SOC 30100 [01] – MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY

HUNTER COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

FALL 2025

ONLINE
ASYNCHRONOUS

Instructor: Isabelle Lee
Office Hours: Mondays & Thursdays (remote & by appt.)

Email: ilee.dipasquale@gmail.com **OR**
il36@hunter.cuny.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on health, illness, and medicine from a sociological perspective. The class will provide students with an overview of the development of medicine as an institution, the impact of medicine on society, the socialization of health care practitioners, the social determinants of health and illness, healthcare policies in the U.S. and around the world, and patients' experiences with illness.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
(1) Identify concepts in sociology, such as socialization and other theoretical perspectives, to demonstrate their real-world applications in the context of health and medicine.
(2) Analyze the impact of multiple social forces on people's health and the surrounding community.
(3) Critique sociological theories, such as the "sick role."
(4) Compare and contrast global and domestic health care systems.
(5) Explain the social construction of diverse illness identities in patients with chronic diseases.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Medical Sociology *[16th edition]* **Author:** William Cockerham
Publisher: Routledge/Taylor & Francis
ISBN: [16th edition, 2025] **9781032907864 (paperback); 9781032942698 (e-book)**
New, used, rental and/or digital copies of this textbook are available through Hunter's Online Bookstore (*hunter.textbookx.com).* The Hunter library will also have the 16th edition on reserve. Please check with them if the hard copies have arrived.
Other sources: PDF copy of 15th edition is available on Brightspace

CLASS COURSE SITE

All students must make sure they can access the class course site on **Brightspace (BSP).** The **Brightspace (BSP)** course site gives access to supplementary readings, exam materials, links to documentaries that can be watched at home, and important class updates. Please make sure you have completed the training titled "Getting Started in Brightspace" on your Brightspace homepage, if you haven't done so already.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS *(also refer to checklist on page 3)*

GRADING

Participation (weekly quizzes/discussion board)	20%
Final Exam Questions (total of 3 short papers)	80%

Participation (20%): This class is an asynchronous, self-paced online course. Participation in the class will primarily be taken through the completion of weekly quizzes and some discussion board responses. Students must complete weekly quizzes (average of 4 questions for each quiz) by the scheduled due date. These quizzes can be found under each week's assignments on Brightspace (EX: Week 1, Week 2…) and will be posted by Thursday of each week. The quizzes will be based on the activities for the designated week, such as PowerPoints, readings, and/or videos. Two attempts to complete the quiz are allowed by the due date, which is usually on a Monday unless the Monday falls on a holiday. Quizzes are not timed, but they cannot be accessed after the strict due date. If you are unable to complete a weekly quiz due to technical difficulties, please inform me. Technical assistance contact information is provided below.

Final Exam Questions (80%): You will be taking the Final Exam throughout the semester as three (3) assignments (abbreviated as "**FEQ"**). On the last page of the syllabus, you will find a chart that lists the point value for each assignment, the date the assignment details will be posted, and the due date. *No extension requests are necessary for Final Exam Questions unless you cannot submit them by the listed absolute deadline. Any FEQs submitted after the absolute deadline (without requesting an extension) will be subject to a* **5-point** *late penalty deduction.*

Policy on Rewrites and INC (Incomplete Grade)

- If you want to revise your grade, only assignments due early in the semester are eligible for the rewrite option. There is no guarantee of a rewrite option for the last FEQ or if you submit any of your assignment(s) within 2 weeks of the final deadline.
- The INC (Incomplete Grade) will only be given to students for medical reasons and/or extreme personal circumstances. Documentation must be provided for either situation.

How to Send Assignments

For all assignments (including rewrites), you must upload the papers on Brightspace. There will be clearly designated areas to submit your assignments.

Submissions in the incorrect file format (as suggested by Brightspace) may result in grading delays.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

https://community.d2l.com/brightspace/kb/learners-higher-ed-postsecondary
https://www.cuny.edu/academics/brightspace-transition/#2023
Student Help Desk: (212) 650-3624

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Make sure to read CUNY's updated statement on academic integrity, available here: https://hunter.cuny.edu/center-for-online-learning/online-learning-resources/academic-integrity-policy/
Your original ideas/work matter! Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this class. Any student caught ***plagiarizing any paper/assignment*** will face the following consequences: **0** on the assignment(s), disciplinary action, and a possible **F** for the course. While you may use AI tools for feedback or help with proofreading your writing, responsible and ethical usage of these tools is crucial for success in this class. Use of an AI text generator when an assignment does not explicitly call or allow for it without proper attribution or authorization is plagiarism (aka "AIgiarism").

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment

retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College. a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444). b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123. CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link: http://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-resources/Sexual-Misconduct.pdf

ADA POLICY

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772-4857 or (212) 650-3230.



MED SOC 301 Checklist

- ☐ Weekly Quizzes under each week's activities/assignments
- ☐ Final Exam Question #1
- ☐ Final Exam Question #2
- ☐ Final Exam Question #3
- ☐ Success in this course = READ all the instructions/announcements carefully

COURSE OUTLINE [Please follow this outline and the Weekly Assignments set up on Brightspace]

- **Below is an outline and preview of activities for each week. Specific details on activities, such as PowerPoint lectures and quizzes, will be posted on Brightspace.**
- Supplementary readings that must be downloaded from **Brightspace** are designated with the following symbol: 🖱💻
- Readings from the required textbook are symbolized with: 🕮
- PowerPoint lectures (and audio overviews) will be posted on Mondays & Thursdays of each week.
- Course Schedule changes will be announced on Brightspace.

WEEK 0 – Introduction (starts on Aug. 26)

Introduction to class, outline of major themes

- **Acquire access to textbook**
- **Explore our Brightspace course site – *Complete activities under Orientation on Brightspace***
- **Please check Brightspace Announcements and/or each weekly module for more information.**

WEEK 1 – Week of Sept. 1

✓ ***Continue to familiarize yourself with Brightspace and complete Orientation activities***

***Monday, Sept. 1*: NO CLASS (College Closed)**

Brief History of Medicine & Theoretical Background

- READ 🖱💻: "The Development of Scientific Medicine" [from Weiss & Lonnquist's *The Sociology of Health, Healing, and Illness*, 7th edition: 2012]
- [Optional] READ 🕮 Chap. 1 – "Medical Sociology"

WEEK 2 – Week of Sept. 8

Functionalist: Sickness as a Social Role

- READ 🕮 Chap. 9 – "Illness Behavior and the Sick Role"
- READ 🖱💻: "Medicine as an Institution of Social Control" by Irving Kenneth Zola [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 9th edition: 2013]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "The Impending Globalization of ADHD: Notes on the Expansion and Growth of a Medicalized Disorder" by Conrad & Bergey [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 10th edition: 2019]
- READ 🖱💻: "The Meaning of Medications: Another Look at Compliance" by Peter Conrad [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 9th edition: 2013]

WEEK 3 – Week of Sept. 15

Functionalist: The Doctor Role

- READ 🕮 Chap. 11 – "Physicians"
- READ 🕮 Chap. 12 – "The Physician in a Changing Society"
- READ 🖱💻: "It's Like Having a Physician in Your Pocket!": A Critical Analysis of Self-Diagnosis Smartphone Apps" by Lupton & Jutel [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 10th edition: 2019]

Training of Doctors

- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: Articles in DOCTORS Folder on Brightspace [under **Optional Readings**]
- **WATCH documentary below:**
  - ➔ 🎬 "Doctors' Diaries" [NOVA/PBS, 2009] & ***Work on related Final Exam Question (FEQ) #1 (assignment details TBA on Brightspace)***

WEEK 4 – Week of Sept. 22

***Sept. 22 - Sept. 24*: NO CLASSES SCHEDULED**

Health Professionals & Patients

- READ 🕮 Chap. 10 – "Physician-Patient Interaction"
- READ 🕮 Chap. 13 – "Nurses, Physician Assistants, Pharmacists, and Midwives"
- READ 🖱💻: "Not Just Bodies: Strategies for Desexualizing the Physical Examination of Patients" by Giuffre & Williams [from Lisa McIntyre's *The Practical Skeptic: Readings in Sociology*, 3rd edition: 2006]

WEEK 5 – Week of Sept. 29

***Oct. 1 – Oct. 2*: NO CLASSES SCHEDULED**

Illness Narratives/Social Construction of Illness

- READ 🕮 Chap. 9 – "Illness Behavior and the Sick Role"
- READ 🖱💻: "Electronic Support Groups, Patient-Consumers, and Medicalization" by Kristin Barker [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 10th edition: 2019]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "Illness Meanings of AIDS Among Women With HIV: Merging Immunology and Life Experience" by Alison Scott [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 9th edition: 2013]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "The Health Politics of Asthma: Environmental Justice and Collective Illness Experience in the United States" by Phil Brown, Brian Mayer, and et al. [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 9th edition: 2013]
- 🎬 **WATCH (*assignment details TBA on Brightspace*):** "In My Hands: A Story of Marfan Syndrome" (2009)

WEEK 6 – Week of Oct. 6

Social Class Impact on Health

- READ 🕮 Chap. 4 – "Social Demography of Health: Social Class"
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "Food Stamp Nation" by Eli Saslow [originally published in *The Washington Post*, March 2013]

Gender Impact on Health & Illness

- READ 🕮 Chap. 5 – "Social Demography of Health: Gender"

WEEK 7 – Week of Oct. 13

***Monday, Oct. 13*: NO CLASS (College Closed)**

Impact of Race on Health & Illness

- READ 🕮 Chap. 6 -- "Social Demography of Health: Age and Race"
- READ 🖱💻: Tuskegee Syphilis Study
    - https://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm

WEEK 8 – Week of Oct. 20

Monday, Oct. 20: NO CLASSES SCHEDULED

Lifestyle & Health Behavior

- READ 🕮 Chap. 8 – "Health Behavior and Lifestyles"
- READ 🖱💻: "Grandma's Experiences Leave a Mark on Your Genes" by Dan Hurley [DISCOVER: May 2013]

➔ **WATCH documentary (*assignment details TBA on Brightspace*):**

➔ 🎬 *:"Epigenetics: The Game of Genes"*

Stress & Health

- READ 🕮 Chap. 7 – "Social Stress & Health"

➔ **Watch documentary below (*assignment details TBA on Brightspace*):**

➔ 🎬 "Self Care for Caregivers: When the Body Says No" by Dr. Gabor Mate (2013)

WEEK 9 – Week of Oct. 27

Aging and Death

- READ 🕮 Chap. 6 -- "Social Demography of Health: Age and Race"
- READ 🖱💻: "Dying Alone: The Social Production of Urban Isolation" by Eric Klinenberg [from Peter
- Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 8th edition: 2009]
- READ 🖱💻: "Putting the 'Home" in Nursing Home" by Marissa Evans [The Atlantic: July 10, 2014]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: Articles in AGING Folder on Brightspace [under **Optional Readings**]
- 🎬 **WATCH (*assignment details TBA on Brightspace*):** "Secret Lives of Seniors" (2013)
  - ***Work on related Final Exam Question (FEQ) #2 (assignment details TBA on Brightspace)***

WEEK 10 – Week of Nov. 3

"Alternative" Medicine

- READ 🕮 Chap. 14 – "Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)"
- READ 🖱💻: "How Racism Gave Rise to Acupuncture for Addiction Treatment" by Olga Khazan [The Atlantic, Aug. 2008]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "Marijuana Stops Child's Severe Seizures" by Saundra Young [CNN: Aug. 7, 2013]

Commodification of Health

- READ 🖱💻: "Breast Cancer Awareness Products Profit Off Survivors' Suffering" by Chavie Lieber [VOX: Oct. 17, 2018]
- READ 🖱💻: "Pinkification: How Breast Cancer Awareness Got Commodified For Profit" by S.E. Smith [The Guardian: Oct. 3, 2012]
- **Watch documentary below** (***assignment details TBA on Brightspace***):

➔ 🎬 *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* (2012)

WEEK 11 – Week of Nov. 10

Comparative Health Care/Inequality in U.S. Health Care Policy

- READ 🕮 Chap. 16 – "Health Care Reform and Health Policy in the U.S."
- READ 🕮 Chap. 17 – "Global Health Care"
- READ 🖱💻: "Health Care Reform: Lessons from Canada" by Raisa Berlin Deber [from Peter Conrad's *The Sociology of Health & Illness: Critical Perspectives*, 9th edition: 2013]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "A Little Van With a Big Impact" by M. Carmichael [Newsweek, July 2010]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: Jack Balkin – "Tax Power: The Little Argument That Could" [CNN, June 30, 2012]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: "Drive-Thru Medical: Retail Health Clinics Get Good Marks" by J. Kluger [Time Magazine, Sept. 2009]
- **WATCH (*assignment details TBA on Brightspace*)** :
  - ➔ 🎬 *Frontline: Sick Around the World* (2008)

WEEK 12 – Week of Nov. 17

Hospitals as Institutions

- READ 🕮 Chap. 15 -- "Hospitals"
- **Watch documentary below** (***assignment details TBA on Brightspace***):
  - ➔ 🎬 *Code Black* (2013)

November 27 – 28 --- NO CLASSES (Thanksgiving Break)

WEEK 13 – December 1

Public Health and Sociology of Pandemics

- READ 🕮 Chap. 2 – "Social Epidemiology"
- READ 🕮 Chap. 3 – "Social Causes, Impacts, and Responses to COVID-19"
- READ 🖱💻: "Public Health in U.S. Cities: A Historical Perspective" by David Rosner [from *Cities and the Health of the Public*, 2006, edited by N. Freudenberg, S. Galea, and D. Vlahow]
- READ 🖱💻: "America's 'Food Deserts'" [The Week, Aug. 2011]
- [Optional] READ 🖱💻: any articles in the CORONAVIRUS folder under **OPTIONAL READINGS** on Brightspace

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WEEK 14 – Week of December 8

Virtual Office Hour Sessions Available for General Q & A

- ***Dec. 8, Dec. 11, Dec. 15, and Dec. 18***
- **time slots will be announced on BSP**
- **questions via email will always be accepted**

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

Sunday, Dec. 21 – ABSOLUTE DEADLINE for all FEQ assignments
Submit on Brightspace before midnight (Sunday night)

Question #	Documentary/Film	Assignment Date	Due Date & Points
1	🎬WATCH: "Doctors' Diaries"	**Week of Sept. 15 (Week 3)**	**Monday, Sept. 29** ***[up to 25 points]***
2	🎬WATCH: "Secret Lives of Seniors"	**Week of Oct. 27 (Week 9)**	**Monday, Nov. 10** ***[up to 25 points]***
3	**Review of Terms/Theories**	**Week of Dec. 1 (Week 13)**	**Sunday, Dec. 21** ***[up to 50 points]***