

Sociology 3100 : Sociology of Medicine  
Fall 2009  
Professor Linda Grant  
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Class meets 3:30-4:45, Tu/Th  
Room 311, Baldwin Hall

*Office Hours for Spring 2009 are 1-3p.m. Tuesdays, and by appointment.*

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### ***Introduction and Course Description***

This course is a general introduction to the Sociology of Medicine, one of the largest subareas of Sociology in the U.S. today. We study health, illness, and the health care system as a form of social organization critical to the lives of individuals and central to their sense of well-being. The course covers topics such as epidemiology (or the distribution of health conditions), cross-cultural conceptions of health, health and illness-related behaviors, stress and physical and mental health, forms of healing, roles and training of health care professionals, organization of hospitals and other health delivery agencies, ethical issues in health care, and health care policies in the U.S. and in other developed and developing countries.

Sociology of Medicine is a rapidly changing, and often controversial, field. The current debate over health care reform in the U.S. is but one example of an ever-changing landscape. We will use a variety of format in this class: lecture, small group discussions, videos, written assignments and perhaps also guest speakers, and it is my hope that we can develop a climate where people feel free to discuss their perspectives on issues we cover, even though it is unlikely that we all will agree. Health care is always in the news, and we will try to incorporate portions of current debates into class discussions and assignments. The course will use several forms of evaluation, described more fully below and in handouts to come, including objective and essay-style tests, discussion journals, and a short paper on a medical policy issue of your choice. Regular attendance and class participation is central to your success in this course.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Acquainting students with classical and contemporary sociological theory and research on health, illness, and health care systems, with a particular emphasis on the United States.
2. Exploring linkages between medicine and health and other important sociological

phenomena, such as race, class, gender, the occupational structure, the economy, and education.

3. Encouraging students to develop more in-depth expertise on contemporary, policy-relevant issues related to health, wellness, medicine, and illness.
4. Developing analytical and writing skills via discussion, research, and writing assignments focused around controversial issues in medical ethics and health care policy.

### **Course Materials:**

I have ordered the following as a required text for this course:

William C. Cockerham. **Medical Sociology**. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson/Prentice-Hall, 2009, paperback

I advise you to get a copy of the 11<sup>th</sup> edition, as this is a rapidly updating field.

In addition, I have placed on reserve, including electronic reserve, in the main library a course packet of additional readings. These may be accessed under the course number and my name and the password is fall2009 (case sensitive).

I will have additional handouts as the course proceeds that will be distributed as paper copies or posted online for this class. If we have guest speakers, they may provide handouts or additional readings. All materials assigned to be read or covered in class may be included in quizzes and tests. This includes guest lectures, videos, etc.

You should plan to read materials before coming to class each day. We will not cover all assigned reading materials in class, so you should feel free to bring up questions about those materials, as well as issues covered in class, in the classroom or via the web.

### **Evaluation:**

We will have two quizzes, a midterm, and a final at dates shown on the syllabus that follows. These tests must be taken in class on the dates scheduled, unless you have a **documented disability** and have spoken with me in advance to make alternative testing arrangements.

### ***Quizzes and Exams:***

Quizzes will consist of 25 multiple choice questions. We will use SCANTRON sheets, so you will need to bring two soft-lead pencils, with good erasers, to class on quiz days.

The midterm and the final will be combination multiple choice and essay tests.

The midterm will concentrate on materials studied from the beginning of class to the date of this exam. The final exam will concentrate on materials studied after the midterm exam.

***Medical-Ethical Discussion and Research Journal:***

Throughout the class, we will have several discussions of medical ethical issues, based on short readings of actual cases, or viewing of videos or dvd's, that focus on critical ethical issues in health, illness, medical care, or health policy. You will be required to read these materials and write a brief, one or two paragraph statement of your perspective on this issue prior to the discussion in class. I have not outlined all these topics in advance, so that we can take advantage of issues that might emerge over the next few months.

You will be assigned to a regular group with whom you then will discuss and debate the issue. At the conclusion of the discussion, you will be asked to revisit your original perspective statement, write a summary of issues emerging in your group's discussion of the issue, and then adding a statement about any shift in your perspective and the rationale for the shift, or affirming your original position on the issue, in light of issues raised in your group discussion. At midterm, we will switch group assignments so that you will have an opportunity to work with a different set of classmates. We will begin discussions in class, but feel free to continue your conversations with your group online.

We will have six such discussions, and you can choose the four for final submission in the journal. ***Note: You must have been present for the class discussion in order to include that subject among the four that you submit.***

In addition to the issues covered in class, you will need to do research on two additional contemporary (e.g., within the past 15 years) medical ethical issues that are not the subjects of class discussions. Two of your journal entries must be based on this original research. (More about that later in class).

You should buy a notebook for these entries, or bind them together and submit them as a single paper when they come in for grading. I prefer a lightweight spiral notebook or a term paper-type binder rather than a heavy notebook for the submission. Your entries may be typed (preferred) or hand-written.

***This assignment must be turned in by the due date shown on the syllabus that follows. Late assignments will not be accepted.***

***Weightings of Assignments for Final Grade:***

Quizzes: 15% each

Midterm: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Medical-Ethical Research and Discussion Journal: 25%

### ***Calculation of Grades:***

Final grades in this class will be assigned according to a plus and minus grading scale, calculated as follows:

A=93 or above  
A- = 90-92.99  
B+ = 88-89.99  
B= 83-87.99  
B- = 80-82.99  
C+ = 78-79.99  
C = 63-77.99  
C- =70-72.99  
D= 60-69.99  
F=59.99 or below

***Attendance Policies:*** Regular attendance is important to doing well in the course (see, for example, the note about attendance and ethical issue discussions, above). I will take attendance regularly. Absences beyond five may result in an instructor-initiated drop at any point in the term. Please note that any drop after the midpoint withdrawal date, under university regulations, results in a grade of WF for the course.

***Furlough Interruptions:*** As this syllabus was being prepared, the Board of Regents at UGA announced a furlough policy for faculty and staff. Although furloughs are not anticipated to affect class times in any way, it may affect instructor availability on non-class days, as the policy prohibits working on furlough days. I will provide more information as it becomes available.

***Other Policies:*** I do not mind phone calls at home at reasonable hours. The number is 706-548-2669 (or you can find me under my name in the local Athens phone book). However, email is often the quickest and most reliable way to reach me. The inbox that I check most regularly is my regular email address ([lgrant@uga.edu](mailto:lgrant@uga.edu)), and you should use this to reach me. If my office hours are not convenient, please feel free to contact me about meeting at other times.

***Use of Laptops and Other Electronic Devices:*** Cell phones, pagers, and the like should not be out or turned on in class. It is preferable that you leave them home on quiz and exam dates. If you must have them with you, they should be both off and out of sight on exam days. You may use a laptop for notetaking. If laptops are misused during class time or cause disruptions for your classmates, I will ask that you discontinue bringing yours to class.

I will be posting outlines of lecture of lecture notes online ***after*** each class, so you will have these to use as a resource. However, the posted notes are “bare bones” outlines and will not substitute for regular attendance and attention that allows you to take your own full set of notes on your own. If you need to miss a class, it would be advisable to see if

you can borrow a full set of notes from a classmate. I will also post announcements, schedule changes, and course-related materials electronically. It is your responsibility to keep up with posted materials, as well as class sessions.

Please note that materials posted for this class should be considered privileged. You may download and copy them for your own use, but they should not be forwarded to external recipients. This is particularly true of materials that might be posted by your classmates, which should not be shared with those outside the class without the explicit permission of the poster.

***Academic Honesty:*** As is the case for most students at UGA, I take academic honesty very seriously. I expect you to do your own work on exams and other assignments, in and out of class. I report suspected violations of academic honesty policies. If you have any concerns about academic honesty, please feel free to speak with me, in confidence, about them.

***Disability Status:*** If you have a documented disability, please speak to me as soon as possible in the term about any accommodations you need to do your best. Special accommodations, such as notetakers, alternative testing arrangements, or laptop use in class will be limited to those with disabilities ***documented by Disability Services at UGA.***

***Honors Options:*** I do permit this course to be taken with an Honors Option, for those students enrolled in the UGA Honors Program. Should you desire to do this, please speak to me no later than the second week of the semester. Typically, honors options students are asked to write an additional policy paper and to prepare a short presentation for the class as a whole, to be scheduled in the latter weeks of the course.

## **SYLLABUS**

*The syllabus that follows is a plan for the course that may be altered as the semester proceeds. Updates and alterations may be made by the instructor, in class, or via WebCT. Dates shown below for videos and/or guest speakers are tentative, subject to availability. Media presentations, such as videos and dvd's, and guest speakers may be added. Quizzes and exams must be taken on the dates shown below, and assignments must be turned in by deadlines shown on the syllabus.*

*Cockerham=Text recommended for purchase, shown above  
Other materials are held on reserve in the main library's electronic reserve system, password=fall2009.*

*Some materials relevant for the ethical issues discussions will be distributed as the course proceeds in class or electronically.*

### **Week One: Introduction to the Field of Medical Sociology: Explanation of Course Requirements**

T, Aug. 18: Introduction and Review of Requirements

Th, Aug. 20: The Development of the Field of Medical Sociology?

Read: Cockerham, chapter 1: The Development of Medical Sociology

Estroff and Henderson, "Social and Cultural Contributions to Health, Difference, and Inequality."

### **Week Two: Social and Cultural Dimensions of Illness and Health**

T, Aug. 25

Read Cockerham, chapter 2: Epidemiology

### **Ethical Issue: Abraham's Law: What is the Age of Consent for Medical Decision-Making?**

Th, Aug. 27: Race, Gender, and Medical Care

Read Avery, "The Health Status of Black Women"  
Freudenberg, "The Corporate Assault on Health"

### **Week Three: Social Factors in Incidence, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Illness**

T, Sept. 1 Read:

Cockerham, chapter 3: The Social Demography of Health: Race, Class, and Gender

Waldron, "What Do We Know about the Causes of Sex Differences in Mortality?"

Th, Sept. 3

Read:

Horton, "Women have Headaches, Men Have Backaches: Patterns of Illness in an Appalachian Community"

*Video: Susceptible to Kindness: Miss Evers' Boys*

**Ethical Issue: Was the Tuskegee Syphilis Study Defensible?**

### **Week Four: Inequalities in Health and Illness**

T, Sept. 8

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 4: The Social Demography of Health

McCord and Freeman, "Excess Mortality in Harlem"\*

Th, Sept. 10

Read:

Wilkinson, "Health Inequalities: Relative or Absolute Material Standards?"

Lee et al. "The Meanings of Race in the New Genomics"\*

*First quiz is Thursday, Sept. 10. To be given in latter part of class today.*

### **Week Five: Social Stress and Health Status**

T, Sept. 15

Read Cockerham, chapter 5. "Social Stress and Health"

House and Umberson, "Social Relationships and Health"

Th, Sept. 17

Read Blum, "Anorexia Nervosa in Context"

**Week Six: Health Behavior and Lifestyles**

T, Sept. 22

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 6: "Health Behavior and Lifestyles"

Knowles, "The Responsibility of the Individual"

*Possible guest speaker on sexuality issues in the college context.*

Th, Sept. 24

Read:

Smith, "Black Lung: The Social Production of Disease"

Lorber and Moore, "If a Situation is Defined as Real: Premenstrual Syndrome and Menopause"

**Ethical Issue:** (To be announced)

**Week Seven: Illness Behavior in Cultural Context**

T, Sept. 29

Read Cockerham, chapter 7: "Illness Behavior"

Barker, "Self-Help Literature and the Making of an Illness Identity: The Case of Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS)"

Th, Oct. 1

Read:

Cockerham, "Social Determinants of the Decline of Life Expectancy in Russia and Eastern Europe: A Lifestyle Explanation"

*Video: The Shaman's Apprentice: Natural Healing in the Amazon (964.1)*

### **Week Eight: The Sick Role (and its critiques)**

T, Oct. 6

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 8, “The Sick Role”

Th, Oct. 8

Read:

Zola, “Self, Identity and the Naming Question: reflections on the Language of Disability”

Brown, “Naming and Framing: The Social Construction of Diagnosis and Illness”\*

### **Week Nine: Doctor-Patient Interaction**

T, Oct. 13

Read Cockerham, chapter 9: “Doctor-Patient Interaction”

*Video: Women in Medicine (2472.1)*

Th, Oct 15:

***Midterm Exam will be given today.***

***NOTE: Oct. 22 is the withdrawal deadline for this semester***

### **Week Ten: Doctor-Patient Interaction and Medical Authority**

T, Oct. 20

Read:

Weitz, “Watching the Brain Die: the Rhetoric and the Reality of Informed Consent”

### **Ethical Issue: Who Gets to Make Life and Death Decisions?**

Th, Oct. 22

Read

Conrad, “Medicalization and Social Control”\*

## **Week Eleven: Options in Health Care**

T, Oct. 27:

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 10, "Healing Options"

Th, Oct. 29

Read:

Winnick, "From Quackery to 'Complementary' Medicine: The American Medical Profession Confronts Alternative Therapies"

*Fall break is Friday, Oct. 30*

## **Week Twelve: Physicians in Contemporary Society**

T, Nov. 3

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 11: Physicians

Starr, "The Growth of Medical Authority"

Th, Nov. 5

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 12: The Physician in a Changing Society"

Guillerman, "Babies by Caesarean: Who Chooses, Who Controls?"

## **Week Thirteen: Non-Physician Health Care Workers**

T, Nov. 10

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 13: "Nurses, Physicians, Pharmacists and Midwives"

*Video: All my Babies: Black Midwives in Georgia*

Th, Nov. 12

Read:

Reverby, "A Caring Dilemma: Womanhood and Nursing in Historical Perspective"

*Second quiz will be given in the latter part of class today*

**Week Fourteen: Hospitals and Other Health Care Institutions**

T, Nov. 17

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 14: The Hospital in Society

Th, Nov. 19

Harrington, "The Nursing Home Industry"

**Ethical Issue: The Ashley Case**

*Thanksgiving Break is from Nov. 23-27: No classes this week.*

**Week Fifteen: Health Care Systems in the U.S. and Elsewhere**

T, Dec. 1

Read:

Cockerham, chapter 15: "Health Care Delivery and Social Policy in the U.S."  
Secombe and Amey, "Playing by the Rules: Health Insurance and the Working Poor"  
Lee, "Health Policy, A Social Contract: Comparison of the U.S. and Canada"

*Video: Paying for Transplants*

**Ethical Issue: Should Organs be Bought and Sold?**

Th, Dec. 3:

Read Cockerham, chapter 16: Global Health Care  
Van Remsberg and Benatar, "The Legacy of Apartheid in Health and Health Care"

**Medical-Ethical Issues are due in today for a final grading. LATE JOURNALS CANNOT BE NOT ACCEPTED. Journals must be turned in as hard copies.**

**Dec. 3 is our last scheduled class day as Dec. 8 operates as a MWF schedule day.**

***The final examination for this class is scheduled for December 15, from 3:30-6:30 and MUST be taken at this time.***