SOCY107801: Sociology of Health and Illness (3 Credits)
Boston College Summer Session 2019
Summer 2: Tuesday, June 25 – Thursday, August 1
Tuesday and Thursdays, 6:00 PM – 9:15 PM

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Office Hours: Thursdays 4:30 PM – 5:30 PM, and by appointment.

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description
The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This course will consider this whole-person definition across the human life course using a range of sociological principles and perspectives. Major topics will include the structure of health care systems in the United States and globally, doctor-patient interaction, social and cultural influences on health and disease, and social disparities in the distribution of health and quality health care.

Canvas
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit
assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click here.

**Course Objectives**
1. The student will apply social science knowledge to contemporary social problems related to health and illness, including ways to improve the human condition and promote justice through in-class discussion and a research paper.
2. The student will employ one or more social science methods or social science theories and philosophies through in-class writing assignments and a research paper.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age on one’s health as evidenced by in-class discussion, group work, and/or writing.
4. The student will demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to health practitioners, consumers, health activists, and policy makers as evidenced by in-class discussions and a research paper.

**Grading**
The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:
- A (4.00), A- (3.67)
- B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
- C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
- D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
- F (.00)

The graduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:
- A (4.00), A- (3.67)
- B+ (3.33), B (3.00)
- B- (2.67), passing but does not count toward degree
- C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit
- F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

**Deadlines and Late Work**
Late work will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor or evidence of sickness, a family emergency, etc.

**Course Assignments**
It is expected that you will spend 6-10 hours per week on out-of-class assignments and reading. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 8 hours per week over the semester.

*Please see the end of the syllabus for a full list of assignments, assignment descriptions, and due dates*

**Course Schedule – Please either use the table below, or create another easy-to-understand calendar/schedule.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Due Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Introduction/Theory</td>
<td>Cockerham, W.C. Chapter 1 of <em>Medical Sociology</em> 14th edition 4-26.</td>
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<td>Tuesday, June 25th</td>
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<td>Thursday, June 27th</td>
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<td>Tuesday, July 2nd</td>
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<td>Class 4</td>
<td>No Class Independence Day</td>
<td>No Reading</td>
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<td>Thursday, July 4th</td>
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<td>Tuesday, July 9th</td>
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<td>Thursday, July 11th</td>
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<td>Tuesday, July 16th</td>
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**Written Work**

Summer Session students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed and submitted in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA or CLA style per your instructor’s requirements. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation and spelling. For writing support, please contact the [Connors Family Learning Center](#).

**Attendance**

Attending class is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. When circumstances prevent a student from attending class, the student is responsible for contacting the instructor before the class meets. Students who miss class are still expected to complete all assignments and meet all deadlines. Many instructors grade for participation; if you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Makeup work may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class.

Consistent with BC’s commitment to creating a learning environment that is respectful of persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing their academic status. Students are responsible for reviewing course syllabi as soon as possible, and for communicating with the instructor promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. Students are responsible for completing all class requirements for days missed due to conflicts with religious holidays.
Accommodation and Accessibility
Boston College is committed to providing accommodations to students, faculty, staff and visitors with disabilities.
Specific documentation from the appropriate office is required for students seeking accommodation in Summer Session courses. Advanced notice and formal registration with the appropriate office is required to facilitate this process. There are two separate offices at BC that coordinate services for students with disabilities:

The Connors Family Learning Center (CFLC) coordinates services for students with LD and ADHD. The Disabilities Services Office (DSO) coordinates services for all other disabilities.

Find out more about BC’s commitment to accessibility at www.bc.edu/sites/accessibility.

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
Students in Summer Session courses must produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to cite references is plagiarism. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on exams or assignments, or submitting the same material or substantially similar material to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work. Please see the Boston College policy on academic integrity for more information.
Class Assignments

Participation (15%): Participation is the most vital component of our course. It is in class discussion that we learn most about the readings, ourselves, and each other. There are also times when in-class opportunities are small group or pair-based. Therefore, it is crucial that you attend each class, come prepared having read and being ready to discuss the material, and so that we can maintain an engaging and empowering environment. I recognize that participating and speaking up in class may not be easy or preferred for some, so please see me to discuss concerns and other forms of participation so that your grade will not be negatively impacted.

Article Critique / Presentation (20%): You will choose an article from the preapproved list at the end of the syllabus, or one that you have found that I approve, and deliver a short presentation around four themes: a) Comprehension – what is the argument? What evidence is given for the argument? b) Critique – How would you evaluate the logic consistency, evidence, and applicability of this article? c) Comparison – How does this article extend and build on the theoretical traditions developed in this course? d) Connection – In what ways can this article be used to better understand health, illness, and medicine in the contemporary world? You can alternatively turn in a 5-page paper answering the same questions. You must email me at least two days before the class you plan on presenting in so I can plan my schedule accordingly.

Article critiques and presentations must be submitted and presented by Tuesday, July 30th.

Media Analysis (25%): You will choose some cultural object (novel, movie, television show) that represents health, illness, or medicine, and analyze it using the theories we have developed in this course. The paper should be 5-to-6 pages long double spaced. I have provided additional guidelines for you all below.

Due by Thursday, July 11th at the start of class.

Final Exam (30%): The final exam will be part short answer, true/false questions and part essays. This exam will cover all the material from the course.
Medicalization, Biomedicalization, Geneticization

- Shell-Duncan, B. (2001). The medicalization of female “circumcision”: harm reduction or promotion of a dangerous practice?. *Social Science & Medicine, 52*(7), 1013-1028.

Social Determinants of Health – Race


Social Determinants of Health – Class


**Social Determinants of Health – Gender**


**Illness Narratives**


**Alternative Medicine**


**Social Control and Deviance**


**Social Relationships and Health**

Media Analysis Assignment

Due: July 11th, 2019

In this 5- to 6-page assignment you will choose some cultural object (novel, movie, television show, documentary) that represents health, illness, or medicine, and analyze it using the theories we have developed in this course. At the beginning of the paper you will need to specify which cultural object you watched or read for your analysis. In this assignment I would like you to consider some of the following questions: What is the message of the cultural object as it relates to this course? How does this media present health, illness, or medicine? Which theory could be used to explain this representation? Do you find this media’s representation of health, illness, or medicine accurate? Please argue why or why not.

Please make sure that you are not simply summarizing the cultural object you are analyzing. This assignment requires you to think critically and apply the concepts of this course to examine how health, illness, or medicine is being represented. I want to see that you have mastered the material being taught in this course and are able to apply it to the cultural object you are examining. Below I have provided you with a list of options that I thought of as well as more specific guidelines.

Media Ideas:
- Still Alice (2015)
- Unrest (2017) – documentary
- Atypical
- Being Mortal by Atul Gawande
- Ordinary Medicine by Sharon Kaufman
- Better Than Well by Carl Elliott
- Take Your Pills

Assignment Guidelines:
- You will write 5- to 6-pages, double spaced, and include page numbers (top right corner).
- You will need to write a thesis statement.
- 12-point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins.
- Include 2-3 citations in the paper. Two of these should be academic sources.
- Please use APA format for your in-text citations and references.
- Do not call it media analysis assignment. Think of a fun title! 😊