

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**Sociology C115: Sociology of Health and Medicine**

Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00-3:30pm

Social Sciences Bldg., Room 166

**COURSE SYLLABUS\***

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Jennifer Templeton Dunn

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**OFFICE HOURS:**

Office: TBD, Soc. Sci. Bldg.

Tues/Thurs 4:00-5:00 (by appointment)

Use [Calendly](#) for in person office hours.

Please email me to schedule a Zoom appointment outside regular office hours.

**READER:**

Morayo Odujinrin

[Morayo.odujinrin@berkeley.edu](mailto:Morayo.odujinrin@berkeley.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to the sub-discipline of medical sociology through the following theoretical frameworks: social determinants of health, fundamental cause theory, medicalization, and biopower. Course readings will draw from multiple perspectives and fields, including sociology, anthropology, history, law, medicine, nursing, and public health.

We will begin the course by reading about the U.S. health care system and comparing our health system to health systems in other nations. Next, we will study the dominant theories and concepts used by medical sociologists. We will apply a sociological lens to issues and problems in the contemporary social world, such as abortion, pregnancy and maternal health, segregation in healthcare, the global pandemic, and the impacts of climate change on health. We will also borrow tools and frameworks from political sociology, political economy, and organizational theory to critically examine contemporary health policies and practices and how racism, sexism, and other forms of systemic oppression became historically embedded within the American health care system.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Identify the role of sociology, theory, and social science research in the study of health and medicine.
- Recognize the dominant frameworks through which sociologists approach health and medicine.
- Foster critical skills in comparing and critiquing sociological theories and approaches.
- Apply a sociological lens to understand, document, and critique contemporary issues in the social world.

\*Last updated 01/08/2024. Course content and assignments are subject to change.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

This course will be graded on a 1000 point basis as follows:

Assignments	% of Grade (Points)	Due Date
Attendance	15% (150 points)	On going
3 Response Papers	15% (150 points – 50 points per paper)	1/21, 1/28, 3/17, 4/21
Take Home Midterm	35% (350 points)	2/20-2/25
Take Home Final Exam	35% (350 points)	4/26-5/6

Students must complete 3 out of 4 response papers. If you complete more than 3 response papers, the top three grades will be used. Additional descriptions of the course assignments can be found on bCourses.

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AND READING NOTES

To receive credit for the seminar, you must attend class, actively participate in class discussion, and turn in required assignments on time. Class participation includes active and supportive listening. Attendance will be taken throughout the semester. While attendance is important, please take care of yourself and stay home if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19.

Students may make up absences by submitting reading notes. These reading notes should be 1 page (single-spaced) or 2 pages (double spaced), summarizing the key takeaways from the missed assignment. Use complete sentences (bold and underlining to organize topics under headings is ok; lists and summary bullets are not). If the day's assigned reading is more than 1 article or excerpt, the makeup assignment must address each of the works assigned and how they relate (i.e., why do you think they were they assigned together). Barring special circumstances, the makeup assignment is due one week after the missed class. Students may not make up more than 2 unexcused absences over the course of the semester. There is no limit on makeup assignments for excused absences.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Plagiarism includes turning in any work that is not your own as well as improper or missing citations of others' works. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the [Code of Academic Conduct](#). Cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to the Center for Student Conduct and a failing grade for that assignment. I will use Turnitin for final assignments. I highly recommend submitting your assignments through Turnitin (for this or any class) before uploading to bCourses.

## DSP PROGRAM

For students who require accommodations for accessibility reasons, please send me an email in the first week of class and request that the DSP office provide me with a digital copy of your accommodation letter. Email me if you will be absent due to health reasons,

but please do not send me your medical records, diagnoses, copies of DSP records, or ER visits. If, at any point in the semester, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, I recommend reaching out to the Disabled Students' Program. If you have a diagnosis, DSP can help you document your needs, create an accommodation plan, and ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to your instructors.

### **MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS**

All students may experience a range of issues that can become barriers to learning. These issues include, but are not limited to, strained relationships, anxiety, depression, alcohol and other drug problems, difficulties with concentration, sleep, and eating, and/or lack of motivation. Such mental health concerns can diminish both academic performance and the capacity to participate in daily activities. In the event that you need mental health support, or are concerned about a friend, UC Berkeley offers many services, such as free short-term counseling at University Health Services.

- An excellent campus website having links to many resources is [Recalibrate](#).
- Another campus website addressing mental health services in specific reference to this time of the coronavirus pandemic is [Student Mental Health](#) on the University Health Services website.

### **BOOKS**

The following books are available for purchase in new and used formats. All chapters and excerpts assigned for class will be available on bCourses.

- Bridges, Khiara M. 2011. *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Sufrin, Carolyn. 2017. *JailCare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars*. Univ of California Press.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE RESOURCES**

The following guides on sociology and social theory contain useful information on the theories and frameworks studied in this class and their applications to health and medicine in the United States:

- Cockerham, William. 2021. *Sociological Theories of Health and Illness*. Routledge.
- Copelton and Weiss. 2023. *The Sociology of Health, Healing, and Illness*.

The following textbook introduces a biosocial framework for studying and addressing Global Health problems:

- Greene J., Basilio M., Kim H., Farmer P. Colonial medicine and its legacies. In: Kim J., Kleinman A., Basilio M., editors. *Reimagining Global Health: An Introduction*. University of California Press; Berkeley, CA: 2013.

### **COURSE READER**

All course materials will be available on bCourses. Carefully review the syllabus for the dates and assigned pages.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **PART I. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE AND TO THE U.S. HEALTH SYSTEM**

#### **Week 1**

*Tues. 1/16 — Introduction to the Course; What is Medical Sociology?*

Copelton, Denise and Gregory Weiss. 2023. "Ch 1: Introduction" pp. 1-14 in *The Sociology of Health, Healing, and Illness*.

**Homework for First Class (ungraded):** Find an article or image relating to health or health care that interests you or otherwise holds meaning. Print, screenshot, or download to a device so that you can share your article or image during our first class.

*Thurs. 1/18 — Introduction to the U.S. Health Care System*

Reid, T.R. 2010. Chapters 1 & 2. Pp. 5-27 from *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care*.

#### Recommended Reading:

Emanuel, Ezekiel. 2014. "Chapter 1: How did we get here? A Brief History of the American Health Care System" from *Reinventing American Health Care*.

#### Recommended Videos on U.S. health care

- PBS Frontline documentary (2008) "[Sick Around the World](#)" based upon the book, *The Healing of America* (2009/2010) by T.R. Reid.
- PBS Newshour (2021 Update): [Health care: America vs. the World](#)

**Response Paper #1 Due on Sunday 1/21 (50 points):** Find an article or image relating to health or healthcare. You may use the image or article from our first day of class, a reading from this class, or you may choose a new source. Prepare a short 1-2 page paper (12-point font, double spaced, one-inch margins), discussing the article or image. Why did you choose it? How does it relate to this class?

#### **Week 2**

*Tues. 1/23 — Comparative Health Systems*

Emanuel, Ezekiel. 2020. "Introduction." Pp. 1-17 from *Which Country Has the World's Best Health Care?*

Alspaugh, Amy et al. 2021. "Universal Health Care for the United States: A Primer for Health Care Providers." *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*. 66.4: 441-451.

#### Recommended:

Beckfield, Jason, Sigrun Olafsdottir, and Benjamin Sosnaud. 2013. "Healthcare Systems in Comparative Perspective: Classification, Convergence, Institutions,

Inequalities, and Five Missed Turns.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 39(1):127–41.  
**Read pages 127-133.**

*Thurs. 1/25 – U.S. Health Care Reform & the Affordable Care Act*

Oberlander, J. (2012) Unfinished journey--a century of health care reform in the United States. *N Engl J Med.* Aug 16;367(7):585-90.

Navarro, V. (1995). The Politics of Health Care Reform in the United States, 1992-1994: A Historical Review. *International Journal of Health Services.* 25 (2):185-201.

Recommended Data Sources for Comparing the U.S. to other countries

OECD [Health at a Glance 2021](#)

Commonwealth Fund [Mirror Mirror 2021](#)

**Response Paper # 2 comparing the U.S. and 1 other country due on Sunday 1/28 (50 points):** Pick a health indicator, performance measure, health condition, or health care system issue. Prepare a short 1-2 page paper (12 point font, double spaced, 250-500 words) comparing the U.S. to 1 other country or health system. Although these response papers are short, remember to follow a standard paper format: introduce your main point or thesis, draw upon the texts to make your main points or arguments, and conclude with a summary or key takeaway. Use short form citations to course materials and include page numbers where relevant, e.g, (OECD 2021) or (Reid 2020:3; Ezekiel 2020:20).

## **PART II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR UNDERSTANDING HEALTH & HEALTH CARE**

### **Week 3**

*Tues. 1/30 — Biopower and Risk I: Theory*

Foucault, Michel. 1976/1978. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I.* Trans. by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage. Pp. 135-147.

Bridges, Khiara M. 2011. *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization.* Berkeley, CA: UC Press. Introduction. Pp. 1-15

Recommended:

Cockerham, William. 2021. “Foucault and Medical Sociology” PP. 152-158 in *Sociological Theories of Health and Illness.* Routledge.

*Thurs. 2/1 — Biopower and Risk II: Application*

Bridges, Khiara M. 2011. *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction, pp. 41-73, 144-185.

## Week 4

*Tues. 2/6 – Biopower and Pastoral “Care”: Pregnancy Care in a San Francisco Jail*

Sufrin, Carolyn. 2017. *JailCare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars*. Univ of California Press. Pp. 1-24, 35-37, 185-193.

*Thurs. 2/8 — Finish Biopower; Introduction to Medicalization*

Sufrin, Carolyn. 2017. *JailCare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars*. Univ of California Press. 140-152.

Conrad, Peter. 2007. *The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3-19.

Ehrenreich, Barbara, and John Ehrenreich. 1978. *Medicine and social control from The Cultural Crisis of Modern Medicine*, edited by John Ehrenreich. New York: Monthly Review Press. Pp. 39-42 and 48-52 only.

### Recommended:

Cockerham, William. 2021. *Sociological Theories of Health and Illness*. Routledge. Pp. 294-307. Conrad and medicalization theory.

## Week 5

*Tues. 2/13 – Upstream Social Determinants of Health*

McKinlay, John B. 1975. A case for refocusing upstream: The political economy of illness. Pp. 7-17 in *Applying Behavioral Science to Cardiovascular Risk*. New York: American Heart Association. **Focus on Pages 7-8.**

Ray R, Lantz P, Williams D. Upstream policy changes to improve population health and health equity. *Milbank Q.* 2023; 101(S1): 20-35.

Review: Bridges, Khiara M. 2011. *Reproducing Race: An Ethnography of Pregnancy as a Site of Racialization*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Introduction, pp. 41-51 on New York’ Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP)

In Class Application: California’s Medicaid Program and Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program ([CPSP](#) Program).

### Recommended:

- Check out [World Health Organization](#) on Social Determinants of Health
- Check out [U.S. Health and Human Services](#) on Social Determinants of Health

*Thurs. 2/15 —Fundamental Cause Theory*

Phelan, Jo, Bruce G. Link and Parisa Tehranifar. 2010. Social conditions as fundamental causes of health inequalities: Theory, evidence, and policy implications.” *Journal of Health & Social Behavior* 51 (Suppl): S28-S40.

Phelan, Jo C. and Bruce G. Link. 2015. Is racism a fundamental cause of inequalities in health? *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 311-330.

## **Week 6**

Mon. 2/19 — President's Day Holiday

Tues. 2/20 – *Refresh, Review, and Recap: U.S. health system, biopower, medicalization, and social determinants of health.*

Cockerham, William. 2021. "Foucault and Medical Sociology" PP. 152-158 in *Sociological Theories of Health and Illness*. Routledge.

Cockerham, William. 2021. *Sociological Theories of Health and Illness*. Routledge. Pp. 294-307. Conrad and medicalization theory.

**Midterm Instructions Posted:** The take home midterm, including instructions, will be posted on bCourses by 6pm on 2/20.

**Take Home Midterm Due Sunday, 2/25 (350 points):** The take home midterm is an open book, take home exam. The exam, including instructions, will be posted on bCourses by 6pm on Tuesday, 2/20 and due by midnight on Sunday 2/25. The exam is intended to test your knowledge of class materials from Weeks 1-5. For the midterm and final exam, you will be tested on assigned materials, class lectures, and class discussion. You may not rely on outside sources.

## **Week 7**

Tues. 2/27 – Fundamental Cause Theory and Looking Upstream  
Review assigned reading on Fundamental Cause Theory from 2/15

Williams, David R., and Chiquita Collins. 2001. "Racial residential segregation: A fundamental cause of racial disparities in health." *Public Health Reports* 116.5: 404-407.

Boyd, Rhea W., Edwin G. Lindo, Lachelle D. Weeks, and Monica R. McLemore. 2020. "On Racism: A New Standard For Publishing On Racial Health Inequities." *Health Affairs Blog*. July 2, 2020.

### **Recommended:**

Cockerham, William. 2021. "Social Construction of Gender and Race" pp. 194-219 in *Sociological Theories of Health and Illness*. Routledge.

## **PART III. INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND POWER**

Thurs. 2/29 – *How does the law shape society? Residential Segregation*

Rothstein, Richard. 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Pp. vii-xv, 3-14.

## Week 8

### *Tues. 3/5 - Political Sociology and Health*

Beckfield, Jason. 2018. "Introduction." Pp. xxi-xxx in *Political Sociology and the People's Health*. Oxford University Press.

Krieger, Nancy. 2020. "Measures of Racism, Sexism, Heterosexism, and Gender Binarism for Health Equity Research: From Structural Injustice to Embodied Harm—An Ecosocial Analysis." *Annual Review of Public Health* 41(1):37–62. doi: 10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040119-094017. **Read pages 37-50.**

### *Thurs. 3/7 — Segregated Health Care I: Health System Financing as an Upstream Cause* Today's lecture will examine the role of law, legal institutions, and organizations as the upstream causes of segregated health care.

Vinekar, Kavita. 2021. "Pathology of Racism — A Call to Desegregate Teaching Hospitals." *New England Journal of Medicine* 385(13):e40. doi: 10.1056/NEJMp2113508.

Yearby, Clark, and Figueroa. 2022. "Structural Racism In Historical And Modern US Health Care Policy." *Health Affairs*.

## Week 9

### *Tues. 3/12 — Organizational Theory and Racialized Organizations*

Ray, Victor. 2019. "A Theory of Racialized Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 84(1):26–53. doi: 10.1177/0003122418822335.

Sewell, Abigail A. 2016. The racism-race ratification process: A mesolevel political economic framework for understanding racial health disparities. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2(4):402–432. **READ PAGES 402-414 ONLY.**

### *Thurs. 3/14 — Segregated Healthcare in the U.S. II: Results from a Qualitative Study on Provider Experiences*

Pero, Adriana, and Emily L. Xu. 2023. "Is It Reasonable to Expect Students and Trainees to Internalize Equity as a Core Professional Value When Teaching and Learning Occurs in Segregated Settings?" *AMA Journal of Ethics* 25(1):15–20. doi: 10.1001/amajethics.2023.15.

Marquez, Denisse Rojas, and Hazel Lever. 2023. "A Call for Health Care Desegregation." *AMA Journal of Ethics* 25(1):3–6. doi: 10.1001/amajethics.2023.3.

McClurg, Asha Belle, Kavita Shah Arora, Lauren D. Schiff, Erin T. Carey, and Genevieve Scott Neal-Perry. 2022. "Dismantling Structural Barriers: Resident Clinics Refocused on Equity." *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 140(5):739–42.

**Response Paper #3 due Sunday 3/17 (50 points):** Prepare a 2-3 page paper applying a theory, concept, or framework studied in Weeks 3-9 to a topic relating to health care. (12-point font, double spaced, one-inch margins, maximum 750 words). How does the



theory or concept help you understand the action or situation? How is it limited or inadequate? Although these response papers are short, remember to follow a standard paper format: introduce your main point or thesis, define the core theory or concept, draw upon the texts to make your main points or arguments, and conclude with a summary or key takeaway. Use short form citation format with page numbers for class materials so that the reader can identify your source, e.g., Foucault 1978:20 or Bridges 2021, p. 3. If you include an outside example or source, please include a reference list, page numbers, and link to the source.

## **PART IV. SELECTED TOPICS IN HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE REPRODUCTION AND SOCIETY**

### **Week 10**

*Tues. 3/19 — Roe v. Wade and the Right to Abortion – Level Setting*

We will begin this module on abortion with an introduction to the topic. Today's lecture will include a summary of the law; the latest trends and evidence on abortion access, barriers, and safety; and an overview of the different abortion procedures.

Assigned Reading: we will read excerpts from *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and Angela Davis (1990) "Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights."

*Thurs. 3/21 – History of Abortion (pre-Roe)*

Kristin Luker. 1985. "Medicine and Morality in the Nineteenth Century." Pp. 69-76 in *The Reproductive Rights Reader: Law, Medicine, and the Construction of Motherhood*, edited by Nancy Ehrenreich.

Leslie J. Reagan. 1998. "When Abortion Was a Crime: Women, Medicine, and the Law in the United States, 1867-1973." Pp. 79-85 in *The Reproductive Rights Reader: Law, Medicine, and the Construction of Motherhood*, edited by Nancy Ehrenreich.

**3/25-3/29 - Spring Break**

### **Week 11**

*Tues. 4/2 —Direct Action Advocacy, Social Movements, & Abortion*

McReynolds-Pérez, Julia. 2017. "No doctors required: lay activist expertise and pharmaceutical abortion in Argentina." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42(2):349-375.

Aiken, Abigail Ra, and Ushma D. Upadhyay. 2022. "The Future of Medication Abortion in a Post-Roe World." *BMJ (Clinical Research Ed.)* 377:o1393.

*Thurs. 4/4 –Forced Sterilization & Eugenics*

Angela Davis (1990) "Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights." (Review Week 10). Watch the documentary "No Mas Bebés" about the forced sterilization

of undocumented women at LAC-USC Hospital. Access the film here:  
<http://docuseek2.com.libproxy.berkeley.edu/gd-nmb>

## PART V. GLOBAL HEALTH

### Week 12

Tues., 4/9 — *Sociology of Global Health I – Introduction to Global Health*

Koplan, Jeffrey, et al. 2009. "Towards a Common Definition of Global Health." *The Lancet* 373:1993–1995.

Farmer, Paul. 2013. "Preface." Pp. xiii-xxiii in *Reimagining Global Health*. University of California Press.

Farmer, Paul, Jim Yong Kim, Arthur Kleinman, Matthew Basilio. 2013. "Introduction: A Biosocial Approach to Global Health." Chapter 1 Pp. 1-14 in *Reimagining Global Health*. University of California Press.

Thurs. 4/11 *Sociology of Global Health II – Colonialism and Capitalism*

Farmer, Paul "An Anthropology of Structural Violence." *Current Anthropology* 45(3):305-325. Focus on pages 305-307 and 323.

Hunt, Nancy Rose. 1988. "' Le Béb  en Brousse': European Women, African Birth Spacing and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo." *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21:3:401-432.

### Week 13

Tues. 4/16 – *Climate Change & Health*

Reading TBD

Thurs. 4/18 — *Infectious Disease: HIV, Tuberculosis, and the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Reading TBD

**Response Paper #4 due Sunday, 4/21 (50 points):** Response paper # 4 is your opportunity to reflect on any of the topics covered in this class. The main requirement for this paper is that you have a thesis and maintain a structured essay format. State a clear introduction, body paragraphs to address your main points, in text citations, and a strong conclusion. Include page numbers with your in text citations if you are referencing a particular statement or including a quote. 2-4 pages, maximum 1000 words.

**Friday 4/19** — UCSF/UC Law Symposium on Segregated Health Care

### Week 14

Tues. 4/23 — *Medical Ethics and Research - Colonizing the Body*

[Interview](#) with Harriet Washington on her book *Medical Apartheid* where she discusses historical research on Black Americans and how these practices relate to current practices of “big pharma” in African countries. Interview starts at 17:00.

Recommended for Further Reading:

Washington, Harriet A. 2006. “Introduction” pp. 1-22 in *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to Present*.

Washington, Harriet A. 2006. “Africa: Continent of Subjects” pp. 389-396 in *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to Present*.

Thurs. 4/25 – Recap and Review  
Assigned Reading TBD

*Final Exam Instructions will be posted on bCourses by 4/26 at 6pm.*

**Week 15**

4/29-5/3 - RRR Week

**Week 16**

**Take Home Final Exam Due on May 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm (350 points):** The take home exam is an open book, take home exam. The exam, including instructions, will be posted on bCourses by 4/26 at 6pm and due on the scheduled day of the exam: May 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:30pm. The exam is cumulative and intended to test your knowledge of class materials from Weeks 1-14.