

Medicine & Healthcare in Society

Sociology 3430 (21617)

Fall 2013—T, Th 9:00 a.m.-10:15 p.m.—SS 44

Instructor: Carla Koons Trentelman, Ph.D.

Email: carlatrentelman@weber.edu

Office: SS 134

Phone: 626-6575

Office hours: Tues. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., Wed. 2:30 – 3:30 p.m., Thurs. 8:00 - 8:45 a.m., or by appointment if needed.

Required Text:

Weitz, Rose. 2010. *The Sociology of Health, Illness, and Health Care: A Critical Approach*, 5th ed. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning. (ISBN 978-0-495-59887-9)

New and used copies available through the WSU bookstore: New—\$144.40; used—\$91.25; used copies (as well as Kindle) also available for considerably reduced prices through online sources (you can compare prices on the WSU bookstore website).

Course Description from the Catalog: Utilizes the Sociological perspective to explore the institution of medicine and the medical healthcare delivery system; its function as a social institution and its capability, accessibility, and the related issues of providing healthcare. The various organizational system structures, and their economic and political dimensions, are also examined. Further emphasis is placed on the various professional roles, supporting roles, and patient behaviors. Additional focus is placed upon selected international comparisons, as well as medical research, ethical considerations, and international health issues.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will have:

- developed the ability to consider issues related to medicine and healthcare using a sociological perspective, including an understanding that health and illness involve both the physical and the social
- furthered their understanding of how healthcare, economics and politics are interrelated
- developed skills in the critical evaluation of claims related to medicine and health care, whether those claims are made within the healthcare field, the political sphere, the economic sphere or from other areas of society
- improved their ability to participate in informed discussions regarding the problems with healthcare as well as solutions to those problems
- developed stronger writing abilities and honed their critical thinking skills as related to this field

Course Format and Expectations: In addition to using the familiar lecture format, in this seminar-style course roughly one-third of class time will be spent in class discussions in which everyone is expected to contribute. All assigned readings need to be completed before class so you can participate in the discussions.

Lectures supplement, *but do not replace*, required and supplemental readings

Students will be held responsible for material presented in the readings, lectures, guest speakers, videos, etc.

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Students with Disabilities: Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

Student Evaluation: Students will be graded based on performance on written work, including written discussion questions, and class participation. Instructions for all of the written work are included in this syllabus.

Class participation: Because class participation is essential for learning in a seminar-style class (and for better learning in *any* class), attendance and participation make up a part of your grade for this course. I will take attendance daily, low attendance may carry more weight in the semester grade than the 11% for participation noted.

There may be short in-class assignments or quizzes for which you receive class participation credit, however, your comments, responses, and questions in class and in the discussions will carry the most weight for this grade.

If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain the information you missed, including lecture notes as well as any announcements that may have been made.

Grading: Late papers will be docked unless you have made arrangements ahead of time. I do not accept papers by email.

Summary of grading:	Percent (rounded) of course grade:
Participation and Class Activities 50 points total:	11%
Includes attendance as well as class participation	
Reflexivity essay 15 points total:	3%
Course Journal 75 points total:	17%
Collected 3 times during semester—25 points each time (6% of grade)	
Discussion questions—75 points total:	17%
6 sets of 3 questions each	
1 st set: critique only	
Remaining 5 sets: 15 points each	
Interview Project 110 points total:	24%
2 interviews and paper	
Course Project 125 points total:	<u>28%</u>
Total possible: 450 points	100%
Possible 15 points extra credit	

Grades will be distributed as follows:

93% and higher (418-450) = A	80-82% (360-373) = B-	67-69% (302-314) = D+
90-92% (405-417) = A-	77-79% (346-359) = C+	60-66% (270-301) = D
87-89% (392-404) = B+	73-76% (328-345) = C	Less than 60% (269) = E (F)
83-86% (374-391) = B	70-72% (315-327) = C-	

A denotes *exceptional* performance, **B**—*above average* performance, **C**—satisfactory performance, **D**—poor performance, **E(F)**—failing performance

Extra Credit:

Students may accumulate up to 15 points of extra credit. Details about extra credit options (requirements, details, due dates, etc.) will be provided after the first few weeks of class. **All extra credit assignments are due by Dec. 5th; late extra credit assignments will not be accepted or negotiated about.**

Make-up Policies:

In a seminar-type class where a majority of the classroom learning is related to the interaction in class, it is very difficult to make up what has been missed.

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organized university activities, should notify me **in advance** of their absence if possible, and arrange to make up missed work.

An *excusable* absence needs to be cleared with me in order for it to become *excused*.

In the case of an unexcused absence, no credit for missed work will be allowed.

Complying with these expectations greatly increases your chances of being able to make up any work missed, however because of the nature of this course, I may require documentation (e.g., a note from your doctor, the coach, etc.).

Course Assignments

Reflexivity Essay Due in class 9/3 – worth 15 points

Purpose: To consider what you are bringing to the table for this class, in terms of background – and also to consider where that background came from, to begin thinking about it critically.

Task: Using reflexivity (explained in class), write a relatively short (about 2 pages) paper on the following three things:

- 1) Why you’re taking this class
- 2) What you know and think about medicine and healthcare in society
- 3) How you know what you know and why you think what you think

The narrative-style essay (i.e. paragraph form, not bullet points) needs to be typed (double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, pages numbered).

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Class Journal Collection dates: 9/26, 10/31, and 12/3 – 25 points per batch, 75 points total

Purpose: The journal gives students a place to “play” with the material we’ll be covering throughout the semester. It is a place you can flesh out your own perspectives, reflect on course materials in terms of your own life and your own theories, applying the things we are learning in class to what you have seen, experienced, how you’re thinking about things, etc. It’s also a place where you can talk about how you are feeling about the material you’re being exposed to.

Task: Students need to write in a class journal at least once a

Interview Project (cont.)

This paper is not to be a journalistic report of exactly what your interviewees said, but rather, a look at the themes and patterns that came up – particularly:

The similarities and differences between how your interviewees see health care issues
Why you think those dynamics exist (your theories about that)

Include not only what you learned about your interviewees, but what you learned about yourself as well. Here are some things to cover:

Why did you chose to interview these particular people? What made their positions or perspectives interesting to you? What were you hoping to learn? Be explicit.

How do the comments, specific stories and examples your interviewees shared differ from each other? What similarities exist? Talk about their views and opinions about health care in the context of their social location—i.e., how does their social location seem to effect their perspectives and thoughts on the issues?

What did you learn during your interviews? What did they say that sounded foreign to you? Emphasize anything that was new to you.

Are there things you see differently than either of your interviewees? What are they? Why might they be different? What commonalities do you share even among your differences?

Include a sociological perspective throughout your paper. You do not need statistics, but show that you can see bigger social trends and workings in the situations described.

Course Project: Health Care/Illness topic report based on media reports

Internet file due 10/8, full project due 12/5 – total project worth 125 points

Purpose: This project gives you the opportunity to conduct a sociological analysis of the issue of your choosing related to medicine, health care, or illness, using information in the national media. While you will learn about the topic while working on the project, part of the purpose is to give you practice identifying and critiquing how various media construct and portray an issue.

Tasks: Choose any issue we are covering during the class (see the course schedule for the topics, please ask if you have any questions). There are *four parts*: an internet file, a news file, an annotated bibliography of speeches, presentations, videos, etc., and your written analysis of your findings.

***Internet file* – Due 10/8 – 15 points**

Find information on the Internet relevant to the health care or illness issue you selected. You need to collect information from **at least 5 different sources** (which cannot include any newspapers or magazines, even if they are online). Look for reports, records, explanations, etc. Print the material you find, making sure to include the complete URL and the date accessed.

This material should be turned in inside a folder, with the material from each source clearly identified so I can tell how many sources you use, and what each source is

Include a cover sheet in the file that includes your name, your topic, and the name and URL of each of your sources

Please do not turn in more than a few pages from the same website—in the case of a document that is more than 5 pages long, print off the first page, make sure it includes the full URL and date you accessed the website (**cont. on next page**)

Course Project (cont.):

You will not be turning any written material of your own in with this—your file will be graded based on how much information your sources provide you with, how much it relates to your specific topic, and the quality of the websites you have used

Someone's online term paper will not be as useful to you as reports from agencies dealing with your issue (e.g. Dept. of Health & Human Services, WHO, university research teams, etc.)

Sources like Wikipedia, online encyclopedias and dictionaries, etc. may **not** be included as a part of this assignment. I expect to see that you did some work to come up with your sources.

This material will be included in writing your final paper. Think about what sorts of information can help you with the **whole** project.

News file – Due with full project, 12/5 – 20 points

Collect **at least 12 current news articles** (minimum of one per week starting with the third week of the semester; articles may not be older than 1 year) from the New York Times or other comprehensive, national newspapers (Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, etc.) on your issue.

USA Today, while national, is NOT comprehensive; articles from newspapers like this will not count as part of the 12 articles

Course Project (cont.):

The minimum number depends on the length and usefulness of the items—if you're only using short things that don't require much thinking, 5 may not be enough. For documentaries or a political speech and follow-up commentary, 3 items will suffice

Health Care/Illness report on /analysis of media coverage – Due with full project – 70 points
Utilizing information given in class, the readings, and your news, Internet and other media files, write a 5-10 page report/analysis on the health care or illness issue you chose (typed, double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, pages numbered).

This paper is not to be a mere description of what you learned, but rather a sociological

Course Schedule¹:

Reading for Aug. 29th: Excerpt from Mills, C. W. 1959. “The Promise of Sociology;” and from Berger, P.L. 1963. “Invitation to Sociology.”²

Reading for Sept. 3rd: Textbook—Section 1 intro and Chapter 1: The Sociology of Health, Illness and Health Care