"He who loves practice without theory is like the sailor who boards ship without a rudder and compass and never knows where he may be cast." -- Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519
COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is an introduction to the theoretical foundations of sociological accounts of health and illness. As such, it is a survey course meant to acquaint you with many of the major areas of inquiry, questions, debates and arguments – and the work of influential and/or interesting researchers – in the sub-field of the sociology of health. Emphasis will be on a critical analysis of competing discourses on health, including those based on structural functionalism, interpretive perspectives, critical political economy, social constructionism, racialization, intersectionality, feminist perspectives, foucauldian perspectives, and sociology of the body. The focus of discussion will be core concepts of the sociology of health arising from theoretical interpretations of what it means to be healthy or ill in Western industrialized nations. Concepts include, but are not limited to, the sick role, labelling, lay health beliefs, the experience of illness, social causation of disease, medicalization, surveillance medicine, risk, governmentality, technologies of the self, biopower, the social construction of medical knowledge, embodiment, and body projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
By the end of this course, you will:
• have a basic and critical understanding of major sociological theories as they apply to health and illness;
• be familiar with a range of substantive research areas, core concepts and key debates in the sociology of health;
• be able to use sociological theory to open up, question and explore key health issues; and
• express yourself better in oral and written work.

The weekly discussions of ideas about health and illness are organized according to their temporal emergence in the sociology of health, but the enduring character of various accounts over time is as evident as are the differences (and similarities) among them. With a focus on critical analysis of competing discourses, we will ask the following of accounts of health and illness:
• How are health and illness conceptualized?
• What are the underlying (implicit or explicit) assumptions about the relationship between health/illness and the social world?
• What are the strengths and weakness of such assumptions?
• What are the similarities and differences across accounts?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Expectations
As your instructor, I expect that you will:
• Take full responsibility for your own learning;
• Come on time and prepared to every class;
• Complete all work on time;
• Treat your fellow students and instructor with respect;
• Contribute to building a positive learning community by helping others learn; and
• Ask questions when you don’t understand. Doing so is a sign of maturity, not ignorance.
As students, you are entitled to expect that I will:

- Establish and maintain a constructive environment for learning;
- Come prepared to every class;
- Plan each class to help you achieve the course objectives;
- Understand that it is not necessarily your fault if you do not understand the material;
- Provide clear guidelines for assignments; and
- Provide timely and useful feedback.

Reading Materials:

Required and additional readings for each session are listed in this outline. Copies of the required readings are posted on Blackboard under the Readings tab.

Evaluation:

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<tr>
<th>Facilitations (2)</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>Group</td>
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<tr>
<th>Annotations (5/6)</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
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<td>Individual</td>
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<td>To be determined</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Short Papers (4)</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</table>
| Individual        | 80           | Paper 1: by Oct. 11
|                   |              | Paper 2: by Nov. 1
|                   |              | Paper 3: by Nov. 22
|                   |              | Paper 4: by Dec. 6

A. Class Contribution: Facilitations (10%)

The class contribution component of the grade is there to encourage active, prepared and thoughtful discussion. Your specific goal will be to facilitate, along with one or two other students, a discussion of the week’s featured theoretical perspective. Your group will provide a 15-minute overview of the main argument(s) of the required readings; compare/contrast the main arguments across the readings; and outline a contemporary application of the theory to understand a health issue. The minimum number of facilitations will be two.

B. Annotations (10%)

Six annotations of main arguments of papers from selected from six different sets of weekly readings will be submitted over the term. Two are based on a required reading from each of two facilitations that you undertake. The remainder are chosen from readings required for a week other than those which you facilitate. The best five grades will be used for this component of the evaluation. Annotations are due at the beginning of class. See Blackboard for details under Course Materials tab.
C. Short Papers (80%)

Four short papers (7-8 pages, double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point font size) outlining and critically assessing the ideas covered in all of the required readings for a given week. The first two papers will present, compare and contrast the authors’ main arguments, while the last two will synthesize them (see Blackboard for paper details under the Course Materials tab). The paper is due the Wednesday following class discussion of the reading series you choose (i.e., one week later). The first paper must be submitted by Oct. 11; the second by Nov. 1; and the third, by Nov. 22. Paper four can be turned in whenever you wish, but by Dec. 6, at the latest.

Late work: Late submission will result in a 5% grade deduction per day. Papers submitted more than three days late will not be accepted. When illness or exceptional circumstances affect your ability to meet the deadline, please notify me as soon as possible and before the deadline in question.

The ASA Style Guide for text citation and reference lists is required for all written work (see Blackboard for details of ASA style under the Course Materials tab).

The following criteria will be used for evaluating written work (see Blackboard for writing suggestions under Frank’s Writing Corner in Course Materials tab):

**B+**  Understanding of the central ideas/arguments in readings  
Well-written – coherent, well-organized and concise

**A-**  The above, plus the ability to integrate and analyze the ideas/arguments in the readings

**A**  The above, plus the ability to go beyond the readings in a critical and constructive manner (i.e., compare and contrast them, consider their implications, articulate your own position in relation to the central ideas/arguments; and the ability to support your own position)

**A+**  The above, plus intellectual creativity and flexibility (e.g., a new synthesis, insight or application)

For writing assistance, see resources for graduate students at Writing at the University of Toronto (www.writing.utoronto.ca/home). I have also posted on Blackboard under the Course Materials tab a text called “Writing Social Science – Accumulated Advice” by the renowned Canadian sociologist, Arthur Frank. His suggestions are excellent!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Laptops are permitted in the seminar for the purposes of taking notes based on the class discussion. Out of respect for other seminar participants, you are asked to refrain from checking your e-mail or the Internet during class time, and to turn off your cell phones.
OVERVIEW OF COURSE
Sept. 13 Introduction
Sept. 20 Structural Functionalism
Sept. 27 Interpretive Perspectives I
Oct. 4 Interpretive Perspectives II
Oct. 11 Critical Political Economy
Oct. 18 Social Construction of Knowledge
Oct. 25 Foucauldian Perspectives I
Nov. 1 Foucauldian Perspectives II
Nov. 8 Feminist Perspectives
Nov. 15 Racialization
Nov. 22 Intersectionality
Nov. 29 Sociology of the Body

USEFUL JOURNALS:

- Body and Society
- Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law
- Critical Public Health
- Milbank Quarterly
- Health
- Research in the Sociology of Health Care
- Health and Place
- Social Theory and Health
- Health, Risk and Society
- Sociology of Health and Illness
- International Journal of Health Services
- Women & Health
- Journal of Health and Social Behaviour
- Social Science and Medicine
- Journal of Men’s Health & Gender
- Medical Sociology Online
- Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics
- Advances in Medical Sociology
- Health Sociology Review
- Biosocieties
- Health, Culture and Society
- Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry
- Society and Mental Health

USEFUL OVERVIEW TEXTS:


SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

1. **Introduction** - Sept. 13
   
   
   
2. **Structural-Functionalism** – Sept. 20

   **Required Readings:**
   
   
   
   Parsons, Talcott. 1951. Chapter 10 of *The Social System*. **Focus on pp. 428-65**
   

   **Recommended Readings:**
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
3. Interpretive Perspectives I (Labelling Theory) – Sept. 27

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Moncrieff, Joanna. 2010. “Psychiatric Diagnosis as a Political Device.” *Social Theory & Health* 8:370-82.


4. **Interpretive Perspectives II (Negotiated Order/Experience of Illness)** – Oct. 4

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Rousseau, Nikki, Jimmy Steele, Carl May, and Catherine Exley. 2014. “‘Your Whole Life is Lived Through your Teeth’: Biographical Disruption and Experiences of Tooth Loss and Replacement.” Sociology of Health and Illness 36:462-76.


5. **Critical Political Economy** - Oct. 11

Text from Downton Abbey:

*P1:* Surely you believe that servants are human beings.

*P2:* Yes, but only on their day off!
Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


6. **Social Construction of Knowledge** - Oct. 18

![Image of eyes](image-url)

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Horwitz, Alan V. 2007. *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder.* (available on ebrary)


7. **Foucauldian Perspectives I** – Oct. 25
Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


8. **Foucauldian Perspectives II** – Nov. 1


Recommended Readings:


9. **Feminist Perspectives** – Nov. 8

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Gender & Society 2012 26 (1). Special issue on the contributions of Patricia Hill Collins


10. **Racialization** – Nov. 15

**‘Go home’ campaign against illegal immigrants could go nationwide**

David Cameron’s spokesman says controversial scheme involving mobile vans advertising a helpline for people to leave UK is working

☐ **Andrew Sparrow**, political correspondent

☐ **The Guardian**, Monday 29 July 2013 12.51 BST
One of the Home Office's mobile vans offering help to illegal immigrants who want to leave the UK. Photograph: Rick Findler

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:


### 1999


11. **Intersectionality** – Nov. 22

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


*Signs* 38(4) 2013. Special issue on intersectionality.


12. **Sociology of the Body** – Nov. 29

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Winance, Myriam. 2007. “How Speaking Shapes Person and World: Analysis of the Performativity of Discourse in the Field of Disability.” *Social Theory & Health* 5:228-44.
