

COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES 284

SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH
SPRING 2006

Monday 1-4

Room: 41-268 CHS

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2-4 & by appointment

Course Description

This course describes the ways in which society shapes the mental health of its members and further shapes the lives of those who have been identified as mentally ill. With regard to the social origins of mental illness, two distinct approaches are reviewed: One seeks to understand the social conditions and forces that contribute to the kinds of behavior, emotions and thoughts that society identifies as mental illness, whereas the other probes the way in which the concept of mental illness is socially constructed around those behaviors and psychic phenomena. The course also considers the social consequences of mental illness, including the ways in which these responses affect the lives of persons with mental illness and their families.

Course Objectives

1. To understand basic conceptualizations of mental health and their implications for individuals, social groups, society and public health.
2. To identify the social distribution of psychiatric disorders, its origins and its ramifications.
3. To explore the impact of gender, socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity, and age on the risk of disorder and its consequences.

Class Format

Seminar.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation are essential. Participation includes completing all assigned readings prior to class and bringing thoughtful questions that serve as starting points for discussion. Over the course of the quarter, each student will present at least one reading assignment to class and lead discussion of that reading. (45% of grade)
3. A term paper of 15-20 pages in length (double-spaced). The substance of this paper is the student's choice within the broad area of sociocultural aspects of mental health. Students are required to present topics in week 3 and a 1-page outline of their paper to the class at mid-quarter. This presentation will include a clear and concise statement of the goals of the paper, the

literature to be reviewed, and the major themes that will be developed in the paper. You should plan to read bibliography that is approximately equal in length to the reading for the class. (55% of grade)

Reading

READER: Available at Westwood Copies. (Note: In the READER, READER A/P= Aneshensel, C.S. and Phelan, J.C. (1999) *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*. New York: Kluwer Academic Press.)

Karp, D.A. (1996). *Speaking of sadness: Depression, disconnection, and the meanings of illness*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Available at the bookstore.

Course Outline/Readings

WEEK DATE TOPIC

1 4/3 *Introduction: The Experience of Mental Illness*

KARP: Chapter 1. "Living with Depression"

KARP: Chapter 2. "The Dialectics of Depression"

READER: Schulze, B. and Angermeyer, M.C. 2003. "Subjective experiences of stigma. A focus group study of schizophrenic patients, their relatives and mental health professionals. *Social Science and Medicine*. 56:299-312.

2 4/10 *Major Approaches: The Medical/Psychiatric Model; Psychiatric Epidemiology; The Social Construction Perspective.*

READER A/P: Chapter 1. "The Sociology of Mental Health: Surveying the Field" by Carol S. Aneshensel and Jo C. Phelan

READER A/P: Chapter 4. "The Sociological Study of Mental Illness: A Critique and Synthesis of Four Perspectives" by Allan Horwitz

READER: Lee, S. and Mysyk, A. 2004. The Medicalization of Compulsive Buying. *Social Science and Medicine*. 58: 1709-1718.

READER A/P: Chapter 28. "Mental Illness as a Career: Sociological Perspectives" by Carol S. Aneshensel

- 3 4/17 *Social Distribution of Disorder: I. Overall Distribution*
- READER A/P: Chapter 3. “Mental Illness as Psychiatric Disorder”
 by Martha Livingston Bruce 60:104-125.
- READER A/P: Chapter 7. “Overview of Descriptive Epidemiology of Mental Disorders”
 by Ronald C. Kessler and Shanyang Zhao
- 4 4/24 *Social Distribution of Disorder: II. Race, Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status*
- READER A/P: Chapter 2. Mental Illness in a Multicultural Context by Pauline
 Agbayani-Siewert, Rosavina Wy Pangan, and David Takeo Takeuchi
- READER A/P: Chapter 8. “Socioeconomic Status and Mental Health”
 by Yan Yu and David R. Williams.
- 5 5/1 *Social Distribution of Disorder: III. Inequality, Differential Exposure and Vulnerability*
- READER A/P: Chapter 16. “Social Stratification and Inequality”
 by Jane D. McLeod and James M. Nonnemaker
- READER: Wilton, R. 2004. “Putting policy into practice? Poverty and people with
 serious mental illness. *Social Science and Medicine*. 58: 25-39.
- 6 5/8 *Social Etiology: I. Stress*
- READER A/P: Chapter 14. “Social Stress” by Blair Wheaton
- READER A/P: Chapter 19. “The Stress Process Revisited” by Leonard I. Pearlin
- READER: Turner, R.J., Wheaton, B. and Lloyd, D.A. 1995. “The Epidemiology of
 Social Stress. *American Sociological Review*.
- 7 5/15 *Social Etiology: II. Social Support and Coping*
- READER A/P: Chapter 15: “Social Integration and Support”
 by R. Jay Turner and J. Blake Turner
- KARP: Chapter 5. “Coping and Adapting”
- KARP: Chapter 6. “Family and Friends”

8 5/22 *Social Etiology: III. Self Concept*

READER A/P: Chapter 17. “Self, Identity, and Stress and Mental Health” by Peggy A. Thoits

KARP: Chapter 3 “Illness and Identity”

KARP: Chapter 4. “The Meanings of Medication”

9 5/29 *Memorial Day Holiday*

10 6/5 *Social Consequences - Mental Disorder as a Source of Stress*

READER A/P: Chapter 23. Stigma by Bruce G. Link and Jo C. Phelan

READER A/P: Chapter 24. Impact of Mental Illness on the Family by William R. Avison

KARP: Chapter 7. “Sickness, Self, and Society”

Term paper due Monday of finals week - 6/12 - 3:00 PM.