San José State University  
Department of Sociology  
SOCl 166: Medical Sociology. Section 1, Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Boero
Office Location: DMH 211
Telephone: (408) 924-5345
Email: natalie.boero@sjsu.edu or message through Canvas
Office Hours: Monday: 11:45am-12:45pm  
Wednesday: 4:15-6:30pm
Class Days/Time: Mondays 6:00-8:45pm
Classroom: DMH 227
Prerequisites: Soci 1

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging
Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on the course Canvas page. You are responsible for regularly checking the course Canvas page as well as your email for notifications relevant to the course.

Course Description
In this course we will study health and illness through a sociological lens. We will use readings, lecture material, films and more to explore the social meanings of health, illness and medical care. We will ask questions about how healthcare is distributed and look at the social distribution of illness while at the same time looking at the social construction of our ideas about what is and is not healthy. We will focus on the topic of medicalization, or, the process by which previously non-medical phenomena come to be understood in medical terms. In particular we will explore how the media, pharmaceutical companies and the medical profession influence how we understand and experience our own health and the health of our society.

Course Content Learning Outcomes
As a result of fully participating in this class, students will be able to:
a) Describe, explain, and summarize the social and cultural character of health, illness, and disease.
b) Examine trends, issues, and problems related to the social distribution of health, illness, disease, and health care in the United States.
c) Describe and critically assess the social organization of medical care in the United States.
d) Compare and contrast different types of health care systems with the U.S. health care system.
e) Describe and critically assess the social process of medicalization and its implications.

Required Texts/Readings

There are three required books for this course, all three are available at the SJSU bookstore as well as through Amazon in both print and Kindle versions.

3. Anne Fadiman. 1998. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*

Other Readings

I will post additional readings on the course Canvas in PDF format. They will always be posted at least a week before they are due. In the course schedule below, these readings are designated with a (PDF).

Classroom Protocol

I expect that you will have each week’s readings completed by class on Monday of each week. I have tried to make the reading interesting and manageable so that we can all participate in active discussions. Please bring your readings to class each day so that we can refer to them in discussions.

Participation is important and it helps make discussions livelier as well as to clarify materials. Coming to class is important as I will be lecturing on materials not included in the readings.

If you cannot come to class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your peers. If you miss any handouts or are not in class the day I return an assignment or an exam, I will have them available for you to pick up during my office hours. When you are in class, I expect all cell phones and electronic devices to be turned off and put away. Students may use laptops in class, but, to avoid distracting other students I ask that students using laptops please sit in the back rows of the classroom.

Office Hours, email and Canvas

I encourage all of you to come by my office hours (listed above). Even if you don’t have a specific question, office hours are a great chance for me to get to know you better and
for you to give me feedback on the course. If you are having any problems that could impact your success in the course, come see me as soon as possible. It is much easier to deal with problems early on. Please note that I do not give incompletes except in the most extreme situations, and even then only if a student has already completed a majority of the work for the course.

I am also available by email at the address above or through the Canvas site. However, given the large number of students in my classes, I may take a day or two to respond to emails. It is also important that you check your email as well as the “news” section of Canvas for any course updates. I will email the class of any changes in the schedule. If you do email me, please include your name and the course number and section in the subject line.

**Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/) web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/).

**Assignments and Grading Policy**

Your grade is composed of five elements:

1. **Reading Responses (20%)**
2. **In-Class Midterm exam (25%)**
3. **Take Home Final exam (25%)**
4. **Group Book presentation (15%)**
5. **Participation (15%)**

**Reading Responses**

Because regular reading by all students is imperative for the creation of an active learning environment, I use reading responses to provide added incentive for students to read. The reading responses will also help you to prepare for small group work, class discussions, and exams. For each week, you will be given a prompt or question to respond to based on the readings. Your response to the prompt or question should be approximately 1-2 pages in length, typed. *Your response needs to be put into your own words.* If part of your answer does include the author’s exact words then you
need to properly cite. Failure to do so will result in a loss of points. Reading responses are due on Monday of each week.

There are 12 weeks of reading response questions; however, only 10 responses will count towards your grade. This means that you may miss or drop 2 responses. Because of this, there will be NO make-up reading responses for any reason. Your responses must be typed to receive any credit. If you will not be in class on the day a reading response is due, you may still turn it in as long as you do so before class meets. NO READING RESPONSES WILL BE ACCEPTED OVER EMAIL.

I will provide minimal comments on the reading responses, as we will go over the answers each week in class. Each response will be given a grade, however. Grading of the reading responses will be as follows:

√+    Response reflects good effort. Writer clearly read the readings and put thought and care into the response. Writing is easily understood and there are few or no writing issues.

√      Response reflects minimal understanding of authors’ points. Although it remains clear that the writer completed the readings. The writing is not easily understood.

√-     Response reflects weak effort and/or little to no understanding of authors’ points. It is not obvious that the writer read the readings and/or the writing is not easily understood.

0      Late, not typed, or not completed.

**Group Book Presentations**

In this class we are reading three books. For each book we will have two or three groups of students present on different parts of the text. I will outline my expectations for these presentations in a separate handout and I will work with each group on their presentation.

**University Policies**

**Academic integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without
giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

**Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.

**Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping
students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/
This schedule is subject to change. I will inform you in class and via email of any changes at least one week in advance.

Table 1 Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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| 1    | 8/25   | **Introduction**  
No Reading                                      |
| 2    | 9/1    | **No Class: Labor Day**                             |
| 3    | 9/8    | **What is Medical Sociology?**  
**Reading:** Cockerham, “Introduction”; McKinlay & McKinlay, “Medical Measures and the Decline of Mortality”; Conrad, “Intro” |
| 4    | 9/15   | **Social Determinants of Health**  
**Reading:** Lantz et al: “Socioeconomic Factors, Health Behaviors, and Mortality Results From a Nationally Representative Prospective Study of US Adults”, Himmelstein and Woolhandler “Race and Infant Mortality.”  
Film: “Unnatural Causes” |
| 5    | 9/22   | **Social Determinants of Health, Continued**  
**Reading:** Williams, “Race, SES, and Health”; Lorber, “Women Get Sicker, Men Die Quicker”; McCally et al, “Poverty and Ill Health”  
Film: “Unnatural Causes” |
| 6    | 9/29   | **The Social and Cultural Construction of Health and Illness**  
**Reading:** Engelhardt, “The Disease of Masturbation”; Fadiman, selected chapters |
| 7    | 10/6   | **The Social and Cultural Construction of Health and Illness Continued**  
**Reading:** Fadiman, selected chapters |
| 8    | 10/13  | **The Social and Cultural Construction of Health and Illness Continued**  
**Reading:** Fadiman, selected chapters |
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/20</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/27</td>
<td><strong>In-Class Midterm exam</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The American Healthcare System</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Conrad and Schneider, “Professionalization and Monopoly…”; Wertz and Wertz, “Notes on the Decline of Midwives” Film: “Sicko”</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11/3</td>
<td><strong>The American Healthcare System Continued/The Medicalization of Society</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Kaw, “The Medicalization of Racial Features”; Reissman, “Women and Medicalization”</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td><strong>The Medicalization of Society</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Conrad, Selected Chapters,</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/17</td>
<td><strong>The Medicalization of Society Continued</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Conrad, selected chapters Film: “Big Bucks, Big Pharma”</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>11/24</td>
<td><strong>The “Obesity Epidemic”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Boero, Selected chapters</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>12/1</td>
<td><strong>The “Obesity Epidemic” Continued</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Take home final distributed</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Reading:</strong> Boero, Selected chapters</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12/8</td>
<td><strong>Last Class/Wrap-up</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
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| 17   |      | TAKE HOME EXAMS DUE VIA CANVAS BY 10PM ON MONDAY 12/15  
ABSOLUTELY NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED |