

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Department of Sociology
Sociology 419.06, Lecture 2
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Course Outline
Winter 2008
Sociology Department Website: www.soci.ucalgary.ca

Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Knaak
Office / Phone number: SS952 / 220-5982
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00-12:00
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is an exploration of how social processes play a role in the creation and shaping of knowledge about illness and health. The primary focus of the course is to examine how various diseases are conceptualized, categorized and defined, and to examine how various political, economic, and ideological forces influence these activities. This theme will be taken up with respect to a number of well-known health issues, including depression, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, attention deficit disorder, PMS, and others. We will also examine the medical management of the phenomenon of intersexuality through a social constructionist lens.

The specific objective of this course is that students become versed in various theoretical applications pertaining to the social construction of health and illness and the medicalization thesis. By the end of this course, students will be able to apply a sociological lens to various questions about the boundaries and definitions of health issues, and will have a solid theoretical understanding how medical knowledge and practices—as well as the very boundaries between normal and abnormal, healthy and ill—are shaped by social, cultural, historical and political forces.

This course is a senior undergraduate seminar course. As such, it is not lecture-based, but *discussion-based*. The course thus demands a high degree of involvement and in-class participation from students.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following are the required texts for this class:

- Moynihan, Ray and Alan Cassels. 2005. *Selling Sickness*. Vancouver/Toronto: Greystone Books.
- Kessler, Suzanne. 2002. *Lessons from the Intersexed*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Figert, Anne. 1996. *Women and the Ownership of PMS: The Structuring of a Psychiatric Disorder*. New York: Aldine de Gruyer.
- *Sociology 419 Custom Course Packet*, available at the bookstore.

Because this course is designed as a seminar, it is expected that assigned readings are completed *in advance* of the class for which they are assigned. This is an important requirement, as the success of any seminar class depends heavily on the active involvement of all class participants.

All assigned books are available at the University Bookstore. There is also a copy of each book (with the exception of the reading packet) available on two-hour reserve at the library.

EVALUATION

Your final grade will be calculated according to the following:

Participation (attendance, listening, discussion, preparation)	30%
Leading class discussion (2X)	15%
Mid-term exam (in-class: February 14)	25%
Final paper (due: Tuesday, April 22)	30%
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 100%

Attendance and Participation: attendance and participation in class is expected. Your grade for this component of the course will be based on a combination of attendance, listening skills, and engagement in class discussions. I am well aware that speaking out in class is easier for some people than for others. As such, the “participation” portion of this grade will not just be based on the *quantity* of your comments, questions, and discussion, but also on their quality. In order to facilitate class participation and discussion, it is expected that you come to each class with *at least one* comment, question, or discussion point about the assigned reading.

Leading class discussion: Each student will have *two* occasions during the course to be in charge of leading the class. A sign-up sheet will be passed along on the first day of class. It is expected that for many of the classes, there will be two students signed-up, meaning that the responsibility for that day will be shared. Students’ responsibilities for this component include: providing an overview of the key points of the assigned reading, and generating comments/questions/discussion points for the group about the assigned reading. Grading for this portion will be based on a combination of both content and delivery.

Mid-term exam: The mid-term will cover all material up until the exam date. The exam will be written in-class on Thursday, February 14. The exam will be open-ended, consisting of both short and long answer questions.

Final paper: For your final paper, you will write a 5-7 page paper on the assigned book, *Women and the Ownership of PMS*. Your paper is expected to include the following components: a summary/overview of the book’s key themes and arguments, a discussion of how the book’s arguments/findings connect up with other material and ideas from this course, and some personal reflection/discussion of what you thought of the book and/or what you will take away from it.

The final paper is due by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 22. Papers are to be dropped off in my office (SS 952) and **must be** handed in by 4:00 pm. More details about the final paper will be provided in class.

Note: 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 before the deadline if this is the case.

Final papers cannot 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 their paper. Otherwise, final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of the term or the beginning of the next term.

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

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 (SS209) 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 subject 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.

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.

READING SCHEDULE:

Any updates or changes to the reading schedule will be provided in class. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out about any such changes or updates.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Week 1 Jan 15, 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to course 	Handout	
Week 2 Jan 22, 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical grounding in the social construction of health and illness 	Handout; Course pack: Reading #2 (Rosenberg)	<i>Jan 25: add/drop deadline</i>
Week 3 Jan 29, 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical grounding cont. 	Reading #3 (Turner); #4 (Brown);	
Week 4 Feb 5, 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theoretical grounding cont. 	Reading #5 (Zola); #7 (Lupton)	
Week 5 Feb 12, 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term exam 		<i>Mid-term exam: Feb 14, in-class</i>
Week 6 Feb 19, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reading week: no lectures</i> 		<i>Reading Week</i>
Week 7 Feb 26, 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selling Sickness” • <i>Feb. 28: TBD</i> 	Chap 1	
Week 8 Mar 4, 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selling Sickness” 	Ch. 2-3	
Week 9 Mar 11, 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selling Sickness” 	Ch. 4 Reading #6 (Conrad) Ch. 5	
Week 10 Mar 18, 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selling Sickness” 	Ch. 7 Ch. 8-9	
Week 11 Mar 25, 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Selling Sickness” • “Lessons from the Intersexed” 	Ch10; epilogue Intro	
Week 12 April 1, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lessons from the Intersexed” 	Ch. 1-2	
Week 13 April 8, 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lessons from the Intersexed” 	Ch. 3-4	
Week 14 April 15, 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Lessons from the Intersexed” 	Ch. 5-6	
Exam Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final paper due April 22 		<i>Due: April 22, 4:00 pm</i>