

COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring 2021

Sociology of Medicine & Healthcare

Classes begin **January 20, 2021**.

Academic Calendar Directory: <https://academicaffairs.rutgers.edu/academic-calendar-directory>

You are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in your personal files for use when applying for future degrees, certifications, or transfer of credit.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Joanna Kempner, PhD

Email: jkempner@rutgers.edu

Phone: 215-681-1051

Live Classes: First day of class is Wednesday, January 20th.

After that: Mondays, 1:10-2:30 on Canvas Zoom

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:15-2:30 or 4-5:15, please sign up for a 15 min slot on Calendly: <https://calendly.com/jkempner>.

Communication:

Throughout the semester, I will communicate with you via either **Canvas Announcements** or your **Rutgers email account**. Please review the following link for Accessing Rutgers Email:

<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/documentation/general/accessing-rutgers-email/>

The best way to reach me is by email. Please write “Soc 210” in the subject line so that I recognize your email quickly. Don’t forget to sign your name in the email. If, for some reason, you do not hear back from me in 48 hours, please feel free to write again – sometimes my emails do get lost in the rush!

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Description:

Why ask a sociologist, rather than a physician or scientist, about medicine, health and illness? Medicine is more than doctor’s offices and laboratories investigating new and better therapies. Medicine is also profoundly social. How do we know when we are sick and require the help of an expert health professional, rather than just some extra rest at home? And if we need expert help, what kind of person do we see and how do we anticipate paying for them? How we answer these questions will differ depending on a number of social factors: where we live, whether we have insurance, and the kinds of care that our local culture values. Given that a person’s zip code

is a stronger predictor of health and longevity than their genetic code, health and illness cannot be understood simply by looking at biological phenomena and medical knowledge. We must also consider a variety of social, political, economic, and cultural forces in which health and illness are produced and understood. Over the course of the semester, we will survey the central topics in the field, with an emphasis on understanding the way that the following themes: the structural and cultural dimensions of health; health inequalities; the profession of medicine; the experience of illness; and attempts to reform healthcare.

Prerequisites: None

Course Modality:

This course is delivered fully online. To access the companion Canvas course site, please visit Rutgers Canvas at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/> and log in using your NetID. For more information about course access and support contact Canvas Help at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/>, via email at help@canvas.rutgers.edu, or call 877-361-1134.

Core Curriculum Class

This is a core curriculum class designed to meet the following goal:

Social Analysis

*Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

*Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

MATERIALS

Required Texts:

I have worked hard to use low-cost or freely accessible materials for this class. Please contact me if you have *any* trouble accessing materials.

- 1) Almost all readings are available for free on the Canvas course website. Links to readings can also be found in each Module.
- 2) I've assigned a single reading that costs \$1 from the website: www.sociologyexperiment.com. Please purchase chapter 6, Gender and Sexuality. This chapter comes with an audio version and an interactive study guide.
- 3) Sometimes, instead of readings, I have assigned a film to watch. I have provided links to the films. I've provided links to all of these videos. Unnatural Causes is available to watch as a streaming video through Rutgers Library.
- 4) Links to other interactive material can be found on the course syllabus. **Please notify me if you are having trouble accessing any course materials.**

I will email the class a reminder about your weekly readings and activities every Sunday night.

Technology Requirements:

This course requires that you access online resources in the University's Canvas site. Please review the following link for Canvas Student Resources for assistance on getting started in Canvas:

<https://canvas.rutgers.edu/students/>

Additional Technical Requirements:

Review Rutgers' Tech Guides at: <https://it.rutgers.edu/technology-guide/>

COURSE COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

We are living in uncertain times.

Let's be flexible with each other.

Please let me know if you are struggling. We are all still adjusting to our new normal. Most of us didn't choose this format. Given our constantly changing political, economic and social circumstances, I may make adjustments to the course as needed.

LECTURES & COURSE READINGS

Classrooms are always the most inspiring when there's room for interaction, debate and constructive engagement. Let's transform our digital classroom into a dialogue about the most pressing issues of our time.

Our dialogue begins with course material. We will read the occasional textbook, but we'll also read original research, longform journalism, and news excerpts detailing current events. I've also assigned documentaries, podcasts, games, and interactive tools. I'm providing a broad array of materials because I want to teach you the sociological tools and concepts that will help you understand medical sociology, but I also want to ensure you have a chance to practice your new skills.

Every Monday, please join me for a lecture/discussion during our regular class time (1:10-2:30 PM). Lectures are designed to explain and complement the reading materials, but you will be tested on reading material even if we do not cover it in class. Assigned material must be read prior to class. I do ask questions during these presentations. Please participate! Your questions and comments make the class work better for everyone.

Lectures will happen via Zoom and will be recorded and shared on course website for those who prefer to watch on your own time. Attendance is recommended, but not mandatory.

ASSIGNMENTS

You have five assignments, plus one additional extra credit assignment, over the course of the semester. Some of the assignments require participation in an online discussion forum and some require submission of a short response paper or journal entry.

Discussion forums are an important space for working through new course material. As you can see on the course site, I have already assigned you to a discussion group. Your first assignment is to introduce yourself to your group members.

Most discussion forums require at least two posts: an original submission in response to the assignment and then, a few days later, a response to somebody else's post. Rubrics have been provided and due dates are clearly marked on the syllabus.

When writing posts, please remember basic netiquette.

- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material.
- Take your posts seriously and review and edit your posts before sending.
- Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment.
- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source.
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying.
- Don't repeat someone else's post without adding your own contribution.
- Avoid short, generic replies such as, "I agree." You should include why you agree or add to the previous point.
- Always be respectful of others' opinions even when they differ from your own.
- When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way.
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks.
- Be open-minded.

Response papers allow you an opportunity to reflect on course material. Each has a different set of instructions. Some ask you to think sociologically about an assigned video or a set of readings. Other response papers ask you to reflect on your experiences in class or your time during the pandemic. Response Papers should be concise—no longer than a page of text. I have provided detailed instructions and a rubric for each response paper.

QUIZZES

There are four assigned quizzes. Quizzes are designed to assess your basic understanding of content. I will not be testing rote memorization, but instead will be assessing whether you understand general concepts. I provide study guides. Quizzes are not cumulative.

GRADING

Final Course Grade:

After dropping your lowest assignment grade, your average assignment grade will constitute 40% of your total grade.

After dropping your lowest quiz grade, your average quiz grade will constitute 60% of your total grade.

Grades in this course are weighted according to the table below.

Assessment	Due Date
Discussion Forum (Introduction)	1/24
Assignment 1	1/31
Assignment 2	2/14
Quiz 1	2/21
Assignment 3	2/28
Quiz 2	3/14
Assignment 4	3/28
Extra Credit	4/11
Quiz 3	4/25
Assignment 5	5/2
Quiz 4	5/10

Grading scale

- A 90-100
- B+ 86 < 90
- B 80 < 86
- C+ 76 < 80
- C 70 < 76
- D 60 < 70
- F < 60 or below

Before you ask me to “bump up” your grade, please consider the following:

- 1) There must be a “cut-off” somewhere. There will always be someone who is very close to the next grade.
- 2) I always presume that every student wishes for their grade to be “bumped up,” but that only some will make this request. Therefore, I presume you have already made this request when I calculate final grades.
- 3) You may contact me to correct a grading error, but otherwise, final grades are *non-negotiable*.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CLASS CONDUCT AND GROUND RULES

The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. The University Code of Student Conduct is at <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/disciplinary-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/>

Coursework Difficulties:

Online courses require discipline. Do your best to follow the class schedule. Please talk to me sooner, rather than later, if you have any issues completing coursework on time with me. I am available to talk this over with you by appointment.

WELLNESS STATEMENT

As your sociology professor, I very much want to see you learn about the social world and healthcare. But more than anything else, I want to make sure that you are taking care of yourself. Yes, you need to do well in college, but I recognize that you have multiple competing pressures in your life – especially those of you who work long hours to afford this education.

I plan to challenge you in this class. I am assigning rigorous readings and regular writing assignments that will challenge your thinking. By the end of the semester, you should feel proud of all we accomplished here. But this work cannot come at the expense of your wellbeing. Working until exhaustion is not a badge of honor. Research shows that it's usually the students with the most cultural capital (i.e., the students who probably need the least amount of help) who talk to their professors when their lives get difficult. If you are struggling—for whatever reason—come talk to me. Let's get on top of whatever's ailing you before it's all too much. We got this.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

Our purpose in the classroom is to seek the truth; this work requires trust and honesty between teacher and student. If we are not honest about what we know and do not know, our learning will always be impaired. Because our teaching and learning depends on this honest communication, we expect all students to understand what plagiarism is and why it is unacceptable.

Any student considering plagiarism should recognize the consequences and consider alternatives. Students uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism may request help from faculty or from appropriate University services. For information on using sources in writing, see the Identifying and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty section of the [Rutgers Academic Integrity](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/) web site:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-students/>

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are required to adhere to the University Student Code of Conduct delineated in the Rutgers Student Affairs website Student Conduct page:

<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/student-conduct-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/#1495568095620-2f5ce77d-17dd>

ACCOMMODATIONS

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form (<https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration>).

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic Services:

- For academic support visit Rutgers Academics Student Support at <https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support>
- Any student can obtain tutoring and other help at the Learning Centers on each campus. Check the website at <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>
- For coaching help with writing skills and assignments visit the Writing Coaching webpage at <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/student-services/writing-coaching>
- Many library resources are available online. Assistance is available through phone, email, and chat. For information, check the Rutgers Libraries website at <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>

Rutgers Student Health Services:

Rutgers Student Health Services is dedicated to health for the whole student body, mind and spirit. It accomplishes this through a staff of qualified clinicians and support staff. Services are available at several locations throughout the New Brunswick-Piscataway area. For more information visit: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>

On Mental Health and Wellbeing: This class should be hard on your intellect, but not on your emotional health! Here are some campus resources to help cope with the pressure and stresses you might be experiencing:

Just In Case Web App

<http://codu.co/cee05e> Access helpful mental health information and resources for yourself or a friend in a mental health crisis on your smartphone or tablet and easily contact CAPS or RUPD.

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/ rhscaps.rutgers.edu/

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community.

Scarlet Listeners (732) 247-5555 / <http://www.scarletlisteners.com/> Free and confidential peer counseling and referral hotline, providing a comforting and supportive safe space.

- If you need help navigating violence in a relationship, or if you have found yourself dealing with other forms of sexual or relationship violence or stalking, please know that the Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance Office is here to help you.

Veteran Services:

Rutgers is proud to support veterans. If you are a veteran of the armed forces, please visit the Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services website for more information:

<https://veterans.rutgers.edu/>

TOPICS SCHEDULE

Module 1: Week of January 20th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Wednesday, January 20 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Introduction to the Course
Readings/Media	Watch: Introductory video Familiarize yourself with the Canvas site
Assignment Due 1/24	Discussion Forum: Introduce yourself to your discussion group members

Module 2: Week of January 25th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, January 25 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	How do sociologists study medicine?
Readings/Media	Read: Weitz, pp. 4-10 Watch: A Sociological Imagination
Assignment Due 1/31	Response Paper: Developing a sociological imagination

Module 3: Week of February 1st

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, February 1st from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	The Social Production of Health and Illness: How do social environments contribute to health and illness?
Readings/Media	Read: McKinlay and McKinlay, Medical Measures and the Decline of Mortality Changes in How and When We Die:

Category	Description
	<p>https://thesocietypages.org/trot/2020/05/07/changes-in-how-and-when-we-die/</p> <p>Watch: Recorded Interview with Maria Espinoza</p>

Module 4: Week of February 8th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, February 8 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Inequality: <i>Why is zip code such a good predictor of health?</i>
Readings/Media	<p>Read: Phelan, Link and Tehranifer, Social Conditions as Fundamental Cause of Disease</p> <p>Poverty as a Childhood Disease, <i>New York Times</i></p> <p>Life at the Top isn't Just Better, it's Longer, <i>New York Times</i></p>
Assessment Due 2/14	<p>Assignment 2:</p> <p>Watch: Unnatural Causes: In Sickness and In Health, Episode One Available on Rutgers Library</p> <p>Complete with members of discussion forum: Film Guide</p>

Module 5: Week of February 15th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on February 22nd from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Gender and health: <i>Women tend to have more illnesses than men, but live longer lives. Medicine tends to cater to men, even though men seek help less often than women. What explains these paradoxes?</i>

Category	Description
Readings/Media	<p>Read: Angela Barian, Todd Schoepflin, “Gender & Sexuality,” Chapter 6. Pp. 1-27 Purchase for \$1 here: https://www.sociologyexperiment.com</p> <p>Dusenbery, Introduction of <i>Doing Harm</i></p>
Assessment Due 2/21	Quiz 1

Module 6: Week of February 22nd

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, February 22 nd from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial inequality in health: <i>What is race? If race isn't biological, then why are racial disparities in health so large?</i>
Readings/Media	<p>Read: David R. Williams, Jourdyn A. Lawrence, Brigette A. Davis. 2019. Racism and Health: Evidence and Needed Research</p> <p>Watch: Race: The Power of an Illusion Watch: Dorothy Roberts, TedX Talk</p> <p>Watch: https://www.ted.com/talks/david_r_williams_how_racism_makes_us_sick/discussion</p> <p>Recommended: Watch: John Oliver, Bias in Medicine</p>
Assessment Due 2/28	Assignment 3: What is Race?

Module 7: Week of March 1st

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on March 1 st from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Structural Violence: How do social structures create inequality in clinical medicine? This week, we look at examples of how structural differentially affects patients across race and ethnicity.
Readings/Media	<p>Read: Farmer, Structural Violence and Clinical Medicine</p> <p>Knight et al, Reproductive (In)Justice</p> <p>Carpenter, “What’s Killing America’s Black Infants?: Racism is fueling a national health crisis,” <i>The Nation</i> February 15, 2017.</p> <p>Monika K. Goyal, et al. “Racial Disparities in Pain Management of Children with Appendicitis in Emergency Departments.” <i>JAMA Pediatrics</i> 169.11 (2015): 996–1002.</p>

Module 8: Week of March 8th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on March 8 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Pandemic Life: Covid 19 is caused by a virus, but not every population has been affected in the same way. What lessons does pandemic life teach us about the sociology of health and illness?
Readings/Media	<p>Read: Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, “The Black Plague,” <i>The New Yorker</i> You can also choose to listen to this article here: https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/the-black-plague</p> <p>Katherine J. Wu, “Study of 17 Million Identifies Crucial Risk Factors for Coronavirus Deaths”</p>

Category	Description
	Valji, “How Women are Getting Squeezed by the Pandemic”
Assessment Due 3/14	Quiz 2

SPRING BREAK!!!

Module 9: Week of March 22nd

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, March 22 nd from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	The Rise and Fall of Medical Power: <i>Public opinion polls indicate that physicians are one of the most trusted professions in the United States (although they rank far below nurses). How did medical doctors earn that trust? And are they beginning to lose some of their hard-won status and power?</i>
Readings/Media	Read: Paul Starr. 1984. <i>The Social Transformation of American Medicine</i> . Basic Books. pp. 3- 29. Light, Countervailing Power: <i>The Changing Character of the Medical Profession in the United States</i>
Assessment Due March 28 th	Assignment 4: Pandemic Diary

Module 10: Week of March 29th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, March 29 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Medicalization: <i>Does it ever seem like there’s a drug for every ailment? Over the last fifty years, medicine has recategorized hundreds of conditions once understood to be “conditions of life” as medical. For example,</i>

Category	Description
	<i>fatness is now “obesity,” baldness is “alopecia,” impotence is “erectile dysfunction,” and so on. How and why do conditions become medicalized?</i>
Readings/Media	Read: Jutel, Annemarie Goldstein. 2011. Putting a Name to It: Diagnosis in Contemporary Society. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press (Ch.5 “Driving Diagnosis” 97-116).
Assessment 4/11	Extra Credit Response Paper

Module 11: Week of April 5th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, April 5 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Developing compassion in our everyday lives
Readings/Media	Read: Heather Lonczak, Twenty Reasons Why Compassion is So Important in Psychology. https://positivepsychology.com/why-is-compassion-important/
Assessment Due 4/25	Extra Credit Assignment: Short Response Paper

Module 12: Week of April 12th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, April 19 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Experiencing Illness: <i>Our experiences of illness are determined by far more than biology. This week, we’ll explore what it means to be sick by reading a combination of sociological research and illness narratives.</i>
Readings/Media	Read: Kirmayer, Laurence J. 2001. “Cultural Variations in the Clinical Presentation of Depression and Anxiety: Implications for Diagnosis and Treatment.” <i>Journal of Clinical Psychiatry</i> 62:22–30.

Category	Description
	Victoria Weinstein, A Different Fat Narrative
Assessment Due 4/18	Quiz 3

Module 13: Week of April 19th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, April 26 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Healthcare Policy and its Reform: <i>Why does every developed country in the world have universal healthcare except for the United States? Why did President Obama put all of his political capital into healthcare reform? Why has “Obamacare” been so controversial and what are the alternatives?</i>
Readings/Media	Read: Quadagno, The Origins of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act Cohen, The Debate over Health Care Rationing: Déjà Vu All Over Again Watch: Online Mini-Lecture

Module 14: Week of April 26th

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, April 26 th from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Population Health: <i>Healthcare reforms almost always focuses on increasing access to physicians. Is there another way to improve health in the United States?</i>
Readings/Media	Read: Mechanic, Saving Lives Individually or in Populations
Assessment	Assignment 5: Discussion Forum –Comparative health policy

Category	Description
First comment by 4/29 Replies by 5/2	Post your first comment by April 29th. Make sure to reply to others by May 2 nd at the latest!

Module 15: Week of May 3rd

Category	Description
Meeting	Class will be held live on Monday, May 3 rd from 1:10-2:30pm. These sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend in person.
Core Topic(s)	Health Social Movements: <i>Speaking Truth to Power: How can people change our health system? During this last week, we take a look at health social movements, focusing on those working to change how Covid-19 is understood and studied.</i>
Readings/Media	<p>Watch: How to Survive a Plague</p> <p>Read: Epstein, Steven. 1995. "The Construction of Lay Expertise: AIDS Activism and the Forging of Credibility in the Reform of Clinical Trials." <i>Science, Technology & Human Values</i> 20: 408-437.</p> <p>Ed Young, "Long Haulers are Redefining Covid-19" <i>The Atlantic</i></p>
Assessments 5/10 – Due Date	Quiz 4

