



Sociology of Health, Illness, and Healthcare

SOC 3745 (CRN: 23928)

Spring 2024: January 8 – May 4, 2024

In Person, Tuesday-Thursday 12:30 PM to 1:45 PM, Beeghly Hall 3405

Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Amanda Fehlbaum

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers

Office: DeBartolo Hall 507

Phone: 330-941-2716 (Office) or 330-406-9490 (Google Voice/Text)

Email: afehlbaum@ysu.edu

Preferred Contact Method: Email

Student Support Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 – 3 PM; Wednesdays from 1 to 4 PM.

I am also willing to meet by appointment (virtual or in person) at other times.

Communication Expectations: I typically respond to email within 24 hours on weekdays. I strive to grade assignments within one week.

Catalog Description

Social attitudes toward illness. Cultural and social factors in disease definitions of illness, and organization of health professions and health facilities. Prerequisite: SOC 1500, GERO 1501, or admission to NEOMED-YSU program.

Course Description

In this course, we begin with the idea that we cannot understand the topics of health and illness simply by looking at biological phenomena and medical knowledge, but, instead, we must also consider a variety of social, political, economic, and cultural forces. Sociologists of health and illness (also known as “medical sociologists”) use sociological perspectives and methods to understand topics such as: social meanings of illness; patterns in the distribution of health and illness; the ways people make sense of, seek help for, and manage their illnesses; the ways doctors, nurses, and patients interact with each other, including the changing nature of health-related professions; the cultural, organizational, and economic functioning of various healthcare institutions; social movements surrounding health, including the ways some deviant behaviors are “medicalized” while others are not; and the sociological effects of public policy on health outcomes. This course is designed to provide a broad overview of the field of medical sociology, and, to this end, we will address the topics listed above and others.

Course Materials

Required Textbooks:

Weitz, Rose. 2020. *Sociology of Health, Illness, and Healthcare*. 8th Ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9780357045077

Fisher, Jill. 2020. *Adverse Events: Race, Inequality, and the Testing of New Pharmaceuticals*. New York: NYU Press ISBN: 9781479850518

To successfully complete this course, you will need access to a computer with internet and Microsoft Office Suite ([available free](#)). Students are required to have access to [Blackboard](#) as this course takes place online. These are the [computer lab locations](#) on campus.

Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the social distribution of illness in the United States
- Discuss the social factors that shape the experience of health, sickness, and disease
- Describe and discuss how the experience of chronic illness and disability influences the self and relationship with others
- Understand the process of professional socialization of physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers as well as historical and contemporary challenges to medical authority
- Understand the organization of the healthcare system and think critically about proposals for reform
- Have awareness of ongoing challenges in the healthcare system, including the role of technology and the aging of the population

Design of the Course

Readings

Completing the assigned readings for each class is crucial to your success in this course. While you will not be questioned on every reading, the in-class discussions are often based on assigned readings. You are also responsible for knowing the readings for the quizzes. Thus, it is to your advantage to keep up with reading assignments.

Quizzes

There will be 14 quizzes in this class, given approximately every week, generally on Thursdays. Quizzes are formatted to include a combination of multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill-in-the-blank, etc. Quizzes are worth a total of 20 points each. They will generally cover the reading material assigned since the last quiz, as well as questions from the lecture since the last quiz. Information about what will be covered on each quiz is posted on Blackboard. **Quizzes are closed book and closed note.**

Quizzes will be open as soon as class ends on Thursday and you will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes will remain open until 11:59 PM on Friday and you can only take each quiz once.

In the event there is a technological issue during the quiz, I will reset it for you once. You get one full reset due to technological issues per semester. Note: Blackboard does not always

cooperate when quizzes are taken using smart phones. You are encouraged to take your quizzes on a computer. After taking the quiz, [you will receive a confirmation number that your submission was successful.](#)

If you have a problem with a quiz question, such as how it was worded or if you think the answers are incorrect or vague, you need to make an appointment or see me during my Student Support Hours to discuss it. I will not address quiz questions or answers during the quiz, over email, or in public.

Quizzes take the place of exams in this course. That is, you will not have a midterm exam or a final exam in the traditional sense.

Syllabus Quiz

In addition to the quizzes given during the course, a quiz worth up to ten points will be given. You have from the first day of class (January 8) to January 17 to take the syllabus quiz. The syllabus quiz grade cannot be dropped. For the quiz, you need to be familiar with the general policies, assignments, and expectations of the course.

Reflections

Several times throughout the semester, you will be asked to complete a participation assignment either during class or as homework. You may also be asked to complete an in-class assignment. These assignments will **not** be announced in advance. In total, these will be worth 50 points.

Course Project

In this project, you will engage the intersection of sociology and healthcare by doing original field research in a paper 7-10 double-spaced pages. This will involve interviewing 3 healthcare professionals about the social issues that affect their jobs. In the process, I will guide your selection of professionals to interview as well as the questions you will ask. Last, each of you will make a 5-6-minute presentation on your findings to the class. Details of each part of this assignment and rubrics are posted on Blackboard.

Course Project	Points	Due Dates
Part 1: Proposal	10	1/25
Part 2: Interview Guide	25	2/15
Part 3: Final Paper	100	4/25
Part 4: Presentation	15	4/30

Papers

You have a choice among four paper assignments. You will sign up in advance to do one of the four assignments using a [SignUp Genius](#) that is set up for this course. The instructions for each paper assignment are posted under the Papers link on Blackboard – press the “view assessment” button. Soon after the SignUp Genius has closed, the paper option you chose will

be the only one you'll see on Blackboard. You will receive an email from SignUp Genius one week before your paper is due as a reminder.

Paper Topic	Due Date
Epidemiology	1/30
Disease/Condition	2/13
Health Policy	2/27
Miscellaneous	3/28

Each paper must follow the *Written Assignment Guidelines* posted under the Papers link in Blackboard. Your paper must be four-to-six pages in length (three-and-a-half pages is not four full pages). Each paper is worth 50 points. Your paper must be submitted to the proper Safe Assign link by 11:59 P.M. on the due date.

You do not have to turn in a hard copy of your paper; however, I accept hard copied in addition to – not in lieu of – uploading your assignment to Blackboard. You must upload your paper assignment to Blackboard, regardless of if you turn in a hard copy. I do not accept the hard copy alone. If you are retaking this class to receive a higher/passing grade, you may not submit papers you previously submitted in the course.

Although this course is not a writing class, part of the paper grade includes quality of writing and following directions. It is in your best interest to proofread your papers for proper grammar and spelling as well as follow formatting directions. Neglect to follow formatting directions will also result in deduction of points.

Submitting Papers to the Safe Assign Folder on Blackboard

The reason you must submit papers to the Safe Assign link on Blackboard is so that a plagiarism check can be run on your paper. If you turn in your assignment early and see that you had a high plagiarism rating in the originality report, you may have the opportunity to see what you did and correct the assignment before it is due. You may contact me to clear your original paper so that you can submit an improved paper. Plagiarism, regardless of intention, is taken seriously.¹

Please make sure you are submitting to the correct assignment file for the assignment. **If you have problems submitting to the assignment file, you need to e-mail me and let me know well before the assignment is due (e.g., two days, not two minutes).** Assignments should be submitted as .doc, .docx, or .pdf files. Other file types will not be accepted. You are responsible for converting your document, if necessary, into an acceptable format. Unless otherwise noted, **do not just copy and paste the assignment into the text box!**

Blackboard has the option of [uploading from Cloud Storage](#) such as Google Docs and Cloud Drive. Submitting just a link to a Google Doc or OneDrive document – [unless you have uploaded](#)

¹ See section on Academic Integrity

[on Blackboard using Cloud Storage](#) - will result in a grade of zero because it does not allow for the plagiarism check to take place.

Please take care to ensure that your assignment properly uploaded to Blackboard.² After you submit your file to the Safe Assign folder, [you will receive a confirmation number that your submission was successful](#).

You may submit a rough draft of your paper to me via email at least one week before the due date and I will tell you if you are proceeding in the right direction for a good grade.

Extra Credit

Any extra credit opportunities, if available, will be announced.

How to Succeed in This Course

I truly want everyone in this class to succeed not only in this course but throughout their college careers. To succeed in this course, I expect students to attend class regularly, engage with the course, complete the assigned readings for each class, participate in class discussion, complete assignments on time, proofread their papers, and not plagiarize.

Levels of engagement can vary from above average to below average and may be reflected in your grade.

Above average engagement involves:

- Spirited intellectual engagement with the course readings and the class
- Conscientious and insightful preparation of assignments
- Papers that make and support sophisticated arguments, are well-written and interesting to read, and are free of errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar
- Active and thoughtful participation in class discussion

Average engagement involves:

- Clear demonstration in papers and in class discussion of understanding the sociological concepts we explore
- Papers with clear thesis statements and careful research
- Consistent participation in class discussion

Below average engagement involves:

- Work that shows minimal synthesis of concepts or original analysis
- Infrequent participation in discussion
- Assignments that are incomplete or late
- Papers that are not well-researched or are presented carelessly (not proofread or contain many mechanical errors)

² [This video shows you how to upload an assignment](#)

My Student Support Hours (Office Hours) are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 3 PM, Wednesdays from 1 to 4 PM, and by appointment. Please see me if you have any questions concerning the reading material, in-class assignments, quizzes, papers, study strategies, etc. If you are unable to meet me during these hours, but need to be seen, you can e-mail me to make an appointment

How to Get Help

YSU is committed to your success. As a student you have access to several resources that may be instrumental in helping you succeed in this course and others. Please do not hesitate to utilize any of these [free support services](#) to support your academic success, physical and mental health, and help you navigate your time as a YSU student.

One such support service is the [Writing Center](#). They provide writing consultations for any discipline as well as basic computer literacy help.

If you are reading this sentence before the end of the second week of class, send me an email with the subject line “Roar,” and include an image of your favorite dinosaur. I will award you 5 points. Thank you for reading the syllabus.

Attendance Expectations

This course is designed to be interactive. Please come to class prepared to discuss and actively participate. I encourage vibrant and respectful interaction. Discussion should be directed to the entire class. I start instruction promptly and continue to the end of designated class time.

Attendance will be taken during each live class. I understand that you may not be able to attend every class and/or that you may be required to leave a class early. I ask that you please communicate with me via email as soon as possible if you cannot attend a class and/or you have to leave a class early, and together we will make arrangements to ensure you can catch up on any content you missed.

[Youngstown State University’s Attendance Policy](#) reads as follows:

The faculty believes that classroom activities are essential to learning. The student is responsible for knowing and meeting all course requirements, including tests, assignments, and class participation, as indicated by the course instructor. The responsibility for work missed during absence rests with the student.

The instructor has no obligation to give make-up graded coursework or to review other class work missed by a student because of absence apart from absences due to participation in university-sponsored events, government-related activities, religious observances, death of a family member, and documented personal illness.

This course follows an informal ‘everyone gets two’ policy – this means two unexcused absences from class with no penalty starting January 18 (the last day to add/drop a class is January 16).

Thereafter, unexcused absences incur the following penalties:

- 3 absences reduce your highest possible final letter grade to a B
- 4 absences reduce your highest possible final letter grade to a C and you will be referred to academic counseling via the Resch Academic Success Center.

Students who are consistently absent without a university-sanctioned excuse and accompanying documentation need to meet with me to discuss their situation and what steps can be taken to ensure their success in the course. Missing more than 60% of classes and/or non-submission of coursework may result in a Nonattendance F (NAF).

Late Work Submission Policy

Late papers are eligible for credit according to the following schedule: one day past due = 75%, three days past due = 50%, one week past due = 25%. Papers cannot be accepted more than one week past the due date.

Your lowest two quiz grades are dropped from final grade calculations. **Make-up quiz assignments will not be given for any reason.** Quizzes will only be given during the 24-hour window after opening the quiz – not before or after. The dropping of the lowest two quiz grades is designed to accommodate people who experience unavoidable emergencies or conflicts during the semester (including, but not limited to: work, religious holidays or celebrations, doctor’s appointments, extracurricular events, etc.). If your schedule requires that you must frequently miss this 24-hour window, it may be in your best interest to drop this course.

Please Note

Technological difficulties are not considered a valid excuse for tardiness. Please contact me – email, call, text - well before an assignment (paper, quiz, etc.) is due if you are having technical difficulties. I will do my best to work with you to address the situation.

Class Conduct

The American Sociological Association states, [“As sociological scholars and citizens, we have a responsibility to study and speak out regarding all forms of racism and injustice.”](#) I stand in solidarity and support the fight against systemic racism and the oppression of Black folks, Indigenous folks, and other People of Color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, and non-binary individuals.

In this class, we will discuss issues that are highly controversial. We all come from different perspectives on these issues. It is likely that we will disagree with one another. I welcome and encourage lively discussion, as that is necessary for true learning to occur. However, disagreements should not come in the form of personal attack. Mutual respect is required to

maximize a healthy and fair learning environment. You may disagree with each other's ideas and the evidence used in the arguments, but you should respect each other as people.

I show several video clips from a variety of sources as part of the course curriculum and to aid your understanding of concepts that are sometimes abstract or hard to understand. If anyone is ever made to feel uncomfortable or feels something is inappropriate, I request that you talk to me about it to see if the issue can be resolved in a way that allows learning to occur on both of our parts.

A positive learning environment involves commitment of both instructor and students in a course. [Reciprocal Responsibilities for Undergraduate Students and Instructors](#) was developed jointly with the Student Government Association and YSU Academic Senate to outline mutual responsibilities in the classroom, and our class will follow these guidelines.

Communication Issues

Email

I can best be reached by e-mail, but my response may not be immediate. Please indicate which course you are in when emailing me for the first time. You also need to always sign your emails at the end (write your name).

Students are expected to check their e-mail for university announcements or information from instructors, though announcements will typically be cross-posted on Blackboard. It is to your benefit to check your e-mail so that you have the most up-to-date information pertaining to this class. If you use an e-mail address other than your YSU account (in other words, it does not end in "@ysu.edu"), I cannot guarantee that I will receive your e-mail.

Phone

I have a phone in my office; however, I cannot always be relied upon to answer it. The number is 330-941-2716. You may call or text my Google Voice number - 330-406-9490. If texting, please identify yourself.

Grading and Grading Scale

Evaluation

A breakdown of the points available in this course is shown below:

Syllabus Quiz	10
Quizzes (14 total, 2 dropped, 20 points each)	240
Reflections	50
Paper	50
Course Project	<u>150</u>
	500 points total

Final Grades

Final letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A: 450 - 500

B: 400 - 499

C: 350 - 399

D: 300 - 349

F: 0 – 299

YSU's Grading System can be found [here](#).

Final grades will be based on points, not percentage. **Final grades are non-negotiable.**

Honors Contract Language

Honors students may contract this course for honors credit. Notify me of your interest to discuss options and complete required paperwork. You must submit the project to me by the semester deadline.

University Policies

[University policies](#) can be found online and provide you guidance on your rights as a student in this course. The links below take you directly to a specific policy. Should you have any questions about a policy, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information at the top of the syllabus.

- [Statement of Non-Discrimination from the University](#)
- [Academic Integrity/Honesty](#)
- [Student Accessibility](#)
- [Incomplete Grade Policy](#)
- [Academic Grievances and Complaints](#)
- [Attendance Policy](#)

Academic Integrity

As outlined in *The Student Code of Conduct*, all forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited at Youngstown State University. This includes plagiarism, the unauthorized use of tools or notes in taking tests or completing assignments, fabrication of data or information used for an assignment, working with others without permission from the instructor, and more. A student who is believed to have violated the [academic integrity policy](#) will meet with the instructor to discuss the allegations. The student may accept responsibility for the violation and any sanctions selected by the instructor, or they have the right to ask for a hearing before a hearing panel. The full Academic Integrity policy can be found in Article III. 1. of *The Student Code of Conduct*, while further information on University procedures for alleged academic integrity violations can be found in Article V.

Note: Not adequately citing your sources, such as only listing sources at the end and not citing them within the paper, is a violation of academic integrity. If you do this in a paper or

homework, you will receive a zero on your assignment and will be reported for academic dishonesty.

All rules pertaining to plagiarism and academic integrity in general also pertain to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Artificial intelligence (AI) is a new tool - of both striking capacity and severe limitations. Use it at your own risk.

- If you include AI-generated text directly into an assignment, treat it like a quote from any other source. Set it aside from the text with quotation marks or as a block-quote and cite the source parenthetically or in a footnote (see how here: libguides.umn.edu/chatgpt).
- You are responsible for fact checking statements composed by AI language models.
- If you include information or data into an assignment that you found through an AI tool, treat it like information from any other source and include a citation. The citation should also include the prompt to which you asked the AI to respond.
- If you include AI generated materials that the AI copied without attribution from another published source, you - and not AI - will have committed plagiarism.
- You will be held responsible for any errors that derive from AI-generated materials.
- AI will not count toward an assignment's source-minimum (i.e., the number of sources you are required to include in an assignment).
- If you are in doubt as to whether you are using AI language models appropriately in this course, I encourage you to discuss your situation with me.

If you are retaking this class to receive a higher/passing grade, you may not submit papers you previously submitted in the course.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence, discrimination, and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: Title IX Coordinator (titleix@ysu.edu), Counseling Services (330-941-3737), YSU Police (330-941-3527), and Rape Crisis & Counseling Center (24-hour crisis line: 330-782-3936). More information can be found at <https://ysu.edu/title-ix/>.

Voluntary/Involuntary Medical Leave or Withdrawal

[Medical leave/withdrawal](#) is available for all students with a documented physical or psychological illness of a serious nature that requires them to leave the university after the last day to withdraw with a grade of "W" without completing their coursework.

University Schedule of Operations

Last Day to Add or Change a Grade Option:

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Last Day for 100% Refund:

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Last Day for Withdrawing with a Grade of “W”:
 No Class (MLK Day):
 Spring Break:

Monday, January 22, 2024
 Monday, January 16, 2024
 Monday, March 4 -
 Sunday, March 10, 2024

Course Schedule

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning. For maximum benefit in this course, complete the readings by the assigned date to prepare for class

SHIH = *Sociology of Health, Illness, and Healthcare*

B = Reading posted to Blackboard

AE = *Adverse Events*

Week	Date	Topic	To Prepare for Class / Paper Due/ Quiz Opens
Week 1	January 9	Introduction to Course	
	January 11	Why Medical Sociology?	SHIH: Chapter 1
Week 2	January 16	Social Sources of Illness	SHIH: Chapter 2
	January 18	Health and Morality	B: “Blaming the Victim...” B: “Health Nazis and the Cult of the Perfect Body” B: “Wellness as Virtue” Quiz 1 Paper Assignment Sign-Up DUE
Week 3	January 23	Social Distribution of Illness	SHIH: Chapter 3 Syllabus Quiz DUE
	January 25	Medical Racism	B: “Pregnancy and Prematurity in the Aftermath of Slavery” Quiz 2 PROPOSAL DUE
Week 4	January 30	Social Meanings of Illness	SHIH: Chapter 5 Epidemiology Paper DUE
	February 1	Medicalization and Social Control	B: “Medicalization and Social Control” B: “The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde...” Quiz 3
Week 5	February 6	Experience of Disability, Chronic Pain, and Chronic Illness	SHIH: Chapter 6

Week	Date	Topic	To Prepare for Class / Paper Due/ Quiz Opens
	February 8	Lives of Disabled Folks	B: "Disability Identity and Attitudes Toward Cure in a Sample of Disabled Activists" B: "When Do Older Adults Become 'Disabled'?" Quiz 4
Week 6	February 13	Sociology of Mental Illness	SHIH: Chapter 7 Medical Condition Paper DUE
	February 15	Stigma and Mental Illness	B: "The Public Stigma of Mental Illness" B: "Stigma Resistance and Well-Being in the Context of Mental Illness Identity" Quiz 5 INTERVIEW GUIDE DUE
Week 7	February 20	Healthcare in the U.S.	SHIH: Chapter 8
	February 22	Financial Difficulties in Hospitals	B: "Welcome to the Obstetric Unit" B: "A Day in the Life of an Obstetric Nurse" Quiz 6
Week 8	February 27	The Profession of Medicine	SHIH: Chapter 11 Health Policy Paper DUE
	February 29	Bias in Healthcare	B: "'We're a Little Biased': Medicine and the Management of Bias through the Case of Contraception" B: "Cultural Health Capital" Quiz 7
Week 9	March 5	NO CLASS	SPRING BREAK
	March 7	NO CLASS	SPRING BREAK
Week 10	March 12	<i>Adverse Events</i>	AE: Introduction
	March 14	<i>Adverse Events</i>	AE: Entering the Clinic AE: "Doing the Lab Rat Thing" Quiz 8
Week 11	March 19	<i>Adverse Events</i>	AE: A Tale of Three Cultures AE: The Commercialization of Phase I Trials

Week	Date	Topic	To Prepare for Class / Paper Due/ Quiz Opens
	March 21	<i>Adverse Events</i>	AE: A Laboratory for Human Animals AE: The Dark Side of the Model Quiz 9
Week 12	March 26	<i>Adverse Events</i>	AE: Consenting to Adverse Events AE: Constructing Risk Knowledge
	March 28	<i>Adverse Events</i>	AE: Speculating on Health AE: Conclusion Miscellaneous Paper DUE Quiz 10
Week 13	April 2	Healthcare Settings and Technologies	SHIH: Chapter 10
	April 4	Illness and Death in Less Developed Countries	SHIH: Chapter 4 Quiz 11
Week 14	April 9	Health Care Around the Globe	SHIH: Chapter 9
	April 11	Mystery Illness Diagnoses	B: "Nobody Has My Condition But Me" Quiz 12
Week 15	April 16	Other Mainstream and Alternative Healthcare Providers	SHIH: Chapter 12 B: "How 'Alternative' is CAM?"
	April 18	Vaccine Reluctance	B: "Who Calls the Shots?" Quiz 13
Week 16	April 23	Issues in Bioethics	SHIH: Chapter 13 B: "Bioethics, Raw and Cooked"
	April 25	Future Steps	B: "The Engaged Patient" B: "Medical Sociology and Health Services Research" Quiz 14 PROJECT FINAL PAPER DUE

University Scheduled Final Exam Time: **April 30 from 3:15 to 5:15 PM**

Final Project Presentations will take place during this time.