

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
Department of Sociology  
**Sociology 321.01**  
**SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

Course Outline  
Winter 2008

Sociology Department Website: [www.soci.ucalgary.ca](http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca)

**Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Knaak**

Office / Phone number: SS 952 / 220-5982

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00-12:00 a.m. or by appointment

**Course e-mail: [soci321@ucalgary.ca](mailto:soci321@ucalgary.ca)**

Teaching Assistants

**Rebecca Godderis:**

Office hours: Tuesday, 3:30-4:30 pm, or by appointment. Office located at SS 901.

**Stephanie Talbot:**

Office hours: Thursday, 3:30-4:30 pm, or by appointment. Office located at SS 943.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to key areas of theoretical and empirical investigation in the sociology of health and illness, one of the largest sub-disciplines in sociology. Major topics covered in this course include: a study of the determinants of health, an introduction to the phenomenon of medicalization and to the social construction of health and illness, an introduction to the sociological study of the experience of illness, and a study of the health care system and its professions.

This course is primarily lecture-based. By the end of this course, you will understand how to apply a specifically *sociological* lens to various issues and topics within the arena of health and illness. The specific objectives for this course are as follows:

- To learn key terms and concepts in the sociology of health and illness;
- To develop an understanding of the main areas in which sociology contributes—both theoretically and empirically—in furthering our knowledge and understanding of health, illness, and medicine;
- To gain an understanding about the social determinants of health;
- To become introduced to the sociological study of the experience of illness;
- To gain an understanding of how medical knowledge and practice is shaped by social, cultural, historical and political forces;
- To become familiar with the medicalization thesis;
- To become more informed about the history and organization of the Canadian health care system and its professions.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There are two required texts for this class. They are as follows:

- Clarke, Juane Nancarrow. 2004. *Health, Illness, and Medicine in Canada, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Don Mill, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- DeGrandpre, Richard. 2000. *Ritalin Nation*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

The Clarke text is the main text for this class. You are expected to complete the assigned readings *in advance* of the lecture for which they are assigned. Doing so will enhance your experience of the lectures, and will also better facilitate your learning of the material. Completing the assigned readings ahead of time also allows for the possibility of more interesting discussion and consideration of the course material.

The DeGrandpre book is to be read independently. It is strongly recommended that you begin reading this book early in the term, as a review of this book is one of the major evaluation components for this course (see below).

Both books are available at the University Bookstore. There are also two copies of each book available on two-hour reserve at the library.

## EVALUATION

Your final grade will be based on the following evaluation components:

Mid-term Exam (in-class)	February 14	35%
Book Review	March 20	30%
<u>Registrar-Scheduled Final Exam</u>	<u>TBA</u>	<u>35%</u>
Total		100%

**Mid-term and final exam:** The mid-term will cover all material up until the exam date. The final exam will cover all material from the date of the mid-term to the end of term. The final exam will be a Registrar-scheduled Final Examination. Material for the exams will be drawn from assigned readings, lectures, as well as any films and/or guest lectures. Exams will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions.

**Book review:** You will write a 4-6 paper on the DeGrandpre book, *Ritalin Nation*. Your paper is expected to include the following: a brief summary/overview of the book's key themes, a discussion of how the book's arguments/findings connect up with concepts you have been learning in the course, and some personal reflection/discussion of what you thought of the book and/or what you will take away from it. More details about this assignment will be provided in class.

The papers are to be handed in **at the beginning of class (2:00 p.m.) in the classroom on March 20**. Do not put papers under anyone's office door—they will not be considered for grading if submitted in this fashion. Important Note: Extensions for late papers will be penalized

with the loss of 10% for each day late. If you anticipate a problem with the deadline, you are welcome to hand in your paper ahead of the due date. In the case of extenuating circumstances, you must have appropriate documentation to avoid a late penalty and you must inform the instructor or a T.A. before the deadline if this is the case.

## GRADING SYSTEM

A+ = 95-100	B+ = 80-84	C+ = 67-69;	D+ = 55-59
A = 90-94	B = 75-79	C = 63-66	D = 50-54
A- = 85-89	B- = 70-74	C- = 60-62	F = 0-49

*Please note: the grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.*

## COURSE STANDARDS

**Deferrals:** You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an exam due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original test as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred test. Deferred tests will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Deferral requests for *final examinations* go through the Dean’s office and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U. of C. Calendar. If you wish to make such a request you should go to the Faculty of Social Sciences Office where you can get the appropriate paperwork for completion. The Dean then needs to approve your request. The instructor is not involved in this decision.

**Ethics Research:** Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

**Academic Misconduct:** cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

**The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)** legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students

individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

**Safewalk:** The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

**Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers and Release of Final Grades:**

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

**Academic Accommodation:** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. *It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.*

**READING SCHEDULE:**

This schedule is subject to revisions and will be updated in class if there are changes.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 15, 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• Thinking sociologically about health and illness (theoretical perspectives)</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 1-2</i>	
<b>Week 2</b> Jan 22, 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical perspectives, cont.</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 1-2</i>	<i>Jan 25: add/drop deadline</i>
<b>Week 3</b> Jan 29, 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social determinants of health and illness</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 3-6</i>	
<b>Week 4</b> Feb 5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social causes cont.</li> <li>• Social-psychological explanations of illness: stress, social support, beliefs</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 3-6</i>  <i>Ch. 7</i>	
<b>Week 5</b> Feb 12, 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-term exam</li> </ul>		<b><i>Mid-term exam: Feb 14, in-class</i></b>
<b>Week 6</b> Feb 19, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reading week: no lectures</i></li> </ul>		<i>Reading Week</i>
<b>Week 7</b> Feb 26, 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The experience of illness</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 8</i>	
<b>Week 8</b> Mar 4, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The social construction of medical knowledge; medicalization</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 9-10</i>	
<b>Week 9</b> Mar 11, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The social construction of medical knowledge; medicalization, cont.</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 9-10</i>	
<b>Week 10</b> Mar 18, 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mar 18: class time devoted to book review</li> <li>• Canada's medical system</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 11-12</i>	<b><i>Book Review due: March 20, in class</i></b>
<b>Week 11</b> Mar 25, 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada's medical system cont.</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 11-12</i>	
<b>Week 12</b> April 1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alternative &amp; complementary medicine</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 15</i>	
<b>Week 13</b> April 8, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The medical-industrial complex</li> </ul>	<i>Ch. 16</i>	
<b>Week 14</b> April 15, 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap up and review</li> </ul>		
<b>Final Exam</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam dates: April 21-30</li> </ul>		Date & location TBD