

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Department of Sociology
Sociology 321.01
Sociology of Health and Illness
Winter 2010

Instructor: Dr. A.W. Frank

Office: SS 916

Email: frank@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 11:30-12:30, or by appointment

Classroom: ST 131

Course hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 2-3:15

Sociology Department web page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

Course objectives:

The course offers an introductory survey of issues in health and illness from a sociological perspective. Whatever the topic, we will raise questions about *power*; we will consider forms of *knowledge* (including science) as comparative belief systems; and we will be interested in what *identities* (or subject positions) people find available to assume. The course is about what counts as health and as *illness* in a particular society, how those understandings are held in place, and who is affected in what ways by the particulars of what counts and doesn't count.

A sociological perspective need not, however, be relativist. Books by David Hilfiker and about Paul Farmer are assigned, in part, because these people are immensely admirable; they are good personal and professional role models. Conditions of nursing work described by Rankin and Campbell are wrong from a bioethics perspective. The sociological problem is to confront both sympathies and dislikes with what Max Weber called "inconvenient facts"; that is, asking what arguments or data might require thinking otherwise about the issue. Thus, while sociological observations are rarely disinterested, they do attempt to be pluralistically interested, always asking who would think differently and why.

Because we have only thirteen weeks, not everything that's important can be covered. The course will spend unfortunately little time on social determinants of health or on epidemiology (the distribution of disease prevalence). Lack of attention to environmental health is a serious gap in the course, especially in Alberta. We will focus almost exclusively on healthcare institutions in the North America and treat global health issues in generalities. We will spend very little time on mental illness. We will be especially concerned with medical work, and we will consider delivery of healthcare services from the perspective of medical workers.

Required Texts for purchase:

- David Hilfiker, *Healing the Wounds*. Creighton University Press. 978-1881871231
- Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer*. Random House. 978-0812980554
- Janet Rankin and Marie Campbell, *Managing to Nurse: Inside Canada's Health Care Reform*. University of Toronto Press. 0-8020-3791-7

Course Requirements:

Final grades will be based on three components: two in-class examinations (each worth one-third of the final grade) and a take-home final essay (one third). Grades on the final essay will tip the balance for grade averages falling between marks (e.g., 2.5 between C+ and B-). Note that exams and the paper will cover lecture materials in addition to assigned reading. (See *Missed examinations*, below.)

- February 11
- March 16
- Due April 26

Grading scale:

90-100%, A
 80-89%, A-
 77-79%, B+
 74-76%, B
 70-73%, B-
 67-69%, C+
 64-66%, C
 60-63%, C-
 56-59%, D+
 50-55%, D
 0-49%, F

Missed examinations: Due to the scarcity of comparable questions, *no re-takes or extensions* will be allowed on the scheduled examinations. Students who miss either examination will have their grades determined by the remaining two assignments, with the heavier weight on the final paper.

- Only medical excuses will be accepted as reason for missing a scheduled examination. These excuses must specify that the student was incapable of completing the required work, not simply that you saw a physician on a certain day (but the nature of your medical problem is private and need not be included in the physician's note).
- Requirements in other courses, job commitments, or personal engagements are not acceptable reasons for missing the exams.
- N1H1 contingency: If the virus continues during Winter Term, University policy is that medical excuses are *not required* for illness suspected to be H1N1.

University policy also recommends staying at home if you are suspicious you might be ill.

Format of final take-home exam: Length, 600 words, *absolute*. Spelling, syntax, and the organization of ideas will count in the grade. Careful editing is crucial.

The take-home essays should be typed or printed, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with pages numbered and stapled together. The student's name and ID# should appear in the upper corner of the first page. Please do not put papers in covers.

Grades and Return of final essays: Papers will *not* be returned through the Sociology Department Office. Students who want their papers returned by mail should attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Keep a copy: As in every course, my friendly advice is to keep a printed copy of all work you submit. At some point you should have printed at least one draft to edit on paper; keep that too. Students who might want a letter of recommendation should keep copies of their written term work (again, good advice in all courses).

Lecture schedule and readings:

January 12, 14 – David Hikfiker, *Healing the Wounds*

January 19, 21 – Hilfiker, continued

January 26, 28 – Hilfiker, concluded

February 2, 4 – Rankin & Campbell, *Managing to Nurse*

February 9, 11 – R&C, continued; first exam, Feb. 11

February 16, 18 – Reading Week, no classes or office hours

February 23, 25 – R&C, concluded.

March 2, 4 – Illness experience; readings to be posted on Blackboard

March 9, 11 – Illness experience

March 16, 18 – exam on course material since February 11; begin Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (on Paul Farmer)

March 23, 25 – Kidder, continued

March 30, April 1 – Kidder, concluded

April 6, 8 – Death & dying (reading to be posted on Blackboard)

April 13, 15 – review and concluding comments.

Mandatory Notices:

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination 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 an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam 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 exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

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. Term 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.

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.**

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.