

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
University of Calgary  
Sociology 419.9, Lec 02  
Winter 2012

Encounters Between Medicine and Illness

Instructor: Dr. Arthur W. Frank

Office: SS 916

Office hours: MW, 12-12:45, or by appointment

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Classroom: SS 064

Class Hours: MWF, 11-11:50

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

Course Objectives:

This special topics seminar studies the different work done by physicians and by patients, with an emphasis on the former. My concept of *work* includes both sustaining membership in a lifeworld (Alfred Schutz, Jurgen Habermas) and playing the game of a bounded field (Pierre Bourdieu). *Work* also involves meeting the expectations of those who share a particular *habitus* (Norbert Elias, Bourdieu). The most general questions posed by the course include the possibility and limits of intersubjective understanding, the nature of suffering, and the ways of responding to suffering.

We will study different genres of texts that depict the worlds of illness and medical treatment, principally social scientific ethnography and fiction by physicians. Underlying the substantive material are methodological and epistemological questions about genres of texts (again, ethnographic and fictional) and what forms of knowledge are imparted by different forms of writing.

Class sessions will be both didactic and participatory. Lectures will discuss the method of “socio-narratology” and how a new sociology of literature can be developed. Lectures will also talk about sociology of the medical profession, bioethics, and my previous work on illness experience.

Student participation will begin with short (5 minutes) writing in response to “prompts” or concise questions that provide take-offs for reflection. Students will then share their writings with the whole class for group discussion. These writing assignments will be submitted for a participation grade.

The course is a seminar, and which directions we take will be affected by interests that emerge in the process of group discussion.

Required Texts (in order of reading):

Jack Coulehan, editor. *Chekhov's Doctors*.  
 Emily Martin, *Bipolar Expeditions*.  
 Cheryl Mattingly, *The Paradox of Hope*.  
 Vincent Lam, *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures*.  
 Abraham Verghese, *Cutting for Stone*.

*Recommended:* Danielle Ofri, *Singular Intimacies*.

Course Requirements:

Final graders will be based on three components:

- a participation grade, based on writings done in class in response to prompts;
  - at the start of about half the classes, students will write one or two pages in response to prompt/question; these will be discussed during class and handed in after class;
  - grades to be based on number completed and how well the writing demonstrates preparation for class;
  - 25% of final course grade;
- a take-home exam on Mattingly; due February 27;
  - 2 essay questions; 5 pages (double spaced);
  - 25% of final course grade;
- a final essay written in response to suggested topics; 7-8 pp.; due 9:00 a.m., Monday, April 17; 50% of final course grade.
  - Papers should be presented in 12-point font, double spaced, no covers or title page; student name in upper corner of first page;
  - Citations should be primarily to assigned readings; cite pages in parentheses after quotations, with author's name (e.g., Mattingly, 54). Citations to other writing should be listed in a reference list using any standard citation format;
  - Primary grading criteria are: how well the paper displays understanding of the substantive and methodological content of the course; overall interest of the topic and discussion; logical development of the argument and quality of writing.
  - Additional advice for writing will be posted on Blackboard.

Missed examinations and late submissions: There are no examinations in this course. Essays submitted late will have one grade deducted for each day (Monday-Friday, Saturday/Sunday), e.g., C+ to C. See University policy for acceptable excuses for lateness.

Submission of work: All essays should be handed in either in class or under the instructor's door, SS 916. Do not submit work to the Sociology Department office.

Return of work: Students who want their final essays returned should attach a stamped, self-address envelope. *Keep a copy* of all work submitted.

Reading and discussion schedule:

January 9-11-13 -- Chekhov's stories  
 January 16-18-20 -- Chekhov continued  
 January 23-25-27 -- Chekhov concluded

January 30-February 1, 3 -- Mattingly, *Paradox*, chapters 1-3  
 February 6-8-10 -- Mattingly, chapters 4-6  
 February 13-15-17 -- Mattingly, chapters 7-8 (take-home exam given out, Feb. 17)

Reading Week

February 27 -- Take-home exam due (two essay questions)  
 February 29, March 2 -- Martin, *Bipolar*, Introduction, chapters 1, 2  
 March 5-7-9 -- Martin, chapters 3/4, 5/6, 7  
 March 12-14-16 -- Martin, chapters 8, 9, Conclusion

March 19-21-23 -- Lam, *Cures*  
 March 26-28-30 -- Lam, continued  
 April 2-4-6 -- Verghese, *Cutting*  
 April 9-11-13 -- Verghese continued

Note: The Bookstore was uncertain about the availability of Orfi's *Singular Intimacies* until after the other books had been ordered, so it is recommended, not assigned. It's especially interesting as an example of a physician writing non-fiction about her experiences, compared to Lam and Verghese writing fiction. I hope we will discuss Ofri and there will be provision to include her in the final essay, but her work is not required reading for the course.

The instructor's writing on topics relevant to the course include: *At the Will of the Body* (1991/2002), *The Wounded Storyteller* (1995, new edition forthcoming), *The Renewal of Generosity* (2004), and *Letting Stories Breathe* (2010). My own writing has focused on stories by ill people, and this seminar represents my own movement to consider physician stories and to extend my framework for the study of narrative to fictional writing.

The Fine Print (mandatory):

**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.**