SURVEY OF MEDICAL SOCIOLOGY
SOC 354

Associate Professor: Krysia Mossakowski, Ph.D.

Summer 2018: M-F 3:00 - 4:15 PM
Classroom: WEB 112
My office: Saunders Hall 215
My office phone number: 808-956-8416
Office Hours: after class or by appointment
My e-mail: KrysiaM@hawaii.edu

Course Description

Does society make us sick? We will address this question and many others in this introductory medical sociology course. Medical sociology investigates the social causes and consequences of health, illness, and health care. Special attention will be given to medical ethics and the influence of social factors on health and well-being.

We will explore our current knowledge about a number of important questions, and discuss and debate ethical questions that have yet to be answered: To what extent do genetics, lifestyle, stress, environment, and social status contribute to the risk of illness? How and why does social inequality make us sick? Does money buy happiness? Is education one of the most vital predictors of health and longevity? Why do women live longer than men when they are more depressed? Why is heart disease among women still misdiagnosed? Why are there racial/ethnic health disparities in the United States? Can stress harm health? Does racial/ethnic discrimination damage mental and physical health? Does racism lead to physiological stress among Native Hawaiians? Does the “Aloha spirit” protect mental health? What does it mean to revitalize a healthy Hawaiian identity? How does culture influence health? Do relationships make you healthier? What risky behaviors are typical of young people? Can we control what we eat? Do you have a healthy lifestyle? Do you enjoy going to the doctor? What do we teach medical students? How can we improve the health care system in the United States?

This course has a Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus designation. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the main course material and will constitute at least 30% of the content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the use of lectures, discussions and assignments, students will develop basic competency in recognizing and analyzing ethical issues; responsibly deliberating on ethical issues; and making ethically determined judgments.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

- Demonstrate understanding of theories and research methods pertaining to medical sociology and social epidemiology.
• Demonstrate critical thinking and clear and effective verbal and written communication skills in assignments, exams, and class debates.
• During this course, the student will: define ethics, both as a variety of theoretical frameworks and as a personal framework for making decisions about medical and social science-related issues (The ethical decision making framework described by the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics is utilized in this course: www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision).
• explore a variety of controversial issues at the intersection(s) of the following: moral judgments, human error, and social inequality regarding health care and health disparities.
• develop and practice using ethically- and scientifically-valid frameworks for reaching decisions about controversial health and health care issues and finding solutions.

Course Materials and Requirements

Class sessions will consist of a combination of structured lectures, class discussions, small-group exercises, class debates, in-class assignments, and videos/documentaries. Exams draw heavily from required readings and classroom material. All of the power point lectures will be posted on Laulima after each class.

Required Readings

All readings (book chapters, short newspaper and magazine articles) will be accessed through Laulima. There is no required textbook to buy.

Grading will be based upon the following percentage point distribution:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
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<td>EXAM 2</td>
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<td>EXAM 3</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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<td>In-class assignments, discussions, and debate</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grades for the course will be assigned according to the following percentage scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A:</td>
<td>93 – 100 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-:</td>
<td>90 – 92 %</td>
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<td>B+:</td>
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<td>B:</td>
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<td>B-:</td>
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<td>C+:</td>
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<td>C:</td>
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<td>C-:</td>
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<td>D+:</td>
<td>67 – 69 %</td>
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<td>D:</td>
<td>60 – 66 %</td>
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<td>F:</td>
<td>less than 60 %</td>
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Exams
Each of the three exams pertains to a different section of the course. Therefore, the exams are not cumulative. Exams will cover the required readings and material from class lectures. The first exam is worth 20% of your final grade, Exam 2 is worth 20%, and Exam 3 is 30%. Exams must be taken during the scheduled period. Failure to show up for an exam will result in a score of zero.

In-Class Assignments, Discussions, and Debates

In-class assignments are done in class only and cannot be made up for a missed class. They are a diagnostic tool for your understanding of the readings, lectures, and videos. They will also be used for attendance purposes. Each assignment will be assigned and handed in during a class. Not all classes will have assignments. The in-class assignments, discussions (participation), and debates will be worth 30% of your final grade for the course. Attendance is very important for your success in this class.

- Civility and respect for others are guiding principles in this class. Mental and physical illnesses are sensitive topics, therefore during in-class discussions you need to be respectful of others. Cheating and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Scores for assignments and exams will be posted throughout the semester for you to access on Laulima.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

*The readings should be done for the class date assigned. Some parts of lectures contain material that cannot be found in the required readings. This schedule may be subject to change depending on the progress of this class.

Day 1  
**Introduction to syllabus, each other, and the “upstream approach”**  
McKinlay, “A Case for Refocusing Upstream.”

Day 2  
**Does money buy happiness and is socioeconomic status a fundamental cause of health?**  
Link and Phelan, “Evaluating the Fundamental Cause Explanation for Social Disparities in Health”

Day 3  
**Does social inequality make us sick? In sickness and in wealth (documentary)**

Day 4  
**Are there racial/ethnic differences in chronic diseases and mortality?**  
Laveist chapter, “Theories of Racial/Ethnic Differences in Health”

Day 5  
**Can stress damage your mental and physical health?**
Pearlin, “Stress and Mental Health: A Conceptual Overview”

Day 6

**Is there a link between racism and physiological stress among Native Hawaiians?**
Article, “Association between Perceived Racism and Physiological Stress Indices in Native Hawaiians” and McMullin, “The Call to Life: Revitalizing a Healthy Hawaiian Identity”

Day 7

**Review for Exam**

Day 8

**EXAM 1**

Day 9

**Are sexually-transmitted diseases stigmatizing?**
Cockerham, *Society of Risk Takers*, Chapters 1 and 2

Day 10

**Why does college culture involve heavy drinking?**
Cockerham, *Society of Risk Takers*, Chapter 3, Quigley and Marlatt article “Drinking Among Young Adults”

Day 11

**What are the consequences of illicit drug use?**
Cockerham, *Society of Risk Takers*, Chapter 4

Day 12

**Are there socioeconomic and gender differences in smoking trends?**
Cockerham, *Society of Risk Takers*, Chapter 5, American Cancer Society, “Cancer Death Rates found to be higher Among the Poor”

Day 13

**What is a healthy lifestyle?**
Cockerham, *Society of Risk Takers*, Chapter 6, Brody, “At Every Age, Feeling the Effects of too Little Sleep,”

Day 14

**Why do women live longer than men when they are more depressed?**
Rieker and Bird, “Sociological Explanations of Gender Differences in Mental and Physical Health”

Day 15

**Is there a teenage subculture of girls with eating disorders?**

Day 16

**Is there an obesity epidemic among children?**
Day 17  
Review for Exam

Day 18  
EXAM 2

Day 19  
What is the sick role?  
Parsons, “Social Structure and Dynamic Process: The Case of Modern Medical Practice”

Day 20  
What factors improve doctor-patient interaction and why are more women dying after childbirth in the US?  

Day 21  
Why is heart disease being misdiagnosed in women?  
McKinlay, “Some Contributions for the Social System to Gender Inequalities in Heart Disease,” National Post, “Gender No Boundary; Heart Disease,” and CNN, “Heart Disease often Misdiagnosed in Women”

Day 22  
Do social support and marriage have health benefits?  

Day 23  
Should shyness and premenstrual syndrome be medicalized?  
Lane’s chapter, “Direct to Consumer: Now Sell the Disease!” and article, “Beyond PMS”

Day 24  
Why should we medicalize inattentiveness and restlessness in the classroom? (Medicalizing Kids documentary)

Day 25  
Why was there an increase in the prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in the United States?  
Article, “The Run on Ritalin”

Day 26  
What should we be teaching medical students?  
Article, “Medical Student Burnout and the Challenge to Patient Care”

Day 27  
How does our health care system compare to other countries and are there other healing options? Review Session  
Article, “A Doctor for Disease, A Shaman for the Soul,” article, and “Midwife Deliveries Growing in Popularity,”

Day 28  
Final Exam