit 2: THE DOCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Jan 30—The Changing Profession
Feb 2—Training Physicians
Feb 4—Training Physicians
Feb 6—Technology & Medical Work

Hafferty (1988)

Buchbinder & Timmermans (2011)

Feb 9—TEST #1

Unit 3: THE PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Feb 11—Social vs. Medical Model of Disease
Feb 13—Medicalization
Feb 16—Disability
Feb 18—Mental Health & Professional Discourses
Feb 20—Illness Experience
Feb 23—Health Social Movements
Feb 25—Death & Dying

Conrad (1985)

Loe (2004)

Siebers (1998)

Gowan (2010)

Klawiter (2004)

Feb 27—TEST #2

Unit 4: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

Mar 2—Gender & Sex
Mar 4—Race
Mar 6—Tuskegee

Martin (1991)

Shaban (2014)

Gamble (1997)

Unit 5: SOCIAL FORCES & HEALTH

Mar 16—Introduction to Unit 5/Wrap up Unit 4

Mar 18—Health Disparities

Mar 20—Health Disparities

Farmer (1999)

Mar 23—Film viewing: “Unnatural Causes”

Mar 25—Environments & Health

Braun & Kisting (2006)

Mar 27—NO CLASS

Mar 30—Obesity

Apr 1—Bodily Diversity

Apr 3—TEST #3

Unit 6: HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS

Apr 6—Quality, Cost & Access

Apr 8—The American “Patchwork” System

Apr 10—Insurance

Quadagno (2004)

Apr 13—20th Century U.S. Healthcare Reform

Apr 15—The Affordable Care Act

Pescosolido & Boyer (2001)

Apr 17—The Affordable Care Act

Apr 20—Film Viewing: “Sick Around the World”

Apr 22—Comparative Health Care Policy

Apr 24—Complementary & Alternative Medicine

Apr 27—TEST #4

ASSIGNMENTS

In this course you will write two short papers, you will complete one take home assignment on the material from Unit 4, and you will complete a small project and in-class presentation on the health care system of a country of your choice. All assignments will be discussed in class and you will receive written instructions with specific guidelines. **See the end of this syllabus for a sample assignment.**

READING LIST (all readings are available on the Course Reserves website)

Armelagos, George, Peter Brown & Bethany Turner (2005). “Evolutionary, historical and political economic perspectives on health and disease.” *Social Science and Medicine*, 61:755-765.

Braun, Lundy & Sophia Kisting (2006). “Asbestos-Related Disease in South Africa: The Social Production of an Invisible Epidemic.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 96(8):1386-1396.

Buchbinder, Mara & Stefan Timmermans (2011). “Medical Technologies and the Dream of the Perfect Newborn.” *Medical Anthropology*, 30(1):56-80.

Conrad, Peter (1985). “The Meaning of Medications: Another Look at Compliance.” *Social Science and Medicine*. 20(1): 29-37.

Farmer, Paul (1999). *Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Gamble, Vanessa Northington (1997). “Under the Shadow of Tuskegee: African Americans and Health Care.” *American Journal of Public Health* 87(11): 1773-1778.

- Gowan, Teresa (2010). *Hobos, Hustlers and Backsliders: Homeless in San Francisco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hafferty, Frank (1988). "Cadaver Stories and the Emotional Socialization of Medical Students." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 29(4):344-356.
- Khazan, Olga. "Life in the Sickest Town in America." *The Atlantic*, Jan 22, 2015.
- Klawiter, Maren. 2004. "Breast cancer in two regimes: the impact of social movements on illness experience." *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 26(6): 845-874.
- Loe, Meika (2004). "The Rise of Erectile Dysfunction" in *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*. New York: NYU Press.
- Martin, Emily (1991). "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs*, 16(3):485-501.
- Pescosolido, Bernice & Carol Boyer (2001). "Beginning the Twenty-First Century With High Risk, Major Challenges, and Great Opportunities." In Cockerham, Ed. *The New Blackwell Companion to Medical Sociology*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Quadagno, Jill (2004). "Why the United States Has No National Health Insurance: Stakeholder Mobilization Against the Welfare State, 1945-1996." *Journal of Health & Social Behavior*, 45(S): 25-44
- Shaban, Hamza. "How Race Creeps Into Medicine: The history of a medical instrument reveals the dubious science of racial difference." *The Atlantic*, Aug 29, 2014.
- Siebers, Tobin (1998). "My Withered Limb." *Disability, Art & Culture*, 37(2).
- Starr, Paul (1982). *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*. New York: Basic Books.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT: Film Viewing and Paper

This paper assignment is very similar to the first paper in terms of format, but you will have two options for how to conduct your analysis. Regardless of which option you choose, remember to have a thesis and to use a recognizable and consistent citation format. Like last time, the assignment is designed to give you structured choices about films and course concepts, while leaving you the freedom to develop your own analysis. Your papers should be between 4 and 5 pages long (typed and double-spaced).

I specifically chose films that reflected those topical interests that we haven't been able to focus on in detail in the course: nursing, death and dying, childbirth, cross-cultural health and medicine, and the prison system. If you have expertise or experience in any of these areas, you are welcome to draw it into the paper, but keep the analysis of course concepts at the forefront. Keep in mind that we have upcoming lectures in other topics, like environments and health, which will provide additional concepts for you to work with.

Whether you choose option 1 or 2, you should privilege course concepts and readings from Unit 5, but you're welcome to bring in concepts from other units to help your analysis. For example, this

may be especially relevant if you want to analyze the differences in nurse-patient vs. doctor-patient communication or nurse/doctor-patient vs. layperson/hospice worker-patient communication.

Due date: Monday, March 30 at the beginning of class (please bring a hard copy)

This assignment is worth 5 points

Option 1: Choose one film and analyze it using two (or more) course concepts.

If you choose to use more than 2 course concepts, you should devote at least two paragraphs to each concept so that you really flesh out your discussion of each (i.e. don't discuss more concepts just for the sake of it).

Option 2: Choose two films and analyze them in terms of one (or more) course concepts.

If you choose to use more than 1 course concept, you should devote at least two paragraphs to each concept so that you really flesh out your discussion of each (i.e. don't discuss more concepts just for the sake of it). The prison hospice documentary is a short film (about 22 minutes), so this could be a good one to use as a comparison film.

Course Concepts to Consider:

Gender Relations/Gender Inequality/Family Structure

Provider-patient relationship/communication and power differential

Intersecting social categories (race, class, gender, etc.) and forms of social advantage/disadvantage

The role of infrastructure and physical environment (roads, transportation, neighborhood, availability of clinics, etc.) in health care access

Insurance status and health care access

Structure vs. Agency (structural constraints on individual agency)

Access/Quality/Cost Control (systemic & patient-level)

FILMS TO CHOOSE FROM:

1. "The Waiting Room"

Available through: Netflix, will be available for 3 hour loan from the library later this week

Synopsis: "This intense documentary goes behind the closed doors of a public hospital struggling to care for a community of largely uninsured patients."

Keywords: Nursing, Insurance/Access barriers, Safety net hospitals

2. "Wit"

Available through: 3 hour loan at the library. Room 230 is reserved for group viewings on Thursday and Sunday nights

Synopsis: "Professor Vivian Bearing (Emma Thompson), an expert on the work of 17th-century British poet John Donne, has spent her adult life contemplating religion and death as literary motifs. Diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer, she consents to an aggressive and experimental form of chemotherapy administered by Dr. Kelekian and his assistant, Dr. Posner, her former student. Facing death on a personal level, she reflects on her life and work."

Keywords: Doctor-patient relationship, Nurse-patient relationship, Death & dying

Tip: *This movie is a film adaptation of a play. It focuses on Vivian Bearing's journey through cancer treatment and the people she encounters, so you will have to dig a bit deeper to link to course concepts. The most obvious concepts are related to patient-provider communication, but you can also draw on past course concepts like professional authority, or possibly even medical experimentation. In relating to Unit 5, you might discuss Vivian's position of privilege as a white, upper middle class*

woman, and where this privilege brings her advantage, and also where it fails to mitigate disadvantage.

3. “Frontline: Being Mortal”

Available through: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/being-mortal/>

Synopsis: Dr. Atul Gawande investigates how medical personnel and patients handle death

Keywords: Death & dying, Doctor/nurse-patient relationship, Family-patient relationship

Tip: *This movie isn't as obviously sociological (it focuses much more on the individual journeys of the patients themselves and is much more humanistic in its focus). This might make it harder to analyze, so you may have to look for salient absences (what sorts of patients aren't represented, for example) or take a critical perspective on what is there.*

4. “Angola Prison Hospice: Opening the door”

Available through: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMLjANwBRDk>

Synopsis: “Half of the 5,000 inmates at the maximum-security Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola are serving life sentences, and it is estimated that 85 percent of them will grow old and die there. Edgar Baren's documentary examines one of the nation's first prison-based hospice programs, a program that notably incorporates inmate volunteers into the care of other dying inmates.”

Keywords: Prison system, Death & dying

5. “No Woman, No Cry”

Available through: Netflix

Synopsis: “Explore the grave issue of maternal mortality through this documentary, which profiles several pregnant women from around the world whose lack of access to basic health care and nutrition places them and their unborn children in unnecessary danger.”

Keywords: Global health, Childbirth, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Gender relations

Tip: *This could be an interesting case to discuss how culture shapes the interplay of structure and agency, as well as how gender roles (a feature of culture) may become naturalized.*

6. “It's Not Over”

Available through: Netflix

Synopsis: “Three young lives on separate continents are deeply affected by HIV and AIDS, including the misunderstandings and prejudice that accompany it.”

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, Global health, South Africa, India

Tip: *Like the Frontline documentary on death & dying, this film focuses on the individual journeys of people with HIV (primarily examining agency, as opposed to structure). There is enough in the film to do an analysis relating to the course concepts from Unit 5, but you may have to dig for it. Stigma is the most accessible concept in the film. It's totally fine to address this concept, but you should discuss it in conjunction with another course concept from Unit 5, perhaps how stigma surrounding HIV can be mitigated by race, class, nationality, etc. There are also tie-ins to the LGBT community and to gender inequalities, as discussed in the Farmer reading.*