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ANSO 303-01 Medical Sociology, Spring 2006

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An/Soc 303: Medical Sociology (Spring 2006)

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Course Statement

Health was once defined as the absence of disease. However, the definition of health has been reconfigured to mean physical, psychological and socio-cultural wellness. This means that health encompasses the body, the mind, and the social and cultural world in which one lives. Health is therefore *an ontological condition that pertains to the quality and sustainability of one's existence*. This is the context out of which the field of medical sociology has emerged.

Medical sociology is the theoretical, empirical and applied study of the social dimensions of health, illness, disease and the provision and consumption of health care. Topics that will be covered in this course include epidemiology, social demography of health, the problem of meaning as it pertains to health care, medical compliance and cultural competence, the physician socialization and the doctor-patient relationship, the organization of health care and medical practice, and the moral and ethical aspects of health care practice and policy.

In this course we will also study the work of Dr. Paul Farmer. Farmer views poor health as a human rights issue directly related to economic inequality and political oppression. Farmer challenges us to approach professional practice as a moral issue requiring great dedication, commitment and courage. Our goal is to draw out the implications of Farmer's work for the practice of medical sociology in Memphis and beyond. It is possible that your intentions regarding your professional development may be shaken to the core by Farmer's work and your experiences in this course. For this reason you should reflect on how willing you are to be problematized by experiences which may result in self change.

Attendance

This course will combine class discussion of course readings with ongoing fieldwork. Class attendance is mandatory, and three unexcused absences will qualify you for an automatic "F."

Preparatory Writing Assignments

In preparation for every class meeting you will prepare a written response to an assigned question. Your work should reflect a minimum of two hours of preparation, reflection and/or secondary research in addition to the time spent reading the assignment. Your written response to the question(s) should be single spaced (12 point Times New Roman font) and edited so as not to exceed one page in length. Papers are to be handed in at the conclusion of each class meeting.

Community Related Research Term Project/Paper

You are required to spend 40 hours during the semester researching a topic that is relevant and important to the Memphis community. Research topic choices include: 1) infant mortality in 38108; 2) content analyses of focus group discussions of PLWHA; 3) assisting with the evaluation of a HIV/STD prevention program at 201 Poplar; 4) assisting with the planning and implementation of community health fairs and testing events; 5) transcribing and interpreting interviews with community residents regarding barriers to health care access, 6) conducting a survey of residences at risk for lead paint contamination and 7) transcribing and interpreting interviews with community residents living along Cypress Creek. You may also select a research topic of your choice provided the topic is relevant and important to the Memphis community and involves direct contact with community residents, patients or clients. Your research will be presented in a term research paper that is due the final week of the semester. To prepare you for your community related research work there will be two mandatory field assignments, each of which will count toward the completion of your 40 hours of applied work for the semester. One assignment will involve a sojourn into the Hollywood Springdale area Northeast of the Rhodes campus; the second assignment will involve getting tested for HIV at the Memphis/Shelby County Health Department on Jefferson Avenue.

Exams

There will be two exams in this course - a midterm exam and a final exam. Both will be essay and short answer exams that will be taken under exam conditions. They are worth a total of 45% of your final grade.

Evaluation

Participation in class discussions	5%
Preparatory writing assignments	25%
Community related research (40 hrs.)	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	25%

Required Texts

Medical Sociology (9th edition), 2004. William Cockerham. Pearson: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Mountains Beyond Mountains, 2003. Tracy Kidder. Random House: New York, NY.

Pathologies of Power, 2003. Paul Farmer. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA.

Thursday	1/12	Course objectives and primer on sociology
Tuesday	1/17	Social structure: Sociology's unit of analysis Discuss excerpt from Durkheim's <i>Rules of Sociological Method</i> , excerpt from Mill's <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> and Part I of <i>Mountains Beyond Mountains</i> . Preparation question: <i>In what sense does Farmer's work exemplify the sociological imagination?</i>
Thursday	1/19	Sociology as science: Positivism and paradigmatic alternatives Discuss excerpt from Babbie's <i>The Practice of Social Research</i> . Preparation question: <i>What is positivism and what do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of positivist sociology?</i>
Tuesday	1/24	What is medical sociology? Discuss chapter 1 in Cockerham and the Introduction and chapter 1 in Farmer's <i>Pathologies of Power</i> . Preparation question: <i>Use Straus' distinction between sociology "in medicine" and sociology "of medicine" as a basis for describing and categorizing Farmer's work. In what sense is the concept of "structural violence" sociological and what are the implications of structural violence for our understanding of health?</i>
Thursday	1/26	Epidemiology and the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS Discuss chapter 2 in Cockerham and excerpt from Schoub's <i>AIDS and HIV in Perspective</i> . Preparation questions: <i>What is the difference between HIV and AIDS? How is HIV transmitted? How has the prevalence and incidence of HIV changed in the US, Eastern Europe and Africa since the early 1990's? What sociological variables explain the current epi pattern in the US?</i>
Tuesday	1/31	Structural violence, politics and the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS Discuss chapter two in Farmer's <i>Pathologies of Power</i> and section one of the 2006 Southwest Tennessee HIV/AIDS Care Consortium Needs Assessment (McGowan). Preparation question: <i>What does the HIV/AIDS epi pattern in Memphis/Shelby County indicate about social problems and policies in our area?</i>
WED	2/1 8PM	FILM <i>And the Band Played On</i> Location TBA

Thursday	2/2	<p>Health and the problem of meaning Discuss chapter 4 in Cockerham and the article by Iwama. Preparation question: <i>Based on your readings, in what sense is the interpretation of meaning a key variable related to the health and behavior of people and the practice of medical care by practitioners?</i></p>
Tuesday	2/7	<p>The sick role Discuss chapter 7 in Cockerham and the reading by Mead. Preparation question: <i>How does the concept of “role” help to explain how the problem of meaning is dealt with in our society? How is power related to the labeling and performance of roles and what is the moral significance of this?</i></p>
Thursday	2/9	<p>Illness behavior, self-care and medical compliance Discuss chapter 6 in Cockerham and excerpt from McGowan’s HIV/AIDS needs assessment report. Preparation question: <i>What sociological variables affect the illness behavior and medical compliance of people in need of care?</i></p>
Tuesday	2/14	<p>Pragmatic solidarity, shared experience and cultural competence Discuss Part II of <i>Mountains Beyond Mountains</i> Preparation question: <i>Do you think shared experience and shared interests are necessary condition of cultural competence?</i></p>
Thursday	2/16	<p>Cultural competence and medical adherence Discuss chapter 6 in <i>Pathologies of Power</i> and <i>Mountains</i> and article by Tupe and McGowan. Preparation question: <i>How does “cultural competence” relate to Farmer’s critique of typical medical practice in our society?</i></p>
Tuesday	2/21	<p>The social construction of American physicians Discuss chapter 10 in Cockerham Using the Internet as a research tool, answer the following questions: <i>Find three medical schools in the U. S. that make cultural competence a required component of their curriculum. How is cultural competence defined and taught? Is cultural competence integrated into the practical training of the student and if so how? What are the application process and tuition costs associated with going to medical school in Cuba?</i></p>
Thursday	2/23	<p>Doctor-patient interaction Discuss chapter 9 in Cockerham Using the Internet as a research tool, locate two journal articles published in the last five years that pertain to Dr. – patient interaction and the problems and issues associated with it. Read</p>

and report on the findings of the articles and relate them to the Cockerham reading.

Tuesday	2/28	Social demography of health Discuss chapter 3 in Cockerham and introduction to Part II and chapter 5 in <i>Pathologies of Power</i> . Preparation question: <i>What are the inter-relationships among poverty, health and social justice? What is meant by a “preferential option for the poor” and how does it relate to American national policies? How does religion relate to these considerations?</i>
Thursday	3/2	
Tuesday	3/7	Student reports on HIV testing experiences and review of course topics and themes
Thursday	3/9	In-class midterm exam (essay and short answer)
Tuesday	3/14	Spring Break
Thursday	3/16	Spring Break
Tuesday	3/21	Health care on the island of Cuba [There is no assigned reading or preparatory assignment for today]
Thursday	3/23	Health care and social policy in the U. S. and Abroad Discuss chapter 14 in Cockerham <i>Using the Internet as a research tool, locate a minimum of five articles on TennCare and summarize your findings. How does the TennCare situation embody many of the problems and concerns facing health insurance in the U. S.?</i>
Tuesday	3/28	Health care and social policies outside of the U. S. Discuss chapters 15 and 16 in Cockerham and Part IV of <i>Mountains Beyond Mountains</i> . Preparation question: <i>What lessons might we learn from different health care systems around the world? What opportunities and barriers exist in this country that weigh on the possibility of changing our national health care system?</i>
Thursday	3/30	The emergence of the hospital as a social institution Discuss chapter 12 in Cockerham Preparation question: <i>What does Foucault observe about the historical development of hospitals and what general trend are hospitals reflective of?</i>

Tuesday	4/4	Tuskegee and the ethics of biomedicine and positivism Discuss chapter 8 in <i>Pathologies of Power</i> . Preparation questions: <i>What did the Tuskegee experiment involve and what was its purpose? Were the rights of the human subjects involved in the experiment protected? What do you think the impact of Tuskegee has been on African-American attitudes towards health care and scientific research? What is Farmer's main point regarding ethics and practice in developing countries?</i>
Thursday	4/6	Crime, health and punishment Discuss chapter 7 in <i>Pathologies of Power</i> and the two studies of HIV Care and Prevention needs in the Shelby County Jail (McGowan).
Tuesday	4/11	Discuss chapter 9 in <i>Pathologies of Power</i> and the <i>Afterword</i> ; and Part V in <i>Mountains Beyond Mountains</i> Preparation question: <i>Summarize Farmer's thesis pertaining to health and human rights. Identify at least two examples of the practical difficulty of practicing health care as a human right, drawing from Farmer's experience in Haiti.</i>
Thursday	4/13	EASTER
Tuesday	4/18	Discuss chapter 5 in Cockerham Preparation question: <i>What are the distinguishing features of healthy lifestyles and how do they relate to Farmer's vision of health as a human rights issue?</i>
Thursday	4/20	Healing Options and the Changing Role of Physicians Discuss chapters 8 and 11 in Cockerham Preparation question: <i>The move toward alternative health care and the deprofessionalization of physicians are part of post-modern culture. Using the Internet as a resource tool, research the meaning of postmodernism and explain the sense in which alternative health care and deprofessionalization are postmodern phenomena.</i>
Tuesday	4/25	Students present term papers
Thursday	4/28	Students present term papers