Introduction

This course presents a topical overview of the Sociology of Health and Illness (sometimes referred to as Medical Sociology). This is a vast and growing field in sociology and as such no single course could cover all sub-fields. This course focuses on sociological aspects of health and illness (with a focus on the latter). As such, this course will not focus on the medical system, the social organization of medical care, mental health/illness, or bioethics.

Given recent changes to the field of medicine and the US health care system, this is an exciting time to study the social dimensions of health and illness. By the end of the course, it is expected that students will partake in the following learning objectives.

Course Learning Objectives

1. To provide an introduction to a range of sociological perspectives on disease and illness.
2. To embed diseases and illness in social and historical context, not only as biophysiological phenomena.
3. To examine specific social and sociological factors in disease production.
4. To introduce approaches to examining the subjective aspects of illness experience.
5. To familiarize students with terms such as epidemiology, upstream, sick role, medicalization, and other sociological concepts.
6. To give students an opportunity to gather and analyze small amounts of data in a field project.
7. To see both local and global aspects on illness.
8. Overall, to understand disease and illness in a new and broader way.

Attendance

As this is a summer course, we have a lot of material to cover in a short amount of time, thus it is critical that you attend each class on time. Students who are significantly or recurrently late will be marked absent. Students are allowed two absences for the term—more than two unexcused absences will result in failure. If you miss a class for any reason, please notify me in advance, providing the reason for your absence.

Participation

You are expected to come to class prepared to participate fully in class discussions and activities. To be prepared for class, you should feel comfortable with the assigned reading and be able to discuss its merits and shortcomings. Laptops should only be used for note taking.
Starting June 9th, each student will lead discussion twice during the course of this term. Presentations should include:

1. A summary of assigned readings
2. Prepared discussion questions for the class (the idea is to stimulate continued discussion, so no “what/who questions”)

Academic Integrity
All the work you hand in for this course must be your own. When you use outside sources or ideas, it is critical that you cite them properly. In accordance with Section 4 of the University’s Rights and Responsibilities student code, “Every member of the University community is expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. A student shall not submit work that is falsified or is not the result of the student’s own effort. Infringement of academic honesty by a student subjects that student to serious penalties, which may include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension from the University or other sanctions (see section 20). A student who is in doubt regarding standards of academic honesty in a course or assignment should consult the faculty member responsible for that course or assignment before submitting the work.” (See http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/RR14_15.pdf for more information.) Instances of apparent or alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Department of Student Development and Conduct for possible referral to the Student Judicial system, and may carry severe consequences including failure on the assignment in question, failure in the course, and/or suspension from the University. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions about plagiarism, citations, or use of sources.

University Policy on Academic Accommodations
If you are a student who has academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and give me a copy of your letter of accommodation in the first two weeks of the semester. If you have questions about documenting a disability, please contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Office (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu). Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

Assignments
All assignments will be discussed in more depth over the course of the session. On all assignments, please include a header with your last name and page number. Assignments should be size 12, Times New Roman font. Please email me a digital copy of your papers before class (to thert@brandeis.edu) and submit a hard copy in the beginning of class. I do not expect you to follow the American Sociological Association (ASA) citation guidelines, but please be consistent with your in text citations. A “References” page is required for all papers in which you cite an outside source (including course readings, notes, and lectures). Please print on both sides of the page.

Grading
20% Class Participation (includes presentations, attendance, and in-class contribution)
20% First Paper
20% Second Paper
40% Final Paper
Readings
You are expected to read all the assigned readings in advance of the class in which they will be discussed. On this syllabus, assigned readings are listed under the date on which they will be discussed. Required books are listed below and are available for purchase at the Brandeis Bookstore. Required books have also been put on course reserve at the Brandeis library. All other readings will be available on LATTE.

Required Books (listed in order in which they are assigned)

Schedule

I. Illness and Society: June 1, 2
   Dubos, *Mirage of Health* (All)
   *Sociology of Health & Illness* (p1-23)

II. The Social Production of Disease: June 4, 8
   *Sociology of Health & Illness* (p28-57, 81-102)
   Tesh, *Hidden Arguments* (Chapter 5)
   Berman "Why Work Kills" [LATTE]
   Abrams “A Short History of Occupational Health” [LATTE]
   *Movie: Song of the Canary

III. Death, Community and Society June 9, 11
   Klinenberg, *Heat Wave* (All)
   *Sociology of Health & Illness* (p24-45)

   ***June 11: First Paper Due***

IV. Politics of Prevention: June 15, 16
   Tesh, *Hidden Arguments* (Chapter 1-4)
   *Sociology of Health & Illness* (p468-478, 482-487, 583-596)
   *Movie: Toxic Bust (?)
V. Illness in Culture and Community: June 18, 22
Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (All)
*Sociology of Health & Illness* (p394-408)

VI. The Social Meaning of Illness: June 23, 25
*Sociology of Health & Illness* (p123-176, 299-321)
Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and Its Metaphors* (All)
Conrad and Potter "From Hyperactive Children to Adult ADHD" [LATTE]
Paul Farmer “Structural Violence” [LATTE]

***June 25: Second Paper Due***

VII. The Experience of Illness: June 29, 30
*Sociology of Health & Illness* (p177-208; 519-538)
Dow and Essex, *Saturday is for Funerals* (All)

VIII. Health Movements and Activism: July 2
*Sociology of Health & Illness* (p600-615)
Gamson “Silence, Death and the Invisible Enemy AIDS, Activism and Social Movement Newness” [LATTE]
*Movie: How to Survive a Plague (?)

***July 3: Final Paper Due***