SOCIOLOGY OF ILLNESS
01.286.4322
University of Haifa
School of Public Health
Sharon R. Sznitman

Thursdays, 12.00-14.00
Semester B

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 and health; health related stigma; and social movements surrounding health, including the ways some socially controversial behaviors are “medicalized” (e.g. illicit substance use, same sex intercourse) while others are not (legal substance use, unhealthy diet). As a society, how do our labels for “medical problems” change over time so that medical jurisdiction over a problem can expand or recede?

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. We will discuss different sociological theories and examine how these contribute to a better understanding of specific contemporary issues related to health and illness.

The objectives of this course are for the students to:
- To provide students with a broad overview of the field of sociology of illness.
- To enable students to understand links between the subfield and sociology more generally.
- To highlight health policy implications of medical sociology.
- Provide students with the tools to be creative and critical in analysis of readings on health and illness.
- Rate local cultural systems as important for impacting a community’s health practices and outcomes.
- Demonstrate awareness of one’s own cultural assumptions about health and behavior
- Recognize cultural humility as a practice that applies the sociocultural model.

Course evaluation:
- In-class presentation/exercises of final project, counting 30% of your grade
- Final exam: counting 60% of your grade
LECTURE SCHEDULE

Lecture 1: 09.03.2017
Introduction to medical sociology:
  o Structure of the course
  o Your course work:
    ➢ Class participation
    ➢ Student presentation
    ➢ Student GROUP PROJECT presentation

Lecture 2: 16.03.2017
Sociological imagination & agency-structure debate in sociology of illness
Readings:

Lecture 3: 23.03.2017
Agency structure

Social construction of reality

Lecture 4: 30.03.2017
Social construction of medical knowledge

Lecture 5: 20.04.2017
Medicalization
EXTRA READING:

Lecture 6: 27.04.2017
Medicalization case study: ADHD
 ➢ Movie: the drugging of our children

Lecture 7: 04.05.2017
Social construction of disease case study part 1: AIDS

Readings:

EXTRA READING:

Lecture 8: 11.05.2017
Send final project title and outline by EMAIL to: sznitman@research.haifa.ac.il Social construction of disease case study part 2: AIDS
 ➢ Video: Spottiswoode, And the band played on [videorecording] [S.l.] : Home Box Office, 1992 VCV: 3741 000209418, 141 min

Lecture 9: 18.05.2017
Durkheim and suicide

Readings:

EXTRA READING:


Lecture 10: 25.05.2017
Durkheim and suicide
Student presentations

- Movie: Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple, Directed and produced by Stanley Nelson, Distributed by Firelight Media American Experience
- Student presentations

Lecture 11: 01.06.2017
Goffman, stigma and health
Student presentations

Reading:


Lecture 12: 08.06.2017
Student presentation

Lecture 13: 15.06.2017
Student presentation