

Soci 452: Methods Seminar: Health Care and Illness Fall 2016

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Prerequisites: Sociology majors and minors only; filed for F16 graduation

General Education: No

Methods: Qualitative research methods

****All information is subject to change****

Course Description

This is a hybrid course, which will introduce students to the major themes in the sociology of health and illness as well as to the qualitative methods used to answer research questions in this field. Over the course of the semester we will analyze the structure of the US health care system, to understand why the US does not guarantee health care for all of its citizens, how the US spends more money on healthcare than all other peer countries, how the structure of the US healthcare system directly affects health outcomes, what powers are at work to maintain the status quo, and the possibilities for healthcare reform. We will examine: professional dominance and the role of doctors and other health care workers; the social construction of disease, the concept of disease mongering, the medicalization of society, and the corporate/pharmaceutical response; the experience/implications of illness on the individual and on society; health disparities and how environment and social structures affect health; and the role of government in protecting public health.

Additionally, we will discuss and examine qualitative methodology throughout the course. We will cover Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Narrative Review, and Case Study. We will read and critique studies using each methodology.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of the course are:

1. To gain a sociological understanding of how the structure of the US healthcare system directly impacts health outcomes for all people
2. To develop an understanding of qualitative research methodologies, and to be able to identify a strong qualitative study
3. To improve critical thinking, writing, and research skills

Course Assignments

Students are expected to complete the readings and attend each class fully prepared to discuss the material. There will be two written assignments, one quiz, a mid-term exam, and a final project.

Assignments: 40

Mid-term: 25

Final Project: 25

Participation and attendance: 10

Course Readings

Course readings will be available through the library, bookstore, or Moodle