

Sociology of Medicine & Health

Last Updated: Tue, 12/16/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 3086

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
33132

Instructor First Name: Yaqi

Instructor Last Name: Yuan

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

This course explores notions of illness, health, and health care from a sociological perspective. Students learn about conceptions of health and wellness, the U.S. health insurance system and other health policies in comparative perspective, and health disparities within the U.S. (such as by gender, race/ethnicity, and social class). We will analyze how illness is socially constructed, how health systems operate, and how power, inequality, and culture shape the practice of medicine and access to care.

Course learning outcomes:

Explain major sociological theories of health and illness—including social determinants of health, medicalization, and structural inequality—and apply them to contemporary health issues in the United States and globally.

Analyze how social factors such as race, class, gender, age, and geography shape health behaviors, access to care, healthcare experiences, and population-level health disparities.

Critically evaluate healthcare institutions and policies by examining how power, professional authority, and political-economic structures influence the organization and delivery of medical care.

Interpret and communicate empirical evidence on health and healthcare using sociological methods, demonstrating the ability to connect data (qualitative or quantitative) to broader theoretical and policy debates.

Required course materials:

Cockerham, William C. Medical Sociology. 15th Edition. Routledge.

Grading policy:

1. Class Preparation and Participation (10%)
2. Exams (Exam1-20%; Exam2-20%)
3. Flip Classroom Activities (Activity1-5%; Activity2-5%)
4. Final Project (20%)
5. Quizzes (Quiz1-10%; Quiz2-10%)

Total: 100%

Attendance policy:

Regular attendance is essential for your success in this course. Much of our learning will take place through in-class discussion, group activities, case analyses, and applied exercises that cannot be replicated outside of class.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals. This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: How do I understand human experiences and connections? Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome: • Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change. Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies: • Intercultural Competence • Perspective-Taking • Persuasion