

Life Histories (Anth/Soc 264, Spring 2003)

Thomas G. McGowan, Ph. D. Office: C107; #843-3932
Associate Professor of Sociology Office hrs: T and Th 2:40-4pm; and W 2-3pm

Course Statement

This is a service-learning course that combines phenomenological fieldwork, medical sociology and the applied study of HIV/AIDS in Memphis. Phenomenology is the study of the way experience is represented to consciousness and expressed through language and interaction. Your fieldwork experience will provide you with opportunities to observe the way your conscious interpretations of self and other are constituted through socialization, culture and ongoing, constitutive acts. The experience of encountering the other, in this case, a person living with HIV In Memphis, and representing his or her life experience, will position you to examine your own foregrounding and cultural positioning. This process of analyzing the forces constitutive of your conscious interpretation of the other is a practical skill that leads to self insight and ontological development. Exploring and practicing this skill is the key objective of this course. To the extent that you become consciously aware of this skill and how it may be deliberately practiced, you will have succeeded in this course.

The fact that the other with whom you will be working is living with HIV makes the task before you especially interesting and challenging. Persons living with HIV (PLWHA) are stigmatized and discriminated against. As such, they stand to benefit from the opportunity to tell their story to an engaged listener. You stand to benefit from the experience as well since you have been subjected to the same stereotypes that form the societal basis of AIDS based stigma and discrimination. Through your interaction with your companion you will be forced to address, unpack, and own your own taken-for-granted assumptions about what HIV is and what it means to live with HIV/AIDS. You will be prepared for this task through a combination of reading, course lectures and discussions.

Course Requirements/Grading

Mandatory class attendance and participation:	15%
Quality of journaling:	15%
Consistency and quality of field meetings:	15%
Quality of Life History paper:	55%

Tuesday	1/21	Course overview and an overview of HIV in Memphis: Reviewing the Southwest Tennessee HIV Care Consortium Needs Assessment (McGowan)
Thursday	1/23	History and Discovery of HIV/ AIDS Discuss Schoub's "Introduction" to <i>HIV and AIDS in Perspective</i> and Cockerham's "Epidemiology" in <i>Medical Sociology</i> .
Tuesday	1/28	Pattern 1 and Pattern 2 AIDS and the clinical stages of HIV Discuss Schoub's "What is AIDS and how does it manifest itself?"
Thursday	1/30	HIV Transmission Discuss Schoub's "The transmission of HIV infection" and "The ethics of AIDS."
Tuesday	2/4	Gadamer's 3 Modes of Interaction Discuss handout on Gadamer.
Thursday	2/6	The Importance of the Question

Introductions to companions begin- First meetings are scheduled according to student, companion and professor's availability

Tuesday	2/11	Debriefing: Observations and Tales From the Field.
Thursday	2/13	Sociological predictors of health Discuss Cockerham's "The social demography of health."
Tuesday	2/18	The Sick role Discuss Cockerham's "The sick role."
Thursday	2/20	Class does not meet as scheduled.
Tuesday	2/25	Debriefing
Thursday	2/27	The Doctor-Patient Interaction Discuss Cockerham's "Doctor-Patient Interaction" and "Preface" to Foucault's <i>The Birth of the Clinic</i> .

Tuesday	3/4	Class does not meet as scheduled (Individual meetings as scheduled)
Thursday	3/6	Debriefing
Tuesday	3/11	Spring Break
Thursday	3/13	Spring Break
Tuesday	3/18	Stigma Discuss Goffman's <i>Stigma</i> .
Thursday	3/20	Class does not meet as scheduled. (Individual meetings as scheduled)
Tuesday	3/25	Debriefing
Thursday	3/27	Class does not meet. (Individual meetings as scheduled)
Tuesday	4/1	Class does not meet. (Individual meetings as scheduled)
Thursday	4/3	Debriefing
Tuesday	4/8	Class does not meet . (Individual meetings as scheduled)
Thursday	4/10	Debriefing, Discussion of Paper
Tuesday	4/15	Debriefing
Thursday	4/17	Easter Break
Tuesday	4/22	Debriefing
Thursday	4/24	Discussion of Paper
Tuesday	4/29	Class does not meet. (Individual meetings as scheduled)
Thursday	5/1	Final Class Debriefing

