

Medicine & Healthcare in Society
Sociology 3430 (21617)
Fall 2013—T, Th 9:00 a.m.-10:15 p.m.—SS 44

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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.

- **Writing assignments** – there are a few short writing assignments, an ongoing course journal, and two longer project papers for this course. They provide you with another way to learn course materials, give you a chance to demonstrate your progress, and allow me to assess how well you organize your thoughts about the course material and express yourself in writing.
 - I expect university-level writing on all written assignments. This includes proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc. The Writing Center is a good resource for help with writing.
- As noted, **discussion is an essential part of students’ learning** in this seminar-style course. Part of your grade will come from your participation throughout the semester.
 - The usefulness and richness of the discussions are dependent on you having done the reading, so you know what you (and others) are talking about (even if you don’t understand it all).
 - My role in the discussions is that of facilitator and evaluator.
 - All students need the chance to participate.
 - Respect for all viewpoints is expected, including:
 1. **Treating everyone with civility**
 2. **Listening without interrupting**
 3. **Avoiding insulting terms and stereotypes when describing people**
 4. **Attempting to understand other people’s behavior**
 5. **Critiquing ideas rather than the person holding them**

On distractions: This is an upper division class, I expect you understand disruptions are not conducive to learning. Please avoid disruptive behaviors such as chatting with others, reading newspapers in class, playing around with electronic devices (this includes texting), etc. Cell phones need to be turned off at the beginning of class. Coming to class late and leaving early are particularly distracting and should be avoided if at all possible. **Please do not leave class early unless you have made prior arrangements with me.**

Student and Instructor Responsibilities:

Students	Instructor
Be prepared for class	Be prepared for class
Arrive on time	End on time
Turn in assignments on time	Return graded assignments in timely fashion
Know and understand grading policy	Follow grading policy with fairness
Ask about what you don’t know or understand	Research and report back on what I don’t know or understand
Bring up problems when they occur	Bring up problems when they occur

Academic Integrity:

“...As members of Weber State University academic community, students shall...maintain academic ethics and honesty.” Plagiarism, “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work” (including purchased or borrowed papers), and cheating are specifically prohibited (Weber State University Student Code). Any sort of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. A single case of cheating or plagiarism can be the basis for a failing grade and/or sanctions from the University; cases will be dealt with on an individual basis. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse.

For further information, please see the student code referred to above (<http://documents.weber.edu/ppm/6-22.htm>), or talk with the instructor.

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.

- Students who must miss class for any legitimate reason, including participation in 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).

Discussion questions – 1st set with ch. 2, **due 9/10** – worth 15 points per set, 75 points total

Purpose: To help students rotate the opportunities and responsibilities for leadership in class discussions, and to provide guidance for keeping discussions focused on course materials.

Task: Each student will prepare 3 discussion questions on each of 6 different chapters, mostly of their choice, during the semester. You will sign up ahead of time for the chapters you'll do.

- After completing the assigned reading, write three questions to generate class discussion
- Your first set of questions will be written with a partner from the class. This set will not be graded, but will be critiqued; my written comments will give you feedback about the questions you come up with. The remaining 5 sets are worth 15 points each.
 - Questions will be evaluated based on how well they capture the issues from the chapter, how useful they are for generating discussion, and how thoughtful they are
- Turn in typed questions on the day due (the 1st day for each chapter), either in class or by email by 4 p.m. (this is the one assignment I accept by email). Late questions will not be accepted.

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 week. Each journal entry should address something—perhaps the main thing—you found yourself thinking about that week related to this class.

- You might write about something you read or heard that was new to you
 - Or about something that disturbed you or gave you hope
- It could relate to the course readings, class time (e.g. lectures, discussion, presentations, etc.), or your work outside of class
 - Or it could relate to stories in the news, or conversations with others, where you found yourself using/applying/thinking about materials from class
 - It could include something from music you hear or books you read, or something you saw on TV (make sure you adequately explain what you are talking about, do not assume the reader is familiar with the song or book or TV show you are referring to).
- Journals will be graded on whether your journal entries relate to relevant course terms and topics, and whether they demonstrate that you are adequately grasping and digesting course material.
 - Each entry should be a fully formed thought, experience, etc., that includes sociological implications or application.
 - There are no length requirement for entries, but remember they will be graded. While it seems unlikely that content of any real substance would take less than a couple of paragraphs or so, I’m NOT looking for pages and pages.
 - All entries must be typed and dated, and kept together in a folder or skinny binder.

You are welcome to discuss issues of a personal nature in your journal, but it’s fine not to divulge anything personal. The class journal is a chance to write about what interests you or concerns you.

- Keep in mind, this is not simply a personal “diary”—sociological insights must be prevalent.

Interview Project – brief on who interviewing due 9/19; paper due 10/22, 110 points

Purpose: This project allows you to work towards appreciating the diverse array of perspectives and experiences related to health care issues. You need to interview two people whose perspectives about and/or experiences with healthcare are substantially different from each other, due to being from social locations in regards to healthcare. Interview each on their views about health care issues, and write a paper discussing what you learned in the interviews.

- Examples of differing social locations could include:
 - a doctor in private practice, and a Medicaid patient or a staff member of a community clinic
 - someone without insurance coverage and someone who works in the healthcare field
 - a hospital nurse and a person with multiple sclerosis (or some other chronic disease)
 - even a doctor specializing in geriatrics and a pediatrician; or an oncologist (cancer doctor) and a cosmetic surgeon
- Basically, two people who will have different experiences, and therefore perspectives, on healthcare issues. Having different perspectives doesn't necessarily mean they will disagree, it only means seeing the issues from a different standpoint.

Tasks:

Choice of Interview Participants: By Sept. 19th you need to write a brief statement (maybe one paragraph) describing the two people you have selected to interview and explaining why you have chosen those particular individuals, making the differences in their social location clear.

- Make sure each has agreed to be interviewed and mention that in this brief statement as well

The Interview: You need to be respectful and ethical during each interview. Here are the rules:

- **Inform each interviewee that involvement is voluntary and confidential. He or she may refuse to answer any question, and he or she may end the conversation at any time.**
- **Being ethical means that once confidentiality has been promised, it must be protected.** It would not be ethical for you to gossip or “share” with others what your interviewees have shared with you in any way that would identify the interviewees (including in your paper).
 - **It also means being respectful of your interviewees, their views, feelings, and experiences.** You need to talk about interviewees in a way that honors them—NOT “can you *believe* this?!!” Think about how you would want your own views, feelings and experiences talked about.
- **Do not use this assignment as a justification to pry into someone's life.**

Other than those things, how you structure the interviews is up to you. Use an approach that makes you and the interviewee both comfortable. For example, you could conduct the interviews with questions you have already formulated, or you could make them more exploratory, with a general theme in mind that you then use to come up with questions as the interviews progress.

The Paper: Due Oct. 22nd

Write a 3-5 page paper (typed, double spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, pages numbered) that conveys what you learned during the interview process. In your narrative-style essay (paragraph form, not bullet points), make sure you relate your discussion back to relevant information covered in the course to that point. Do not include information that could identify your interviewees. **Do not use real names—use pseudonyms. (cont. on next page)**

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
 - You may also include opinion pieces from the Times or other newspapers, or news articles from other newspapers or magazines, but these would be ***in addition*** to news articles from the comprehensive, national newspapers.
 - If you want to focus specifically on a particularly local issue, talk to me about sources.
- **If you are unsure of the difference between news articles and opinion pieces, you need to ask and get clarification. Opinion pieces will NOT be accepted for news articles.**
- All articles must have the name of the newspaper or magazine identified. Any materials from online sources must include the URL, all clippings must include the date the article ran, and the page number(s) of the page it ran on. This information may be hand-written.
- The reason you are collecting **at least 12 news articles** is to see patterns, to get a good feel for the topic and how it gets covered. You do not need to use every one of these articles as a reference to cite (although you may if it helps you make your point)

Annotated bibliography: speeches, presentations, videos, etc. – Due with full project – 20 points

You need to attend, watch, or listen to **at least 3-5 presentations, speeches, videos, groups, etc.** that address the issue your project is addressing. Take detailed notes you can use for your paper.

- Write an annotated bibliography of these items that includes, for each item:
 - 1) Full citation information, what the thing is (e.g. news broadcast, TV debate, commercial, etc.) and how long it is. Questions about citations?? Ask!!
 - 2) A one paragraph summary of the item
- The annotated bibliography must include **at least 3-5** presentations, speeches, videos, groups, etc., however if you want to include any other of these sorts of references in your report, each must be included in the annotated bibliography.
 - This includes commercials, cartoons, songs, etc., etc. you refer to in your paper

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 consideration that includes analyzing and interpreting what you are seeing with sociological perspectives and materials you have learned throughout the course.
 - Before you begin writing, think about the argument you want to make about the issue, including the ways the media covered and constructed the issue. As you write the paper described below, think about how to make your argument and then support it from your collection of materials.
 - Remember, well-constructed arguments also include evidence of other positions and possible arguments, but then counter that evidence with logic and further evidence.

In the narrative-style report (paragraph form, not bullet points) you need to include:

- A detailed explanation of the issue, including the causes and conditions described in your collected materials
- An explanation of the interaction between society, social groups, individuals, and the health care or illness issue that is at issue
- A critique of the media reports—what you think they did right as well as things you question, important aspects you think they missed, possible bias, etc.
 - How do the media treat or represent the people affected by the issue of focus?
 - How do the media treat or represent the condition?
 - In your critique you need to be specific, use examples to support what you say
- Suggest a potential (and reasonable) solution to the issue, which may be in use already, or may be something you came up with
 - Include supporting arguments or reasons why you have chosen this solution.
- Cite the references you use, and include them in a reference section at the end of the report.

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

✓ **Reflexivity essay due**

Reading for Sept.10th: Chapter 2: The Social Sources of Illness

Reading for Sept. 17th: Chapter 3: The Social Distribution of Illness in the United States

✓ **Sept. 19th – Brief due: who will you interview?**

Reading for Sept. 24th: Chapter 4: Illness and Death in Developing Nations

✓ **Sept. 26th – Journal collection #1**

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Reading for Oct. 1st: Section 2 intro and Chapter 5: The Social Meanings of Illness

Reading for Oct. 8th: Chapter 6: The Experience of Disability, Chronic Pain, and Chronic Illness

✓ **Internet file due**

Reading for Oct. 15th: Chapter 7: The Sociology of Mental Illness

Reading for Oct. 22nd: Section 3 intro and Chapter 8: Healthcare in the United States

✓ **Oct. 22nd – Interview paper due**

Reading for Oct. 29th: Chapter 9: Health Care in Other Countries

✓ **Oct. 31st – Journal collection #2**

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Reading for Nov. 5th: Chapter 10: Health Care Settings and Technologies

➤ **Weeks starting 11/12 & 11/19 – the class will choose between 3 options:**

➤ **Option 1: 2 chapters on medical professions from textbook:**

Reading for Nov. 12th: Section 4 intro and Chapter 11: The Profession of Medicine

Reading for Nov. 19th: Chapter 12: Other Mainstream and Alternative Health Care Providers

➤ **Option 2: Other readings on the current state of healthcare reform:**

Reading for Nov. 12th and 19th: Series of readings on healthcare reform, the healthcare reform law, and the current status of this law—this would be an equivalent amount of reading

➤ **Option 3: Compromise/combination of these two options**

Reading for Nov. 26th: Chapter 13: Issues in Bioethics

✓ **Dec. 3rd – Journal collection #3**

❖ **November 28th: Thanksgiving Holiday**

December 5th: Course wrap-up—last day of class

✓ **Course project due (all remaining parts); extra credit due**

¹ Please note: this syllabus is subject to change due to outside speakers, added activities and readings, or circumstances beyond my control.

² Both from Howard, Eve L. 2004. *Classic Readings in Sociology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson.