Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Boero
Office Location: DMH 211
Telephone: (408) 924-5345
Email: natalie.boero@sjsu.edu or via Canvas message
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am and 4:15-6:00pm or by appointment
Class Days/Time: Mondays 6:00-8:45pm
Classroom: DMH 231

Canvas and Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for regularly checking email and Canvas to learn of any updates.

Course Description

This course presents a conceptual and substantive overview of Medical Sociology (also known as The Sociology of Health and Illness). While the field is so large no single course could cover its entire breadth, my attempt here is examine what I see as some of the most fundamental and salient sociological issues concerning health and illness. Since medicine and health care are more and more a part of how we experience our bodies, selves, and society, this course will undoubtedly challenge us to think sociologically about areas of our lives we often see in more individual terms.

This course is by necessity a selective overview. While we cover a wide array of fundamental sociological topics, due to time constraints several important topics are left out. Hopefully, this course will lay a sufficient base so that students can pursue such topics on their own through their research proposals.

Required Texts/Readings

Books

ALL LISTED BOOKS ARE REQUIRED and all are easily available through Amazon at a reasonable price and are available in both paperback and ebook format.

1. The Medicalization of Society: On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Disorders by Peter Conrad
2. **The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down** by Anne Fadiman  
   **Publisher:** Farrar, Straus and Giroux; (1998)
3. **Killer Fat: Media, Medicine, and Morals in the American “Obesity Epidemic”** by Natalie Boero  
   **Publisher:** Rutgers University Press; (2012)
4. **Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination** by Alondra Nelson  
   **Publisher:** University of Minnesota Press; (2013)

Additional readings will be posted on the course Canvas page. On the course schedule these readings will appear with (PDF) next to them.

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

**Readings:** Reading is the single most important component of this class. Students are going to be required to read a large volume of material in this course. Readings are aimed at giving students a greater understanding of the field and issues discussed in class. Reading assignments must be completed before class and students must be prepared to discuss the readings.

**Class Presentations:** All students will be responsible for leading three class discussions. Class discussion leaders (three or four persons per week) are expected to: organize class discussion by summarizing the readings of the week, presenting specific questions to the class that consider the readings’ contributions, strengths and weaknesses, and relate the readings to other course materials. Class discussion leaders should be ready to call upon classmates to answer questions about the readings. On the days that you are a discussion leader you do not need to turn in a reaction paper but you should submit a general outline of your presentation and the questions you will be asking. Feel free to use tools like PowerPoint, handouts, video clips, and group discussion questions as a part of your presentations. Class presentations will be worth 25% and must be completed to pass this course.

**Reaction Papers:** Each week students must submit a reaction paper covering the selected readings. Reaction papers should not just be summaries of the assigned articles, they should also demonstrate that you have thoroughly and carefully read the material, reflected upon it, and have thought of questions or issues pertaining to the readings that could be raised during class discussion. In reacting to the readings I would like you attempt to identify common themes across readings, critique the supporting evidence or arguments provided or made by the author(s), discuss issues that the author(s) did not raise but you think are relevant, etc. Your reaction paper must include one or more questions that you think could be raised during class discussions. These should be about two (but no more than three) pages in length. You are required to complete six reaction papers over the course of the semester, but do not need to submit a reaction paper on the days you present. Hard copies of reaction papers are due the day the material is to be discussed at the start of each class. Absolutely NO late reaction papers will be accepted. Your reaction papers will be worth 15% of your final grade.

**Paper/Presentation:** All students will write and present a research proposal based on a topic within medical sociology. I will give you a detailed description of my expectations of the proposal but your paper should propose a QUALITATIVE research project based on the topic of your choice. Your proposal must include a...
research question, discussion of the sociological relevance of your question, a literature review, and a discussion of proposed research methods. I am aware that your research methods course does not offer significant training in qualitative methodology thus, we will spend some time in class learning a bit about qualitative methods. A maximum page limit of 15 pages is imposed. Your oral presentation will be an approximately 15-20 minute presentation or your research proposal. You will be expected to summarize your proposed research and answer questions on the topic. Your proposal will make up 15% of your final grade and the presentation of your proposal will make up 10% of your final grade.

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. Doing so not only insure that you understand class material and are able to apply it but it also makes class more enjoyable. Participation will make up 15% of your final grade.

**Midterm Exam:** There will be one in-class midterm exam. The exam will be a combination of essay and short answer questions and will be worth 15% of your final grade.

**Your grade will be broken down as follows:**

1. Response papers: 15%
2. Weekly Presentations: 30% (10% each)
3. Research proposal: 15%
4. Proposal presentation: 10%
5. Participation: 15%
6. Midterm Exam: 15%

**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.**

This class is taught in seminar format, thus, I will not be lecturing and class will depend on the participation of all students.

If you cannot come to class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your peers. 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.
University Policies

General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

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 section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop 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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor’s process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.

- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf 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.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

**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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.

**Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab 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 DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing Center website at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

**SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit Counseling Services website at http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling.
Soci 223 / Seminar Social Issues: Medical Sociology, Fall 2015

Course Schedule

* You will be notified in advance of any changes made to the schedule

### Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/24</td>
<td>Introduction, Class Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/31</td>
<td><strong>Medical Sociology/The Sociology of Health and Illness</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading: Lupton “Theoretical Perspectives” (PDF), McKinlay and McKinlay, “Medical Measures and the Decline of Mortality” (PDF), Lantz et al, “Socioeconomic Factors, Health Behaviors, and Mortality Results From a Nationally Representative Prospective…” (PDF), Cockerham, “Medical Sociology” (PDF)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>No Class Monday 9/7- Labor Day</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>The Social Distribution of Health and Illness&lt;br&gt;*Research Topics Due&lt;br&gt;Reading: “Body and Soul” selected chapters, Williams and Sternthal, “Understanding Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health: Sociological Contribution” (PDF), Syme and Berkman, “Social Class, Susceptibility, and Sickness” (PDF)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>The Social Distribution of Health and Illness Continued&lt;br&gt;Reading: “Body and Soul” selected chapters, Malat et al (PDF), Lorber and Moore, “Women get Sicker, Men Die Quicker.” (PDF)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>The Social and Cultural Construction of Health and Illness&lt;br&gt;Reading: “The Spirit Catches You” (Selected Chapters), Barker &amp; Conrad (PDF), Brown (PDF)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>The Social and Cultural Construction of Health and Illness Continued&lt;br&gt;Reading: “The Spirit Catches You” (Selected Chapters), Sanchez-Birkhead et al, “Navigating a New Health Culture: Experiences of Immigrant Hispanic Women” (PDF)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>The American Health Care system&lt;br&gt;Quadagno (PDF), to be announced</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Midterm Exam in Class&lt;br&gt;No reading</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Medicalization and Social Control&lt;br&gt;Reading: Zola (PDF), Reissman (PDF)</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Medicalization Continued&lt;br&gt;Reading: “Medicalization of Society” (selected chapters), Smith “Reconstructing the War Veteran” (PDF)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>The “Obesity Epidemic”</td>
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<td>Reading: “Killer Fat” (selected chapters), to be announced</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>The “Obesity Epidemic”</td>
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<td>Reading: “Killer Fat” (selected chapters), to be announced</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>11/23</td>
<td>Against Health? To be announced</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations/Last Day of Class</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>12/7</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations/Last Day of Class</td>
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<td>No reading</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Final Research Proposals Due Via Canvas no later than 9:00pm</td>
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