I. Course Description
This course provides an introduction to the common theoretical and empirical approaches used by sociologists to study health and illness. The content reflects two broad themes pursued by medical sociologists: 1) social inequalities in health and illness, and 2) the social processes that shape the experience of health and illness.

II. Course Prerequisites
None

III. Course Goals and Objectives
My goal is that upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to (1) understand and explain the major conceptual approaches to the study of health and illness that are used by sociologists, and (2) be able to apply these concepts to a substantive topic in the field of health services research.

IV. Methods of Instruction and Work Expectations
This is a seminar course. Students should read the material before coming to class and be prepared to take part in the discussion of the material. Lectures are intended to clarify and supplement required readings.
V. Course Text and Readings

Journal Articles: Unless otherwise noted, course readings are available through e-journals on the library website. There may be additional readings assigned during the course.


Suggested readings are not required for the course.

VI. Course Outline/Weekly Schedule

Weeks 1-2: Introduction to Sociological Theory and Medical Sociology

January 22

Required:

Suggested:

January 29

Required:


Clair, Jeffrey M., Cullen Clark, Brian P. Hinote, Caroline O. Robinson, and Jason A. Wasserman. 2007. Developing, integrating, and perpetuating new ways of applying Sociology to Health, Medicine, Policy and Everyday Life.” Social Science & Medicine, 64:248-258.


Suggested:


Week 3: The Life Course Perspective

February 5

***Discussion of topic: one-page outline due***

Required:

Suggested:

Week 4: Social Construction & Medicalization

February 12

Required:

Suggested:

**Weeks 5-7: Social Inequality and Health**

**February 19**

(1) **Socioeconomic Status**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


February 26

(2) Race and Ethnicity

Required:


Suggested:


March 4

(3) Gender

Required:


Suggested:


Week 8: Stress and Coping

March 12

March 13 Application #1 due to Reviewers

March 16 Application #1 due back from Reviewers
Required:


Suggested:


SPRING BREAK

March 23 Midterm due

Week 9: Social Relationships and Social Support

March 26

Required:


Suggested:


Week 10: Help Seeking
April 2

Required:


Suggested:


Week 11 Healthy Lifestyles & Health Promotion
April 9


Week 12: Organizations & Professions
April 16

Required:
Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in Andrew Abbott, The System of Professions (to be distributed)


Week 13 & 14: The doctor-patient relationship
April 23:

Required:


**April 30:**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**Week 15: Health Reform**

**May 7:**
May 8 Application #2 due to Reviewers
May 11 Application #2 due back from Reviewers
May 16 Final Due

**Required:**


**Suggested:**

**VII. Evaluation and Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers (3 at 5% each)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Review: 10% each at midterm and final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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NOTE: To receive a grade in this class you must provide evidence that you successfully completed the on-line course on plagiarism. (discussed in class)

Reaction Papers:
1. Class & Discussion Forum Participation:
   You are expected to come to class having read the material and being prepared to participate in discussion. To help that process, you are required to submit on the course Moodle site, a discussion question or questions that you would like covered in the next day of class. Questions must be posted by 5:00 pm the night before class.

2. Reaction Papers:
   Students are required to write 3 ‘reaction’ papers (maximum word count each = 700) in response to the assigned articles. Students may choose which theme they want to write a response to, but must choose a theme from 4 different weeks of the course (starting in week 3). Each response paper is due by 6:00 pm the day before the date assigned for the discussion in class. Students should be prepared to discuss the results of their reaction papers in class.

2. Topic paper, application papers, and reviews
   Research is a collective enterprise, in which professionals routinely share their ideas and drafts of manuscripts and comment on each other’s work. The expectation that you participate in class and review each other’s papers introduces you to this aspect of professional life, and allows you to practice developing your skills in critiquing theoretical and empirical arguments. Each member of the class is expected to write application papers (described below) as well as read and comment on papers written by other students.

   Topic paper: In the third week of class you must pick a topic in health or health services research that is of interest to you and commit to it for the remainder of the semester. You will need to provide a brief (one page double-spaced) (a) description of your topic and (b) explanation of why you chose it (i.e., why is it important, what is interesting about it). This is due the third week of class and will serve as an introduction of your topic to me, and to those who review your papers throughout the semester. (It is probably easiest to think about this in terms of a research question you would like to be able to spend time thinking about or the dependent variable or phenomenon you are interested in understanding and explaining). Due February 3

   Application paper: In the application papers you are to apply theories and/or concepts from the assigned readings to your chosen topic. In addition, you will supplement class materials with further readings in the area (sociological). When writing your paper you might think about the following questions. How does the theory or concept improve or change your understanding of your topic? How would someone writing from this theoretical perspective, or whose career is based on the use of this concept, approach your topic? What concepts would they focus on in studying your topic? What expectations (hypotheses) would they have for relationships between concepts important to understanding your topic?

   A variety of reading materials are assigned each week and each student may focus on very different features of a given reading/theory/concept. Therefore you must provide your reviewer with enough information about the aspects of the course readings you are applying to your topic so that they can evaluate your understanding of the theoretical perspective or chosen concept. Application papers should be approximately 12-15 pages in length (including references, double spaced, 12-pt font). It is essential that students demonstrate that they understand the core readings. However, in addition to course material, students should integrate further readings in the area.

   A final general comment - - depth is preferable to breadth in these papers. Rather than try to discuss everything about a topic, focus in on what is most applicable to your topic and demonstrate what you’ve learned and your ability to move from theory (abstract) to application (concrete). Keep in mind that this is a sociology course, so you should demonstrate your sociological imagination.

   The readings from the first three weeks of class are applicable throughout the course. Refer back to this material when writing each application paper, and cite as relevant to support your arguments.

   There are two required application papers. They must be submitted to the instructor through the course website.
Application Paper # 1: Due to Reviewers, March 13. Choose a theme from the first half of the course (Social construction or Social Inequality). Due back from Reviewers March 16.

Application Paper # 2: Due to Reviewers May 8. Choose a theme from the second-half of the course (Stress, Social Support, Help Seeking, Occupations and Organizations, the Doctor Patient Relationship). Due Back from Reviewers May 11.

*The application papers are due to assigned reviewers on Friday afternoons. Reviewers have until the next Monday to provide written feedback to authors.

Midterm and final application papers:

The midterm and final papers that follow directly from the application papers described above.

For the midterm, you should submit (1) your topic paper; (2) your original application paper; (3) your colleagues’ reviews of your application paper; and (4) your midterm paper (revised based on reviews); and (5) a response to the reviewers indicating how you addressed the concerns. The paper should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and 12-pt font. Due to instructor March 23.

The final should integrate application paper # 1 and # 2. For the final you should submit (1) your original #2 application paper; (2) your colleagues’ review of your application paper; and (3) a final paper that includes both a revised midterm paper (revised based on the instructor’s review) and a revised second application paper; and (5) a response to the reviews of your midterm and Application paper # 2. The paper should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and 12-pt font. Maximum pages (not including references) = 25 pages. Due to instructor May 16.

Papers should be submitted via the course website. All material must be in one file. Make sure your name is in the document. Please use page numbering and sub-headings. They must be submitted on the due-date.

Peer Reviews

Peer review assignments will be distributed in class once the semester begins.

Each reviewer must provide the author of the application paper with a written review (about 2 double spaced pages) that:

- summarizes the main idea(s) being conveyed
- describes the paper’s main strengths and weaknesses,
- provides a detailed evaluation of any problems identified or ideas in need of clarification,
- offers concrete, practical suggestions for improving the paper (if helpful, refer the author back to pages of assigned readings that may be useful to them in rewriting their paper, and how you think it contributes to understanding the topic of interest),
- is respectful in tone.

Your review is confidential (between you, the author, and later, me).

Please respect the due dates. Delays in providing reviews to authors hamper their ability to meet midterm and final exam deadlines.

Course Evaluation

Beginning in fall 2008, the SPH will collect student course evaluations electronically using a software system called CoursEval: www.sph.umn.edu/courseval. The system will send email notifications to students when they can access and complete their course evaluations. Students who complete their course evaluations promptly will be able to access their final grades just as soon as the faculty member renders the grade in SPHGrades: www.sph.umn.edu/grades. All students will have access to their final grades through OneStop two weeks after the last day of the semester regardless of whether they completed their course evaluation or not. Student feedback on course content and faculty teaching skills are an important means for improving our work. Please take the time to complete a course evaluation for each of the courses for which you are registered.
Incomplete Contracts
A grade of incomplete “I” shall be assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., documented illness or hospitalization, death in family, etc.), the student was prevented from completing the work of the course on time. The assignment of an “I” requires that a contract be initiated and completed by the student before the last official day of class, and signed by both the student and instructor. If an incomplete is deemed appropriate by the instructor, the student in consultation with the instructor, will specify the time and manner in which the student will complete course requirements. Extension for completion of the work will not exceed one year (or earlier if designated by the student’s college). For more information and to initiate an incomplete contract, students should go to SPHGrades at: www.sph.umn.edu/grades.

University of Minnesota Uniform Grading and Transcript Policy - A link to the policy can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

VIII. Other Course Information and Policies

Grade Option Change (if applicable)
For full-semester courses, students may change their grade option, if applicable, through the second week of the semester. Grade option change deadlines for other terms (i.e. summer and half-semester courses) can be found at onestop.umn.edu.

Course Withdrawal
Students should refer to the Refund and Drop/Add Deadlines for the particular term at onestop.umn.edu for information and deadlines for withdrawing from a course. As a courtesy, students should notify their instructor and, if applicable, advisor of their intent to withdraw.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course after the noted final deadline for a particular term must contact the School of Public Health Office of Admissions and Student Resources at sph-ssc@umn.edu for further information.

Student Conduct Code
The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

Use of Personal Electronic Devices in the Classroom
Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: http://policy.umn.edu/ Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html.

Scholastic Dishonesty
You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data,
research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)) If it is determined that a student has cheated, he or she may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/INSTRUCTORRESP.html).

The Office for Student Conduct and Academic Integrity has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: [http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html](http://www1.umn.edu/oscai/integrity/student/index.html). If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class—e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

**Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences**

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/MAKEUPWORK.html).

**Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials**

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: [http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html](http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTRESP.html).

**Sexual Harassment**

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/SexHarassment.pdf).

**Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action**

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf](http://regents.umn.edu/sites/default/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.pdf).

**Disability Accommodations**

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. Disability Services (DS) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical), please contact DS at 612-626-1333 to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

If you are registered with DS and have a current letter requesting reasonable accommodations, please contact your instructor as early in the semester as possible to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

For more information, please see the DS website, [https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/](https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/).

**Mental Health and Stress Management**
As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu.

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility: for courses that do not involve students in research**

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost. [Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]

*Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students".*

*Template update 9/2013*