

“Sociology of Health and Medicine”

Tuesday/Thursdays, 5:10pm-6:30 pm, in 100 GPB

Armando Lara-Millán, PhD
Department of Sociology, UC Berkeley
armando@berkeley.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 6:35-7:30pm 482 Barrows.

This course will provide an introduction to central topics in the sociology of health and illness, with an emphasis on its ongoing redefinition by science and technology studies. We will explore multiple domains: the healthcare workgroup or how health professionals interact with one another and with their clients; the research settings where medical knowledge is produced; the circulation of ideas about health and illness; the state and market institutions that transform social inequalities into health disparities; the social movements that shape medicine and challenge the authority of experts; and the bodies and selves that are remade by illness.

The course is divided into four topical areas: 1) death and dying; 2) genetics; 3) disease activism; 4) medical research; and 5) pharmaceuticals. We will explore a few foundational ideas across each of these areas. By the end of the course students are expected to master those ideas as they apply to these different topical areas.

Some notes. Although many of the themes we will address have a long history in the subfield, the emphasis in our class will be on developments of the last several decades. The course focuses largely on the United States, though we will try along the way to consider global contexts. While the majority of the scholarship we will consider is sociological (broadly speaking), some of it is drawn from other fields. Students from other disciplines are welcome.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Attendance, In-class Assignments.** (15%) Attendance will randomly be taken in class through the collection of various in-class assignments. You are expected to attend and participate actively in all classes in order to be able to complete these assignments and turn them in. They cannot be turned in after the fact.
- **Memos.** (25%; *two memos at 12.5% each*). You will be required to turn in a three-page memo (12-point font, double spaced, one-inch margins) discussing the ideas in **two** course articles in relation to some health-related current event of interest to you. The goal of these memos is to use what you have learned in class to think about a topic, event, or process differently. Successful memos will demonstrate (1) an adequate understanding of the ideas in the course material and (2) a “critical” application to them to the current event. By “critical” I mean writing about how the ideas from the readings might seemingly fit the case you are applying it to, but do not fully or how some mixture of ideas might fit the case, or how applying the concepts to the case helps us to understand the case in a different, unexpected way. You will print these out (along with the news source) and **turn them in mid-class** on February 19th and April 16th.
- **Exams** (60%; *two tests at 30% each*) will assess your knowledge of course material and will ask

you to analyze theoretical and empirical facts, debates, and interpretations covered in the course. It will employ a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, short answer, and/or short essay. Test questions may come from any aspect of the course (e.g., lectures, videos, class activities, and assigned readings).

COURSE POLICIES:

- If you will require academic accommodations, please inform the professor at the beginning of the semester. Requests for religious accommodation should be submitted directly to the professor at the beginning of the semester (preferably within the first two weeks) using this form provided by the university: <https://callink.berkeley.edu/submitter/form/start/132891>. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor in writing by the second week of the semester of any potential conflict of an exam with an extracurricular activity. **Students who need disability accommodations will be accommodated but need to apply with DSP for services.**
- Please familiarize yourself with the University's academic honesty policy: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity>. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.
- We only have 3 hours per week together in class and a lot of material to cover. Thus, I ask that you please come to class prepared and attentive. It's a better experience for everyone if you are ready to participate and not messing around on laptops or cellphones. **I reserve the right to ask someone to close their electronic device if I feel it is distracting me or others.** To that end, consider this research in deciding whether to take notes on the laptop or by hand: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>.
- You are expected to attend lecture on a regular basis (and on time). I will post slide handouts after class, but these are meant as a study aid and not as a substitute for attendance. I urge you to become an active participant in discussions and activities to enhance your learning experience. **You will find that discussion is the main form of lecture in my class.**
- **Communication about changes in course material will be communicated mainly in-class.**

READINGS. There is no textbook in this course. All readings/materials are posted on bcourses. **This is a tentative schedule and list of materials and will change throughout the semester.** Test dates are firm.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

*asterisked readings are recommended

Week 1,

Jan 22nd: Class Overview.

Jan 24th: Class Overview (repeat).

Sociology c115/PH c155, Spring 2017

Link, Bruce, and Jo Phelan. 2010. "Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Health Inequalities." Pp. 3-17 in *Handbook of Medical Sociology, Sixth Edition*, edited by C. E. Bird, P. Conrad, A. M. Fremont and S. Timmermans. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Week 2 Theoretical Background

Jan 29th

Aronowitz, Robert. 2008. "Framing Disease: An Underappreciated Mechanism for the Social Patterning of Health." *Social Science & Medicine* 67: 1-9

Jan 31st

Rose, Nikolas. 2001. "The Politics of Life Itself." *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (6): 1-30.

Week 3 Death and Dying Part I

Feb 5th

Livne, Roi. 2014. "Economies of Dying: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." *American Sociological Review* (79)5

Feb 7th

Timmermans, "Social Death as Self-Fulfilling Prophecy."

Week 4 Death and Dying Part II

Feb 12th

Timmermans, "Postmortem and Suspicious Deaths." Chapter 2.

Feb 15th

Corey Abramson, "The Endgame Game: How Inequality Shapes Our Final Years." Chapter 2.

Week 5, Genetics Part I

Feb 19th

Catch-up and Memos due in **middle** of class.

Feb 21st

Wendy D. Roth and Biorn Ivemark, "Genetic Options: The Impact of Genetic Ancestry Testing on Consumers' Racial and Ethnic Identities," *American Journal of Sociology* 124, no. 1 (July 2018): 150-184.

Week 6 Genetics Part II

Feb 26th

Chapter 2 only. Timmermans, Stefan, and Mara Buchbinder. 2012. *Saving Babies? The Consequences of Newborn Genetic Screening*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Guest Speaker: Santiago Molina on CRISPR/Gene-Editing

Feb 28th

Daniel Navon & Gil Eyal. 2016. "Looping genomes: Diagnostic expansion and the genetic makeup of the autism population." *American Journal of Sociology*.

*Thompson, Charis. 2005. *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 145-178 (Ch. 5: "Strategic Naturalizing: Kinship, Race, and Ethnicity").

Week 7: Genetics Part III/Midterm Review

March 5th

Lakoff, Andrew. 2005. "Diagnostic Liquidity: Mental Illness and the Global Trade in DNA." *Theory and Society* 34 (1): 63-92.

March 7th

Midterm review

Week 8: Midterm

March 12th

Midterm

March 14th **No class**

Week 9: Activism

March 19th

Epstein, Steven. 1995. "The Construction of Lay Expertise: AIDS Activism and the Forging of Credibility in the Reform of Clinical Trials," *Science, Technology & Human Values* 20: 408-437.

March 21st

Klawiter, Maren. 1999. "Racing for the Cure, Walking Women, and Toxic Touring: Mapping Cultures of Action within the Bay Area Terrain of Breast Cancer." *Social Problems* 46 (1): 104-126.

*Best, Rachel Kahn. 2012. "Disease Politics and Medical Research Funding: Three Ways Advocacy Shapes Policy." *American Sociological Review* 77 (5): 780-803.

Week 10, Spring Break

March 26th

March 28th

Week 11, Medical Research Part I

April 2nd

Shim, Janet. 2005. "Constructing 'Race' Across the Science-Lay Divide: Racial Formation in the Epidemiology and Experience of Cardiovascular Disease." *Social Studies of Science* 35: 405-436.

April 4th

Fosket, Jennifer Ruth. 2010. "Breast Cancer Risk as Disease: Biomedicalizing Risk." Pp. 331-352 in *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the U.S.*, edited by A. E. Clark, L. Mamo, J. R. Fosket, J. R. Fishman and J. K. Shim. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week 12 Medical Research Part II

April 9th

Barker, Kristin. 2002. "Self-Help Literature and the Making of an Illness Identity: The Case of Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS)." *Social Problems* 49 (3): 279-300.

April 11th

Armstrong, Elizabeth M. 1998. "Diagnosing Moral Disorder: The Discovery and Evolution of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome." *Social Science & Medicine* 47 (12): 2025- 2042.

Week 13: Pharmaceuticals Part I

April 16th

Second memos due in middle of class.

Lee, Jooyoung. 2013. "The Pill Hustle: Risky Pain Management for a Gunshot Victim" *Social Science & Medicine* 99.

April 18th

Chiarello, E. (2015). The War on Drugs Comes to the Pharmacy Counter: Frontline Work in the Shadow of Discrepant Institutional Logics. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 40(1), 86-122.

Week 14: Pharmaceuticals Part II

April 23rd

Greenslit, Nathan. 2005. "Depression and Consumption: Psychopharmaceuticals, Branding, and New Identity Practices." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 29: 477-501.

April 25th

Sismondo, Sergio. 2015. "Pushing Knowledge in the Drug Industry: Ghost-Managed Science." Pp. 150-164 in *The Pharmaceutical Studies Reader*, edited by S. Sismondo and J. A. Greene. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Week 15 Review Session

April 30th Review

May 2nd Review

Week 16: Reading Week

Week 17: Final