506:227 / 920:220 Health, Culture and Society
Summer 2017 – 30 May to 22 June
M/T/W/Th 10:00 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.
Scott Hall 121

Professor:
Johanna Schoen (johanna.schoen@rutgers.edu)
Department of History and Institute for Health, Health Care Policy & Aging Research
Office: 213A Van Dyck (CAC)

Course Summary: The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Yet the ways in which we understand, define, and experience health and well-being vary widely across history, cultures, and populations. Although health is often viewed as a condition of biology and the body, scholars have documented the powerful ways that economic, cultural, historical, and social forces shape health. In this course, we bring together perspectives from sociology, history, public health, medicine, and the humanities to: (a) define health; (b) understand the diverse ways that scholars study health; (c) identify the social, economic, historical, and cultural factors that influence the prevalence, distribution, and experience of four health conditions: body weight (including obesity and excessive slenderness); mental health (e.g., depression); cancer; and HIV/AIDS. We conclude with discussions of the ways that scholarship might inform medical practice, medical ethics, and public policies to enhance health in the United States and globally. Course materials include scholarly articles and books, articles from popular media, statistical reports on disease prevalence, cultural portrayals (e.g., film, literature) of health conditions and health care, and first-person illness narratives.

Course Format: Students are required to attend the class sessions each week. Active participation is encouraged. Lecture slides will be posted on our class Sakai site within 24 hours prior to each lecture. Assigned readings should be read prior to each lecture. Lectures will be supplemented with video clips, movie selections, and guest video lectures. You are encouraged to let me know before or after class if you want to clarify course material.

Course Requirements: This three-credit course will have a final exam on June 22nd counting 25% of the overall course grade. Students will also complete three short writing assignments (3-5 pages), each counting for 20% of the final grade. These short-essay topics are posted on Sakai. Students are required to write one essay on theories/methods and one on ethics; for the third paper, you may choose to write on one of three possible diseases (mental health, cancer, HIV/AIDS). Attendance and active participation in class discussion will account for 15% of your overall course grade.

Grading Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1 due June 5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2 due June 12</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3 due June 19</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

E-mail etiquette and requirements: I will happily and promptly reply to all student email. However, you must follow two simple rules. First, you must put the course name (e.g., Soc 220, History 227) in the subject line. Second, you must sign your email with your name; your email addresses often do not tell us who you are.

Sakai site: The class Sakai site includes our syllabus, course readings, paper assignments, outlines, exam study guides, occasional supplemental and/or “current event” readings, and other important announcements pertaining to class. Please check the website regularly, to keep updated of class information.

UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

Academic misconduct: Rutgers University policies state that academic misconduct may involve: cheating; fabrication; facilitating academic dishonesty; plagiarism; denying others access to information or material. Any instances of academic misconduct will be reported to your dean. Plagiarism is using someone else's words without giving the author proper attribution. For further information on plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty see the University's academic integrity policy: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml

Class conduct: The History and Sociology Departments encourage the free exchange of ideas in a safe and productive classroom environment. Students and faculty must act with mutual respect and courtesy. Behaviors that distract students and faculty are not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks, and other behaviors specified by the instructor. Courteous expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, the instructor, following the University Code of Student Conduct, may direct the student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct http://www.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml.
TOPICS & READING SCHEDULE

Day 1: May 30. Welcome and Introduction

Studying Health: Sociological and Epidemiological Research Methods


Day 2: May 31. Studying Health: Historical and Cultural Perspectives: An Overview

Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis


Day 3: June 1. Ethical Issues in Research


Day 4: June 5. Body Weight and Obesity: Epidemiologic Approaches

Paper 1 due


**Day 5: June 6. Body Weight and Obesity: Historical and Cultural Perspectives**


**Day 6: June 7. Mental Health and Illness: Historical and Cultural Perspectives**


**Day 7: June 8. Mental Health and Illness: Epidemiological and Sociological Approaches**


**Day 8: June 12. Cancer: Historical & Cultural Perspectives**


**Day 9: June 13. Cancer: Epidemiological and Sociological Approaches**


Day 10: June 14. HIV/AIDS: Historical and Cultural Approaches

Film: And the Band Played On (1993)


Day 11: June 15. HIV/AIDS: Epidemiological and Sociological Approaches


Day 12: June 19. Medical Ethics: Contemporary Challenges – Abortion Debates

Paper 3 Due


Day 13: June 20. Medical Ethics: Contemporary Challenges: End-of-Life-Care Debates


Day 14: June 21. Improving Health in Contemporary Society: Multiple Perspectives


Day 15: June 22.

Final Exam

*Best wishes for a relaxing summer break!*