

SOCIOLOGY OF MENTAL DISORDER

Soci 310

Professor: Giovani Burgos, Ph.D.

Fall 2008: Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:35 – 9:55 AM

Classroom: Burnside Hall 1B36

My office: Leacock Building Room 839

My office phone number: 514-398-6837

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 – 2:00 PM and by appointment.

Teaching Assistant: Dominique Geoffroy (dominique.geoffroy@mail.mcgill.ca)

TA Office: Leacock 822 (Hours: TBA)

Course Description

What is mental illness? What deviant behaviors are labeled mental illnesses and why? How should we as a society understand, prevent, and respond to mental illness? This course examines sociological theories and research regarding the definition, experience, and treatment of mental disorders. A sociological perspective emphasizes that the definitions of mental disorders are socially constructed, vary by culture, and change over history. We also explore how the social environment impacts the symptoms of mental disorders, and how the diagnoses of medical doctors are influenced by social factors. The stigma of mental illness is also addressed, and how North American culture and the media influence our perceptions of those who are labeled “mentally ill.” Various readings and videos will be used to reveal the controversy that surrounds mental illness in society.

Course Materials and Requirements

This course meets twice a week. Class sessions will consist of a combination of structured lectures, class discussions, small-group exercises, in-class assignments, and videos. Exams draw heavily from required readings and classroom material.

Required Readings

Sociology of Mental Disorder (7th edition) by William C. Cockerham.

A Sociology of Mental Illness (2nd edition) by Mark Tausig, Janet Michello, and Sree Subedi. (Referred to in the schedule of readings as Tausig)

Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Psychological Issues, (14th Edition) by Brent Slife (on WebCT)

Additional Readings on Web-Vista: <http://www.mcgill.ca/webct/>

It is crucial that you keep up with the readings. To provide you with a well-rounded education in the sociology of mental health and illness, the reading load is not light. This means that you should keep on top of things if you plan to do well in this course. Do the readings before each class. Core readings will be available ONLY on WebCT. For an optimal learning experience, you should read all material before the beginning of the week.

The class webpage, <http://www.mcgill.ca/webct> , will function as the primary source of information exchange. Be sure to check the webpage before each class for updated materials such as handouts and readings. Class-related documents will be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.PDF)). Acrobat files can easily be downloaded and printed with the free acrobat reader. You may download the free acrobat reader from www.adobe.com. Everyone is expected to complete ALL assignments on time and be fully prepared for class sessions and exams.

Attendance: Students are responsible for all announcements made in class. I will take attendance at random intervals throughout the course (6% of your final grade). In addition, 4% of your final grade consists of attending classes after the second exam.

The lectures are designed to provide a theoretical overview and grounding of the assigned readings. The goal of each lecture is to introduce a broad framework from which to critically assess assigned readings. Because lecture material will **NOT** be posted on WebCT and is only available during class time, students are well-advised to attend class regularly to do well in this course and to visit me during office hours for clarification. Routine class participation is highly encouraged since you will be tested on materials and discussions that take place in class.

Course Grading and Requirements:

Grades are based on 2 tests (20% and 25% each), a short paper (36%), and attendance (9%). Final grades are calculated in the following manner.

First Exam	20%	Tuesday, October 07
Second Exam	25%	Tuesday, November 11
Short Paper	45%	Tuesday, December 02
Participation	10%	
Total:	100%	

Tests: Each test will consist of multiple choice, true-false, and may contain short-answer questions. Material from lectures, discussion, films, and assigned readings will be covered on the tests. You will be responsible for all material covered up to the point of the exam. The first exam and the second exam are not cumulative. This means that the first exam will cover materials from the first day of class up to the day of the first exam. Similarly, the second exam will cover material *after* the first exam and up to the day of the second exam.

Failure to show up for an exam will result in a score of zero. No exceptions.

Grades will be anonymously posted on the class webpage after each test. We will post the grades using your student number on one column and your grade on the next. If you do not wish for your anonymous grade to be posted on the webpage, please let us know so that alternative reporting plans can be made.

Short 5 Page Debate Paper: One of the required books is *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Psychological Issues* by Brent. (see above) Each student is expected to pick a debate from this book and write a short reflection paper on the topic. You must choose a side and elaborate on the issue in light of class readings, discussions, and your own personal and timely research. Special attention should be given to the readings assigned after the second exam. Writing this paper will afford you the opportunity to actively and critically engage the material. The breakdown of the paper is as follows:

1. Summarize the stance and position you are taking. Be sure to explain why your stance is important **(1 page and 25% of Paper Mark)**.
2. Provide a convincing argument for your elaborated stance. You should provide supporting evidence from **(3 pages and 50% of Paper Mark)**:
 - a. Your own timely-research: articles from journals, books, newspapers, and magazines.
 - b. The assigned course readings.
 - c. Lecture material.
 - d. Your own personal observations.
3. Logical conclusion **(1 page and 25% of Paper Mark)**.

The debate papers will be graded according to content and writing style—especially how the argument is related to the course, how persuasive it is, and examples given. The paper should be no longer than 5 double-spaced pages, in 12 pt Times font and with 1-inch margins. Your sources must be from academic journals (Canadian Journal of Sociology) or respected newspapers (Globe and Mail or New York Times). Website information is not acceptable. I will post parts of the *American Sociological Association Style Guide* on WebCT so that you can properly cite your work. You will be penalized for turning the paper in late or for exceeding the 5 page limit. You will lose one letter grade for each day that the paper is turned in late and for each page the paper goes over the page limit. Please do not ask if you can exceed the page limit or turn your paper in late; you can, but the above grading criteria will be applied.

In-Class Assignments

In-class assignments are done in class only and cannot be made up for a missed class. They are a diagnostic tool for your understanding of the readings, lectures, and videos. They will also be used for attendance purposes. Each assignment will be assigned and handed in during a class. Not all classes will have assignments. The in-class assignments will be worth 10% of your final grade for the course. Attendance is very important for

your success in this class. If, for whatever reason, you miss an in class assignment, you cannot not make up the work—it is a one shot deal.

- Civility and respect for others are guiding principles in this class. Mental illness is a sensitive topic, therefore during in-class discussions you need to be respectful of others.
- Cheating and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Be sure to sign the academic integrity page at the end of the syllabus and return it to me before the add/drop period ends.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

*The readings should be done for the class date assigned. Some parts of lectures contain material that cannot be found in the required readings. This schedule may be subject to change depending on the progress of this class.

September 02	Introduction
September 04	The Social Construction of Mental Health and Illness Cockerham Chapter 1 and Joe Sharkey's article "Defining the Line between Behavior that's Vexing and Certifiable" Walker, M.T. 2006. The Social Construction of Mental Illness
September 09	The Ability to Socially Function: Is Happiness a Mental Illness? Cockerham Chapter 2, David Mechanic's chapter "Mental Health and Mental Illness: Definitions and Perspectives," and Richard Bentall's article "Why the Happy are Nuts" Slife ISSUE 6--Does Giving Praise Harm Children?
September 11	Is Mental Illness a Myth? The Anti-Psychiatry Perspective Cockerham Chapter 3, Tausig Chapter 1 Thomas Szasz's "The Myth of Mental Illness" Reiss A Critique of Thomas Szasz's "Myth of Mental Illness"
September 16	Social Stress Theory: Protecting Your Mental Health Tausig Chapter 2 and Leonard Pearlin's chapter "Stress and Mental Health: A Conceptual Overview" ISSUE 3. Classic Dialogue: Was Stanley Milgram's Study of Obedience Unethical?
September 18	Sociological Theories about Mental Illness: Deviant Behavior Cockerham Chapter 4 and Tausig Chapters 10, 12

September 23	<p>The Medicalization of Children's Behaviors: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</p> <p>Peter Conrad "The Discovery of Hyperkinesis"</p> <p>Carey, B. 2006. Use of Antipsychotics by the Young Rose Fivefold</p> <p>Faraone, S. et al. 2006. The worldwide prevalence of ADHD</p> <p>ISSUE 11. Does ADHD Exist?</p>
September 25	<p>Societal Attitudes: Children's Behavior and ADHD</p> <p>Marilyn Elias's article "Pediatricians Approve Ritalin Treatment Plan for Children" and Lawrence Diller's article "The Run on Ritalin"</p> <p>Wenner, Melinda. 2008. Infected with Insanity.</p> <p>ISSUE 5. Are Genetic Explanations of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Faulty?</p>
September 30	<p>Are Psychiatric Diagnoses Objective or Biased?</p> <p>Tausig Chapter 11, Allan Horwitz "Psychiatric Professionals and the Recognition of Mental Illness," and David Rosenhan "Being Sane in Insane Places"</p> <p>Kirsch, Irving, et al. 2008. Initial Severity and Antidepressant Benefits: A Meta-Analysis of Data Submitted to the Food and Drug Administration.</p> <p>Canadian Psychiatric Association Response to Kirsch</p> <p>ISSUE 14. Should Psychologists Be Able to Prescribe Medicine?</p>
October 02	Library day: personal review for exam 1
October 07	EXAM 1
October 09	<p>Socioeconomic Status and Mental Health: Does Money Buy Happiness?</p> <p>Cockerham Chapter 6, Tausig Chapter 4 (pages 32 – 41), article, "Money and Happiness"</p> <p>Men's Health. September 2008. Join Me, If You Would, ...</p> <p>Timmons, H. Vogue's Fashion Photos Spark Debate in India</p> <p>ISSUE 7. Does a Mother's Employment Harm Her Children?</p>
October 14	<p>Are There Racial/Ethnic Differences in Mental Health?</p> <p>Cockerham Chapter 9 and Tausig Chapter 4 (pages 41 – 45)</p> <p>Williams article "Racism and Mental Health"</p> <p>Williams. 2008. Perceived discrimination, race and health in South Africa</p>

ISSUE 1. Should Psychological Treatments Be Empirically Supported?

October 16

Heavy Drinking: The College Culture and Alcoholism the “Disease”

Lori Quigley and Marlatt Alan’s article “Drinking Among Young Adults” and Harrison Trice and Paul Michael Roman “Delabeling, Relabeling, and Alcoholics Anonymous”

ISSUE 9. Are Human Cognitive and Behavioral Activities Determined?

October 21

Turning Points in the Mental Illness Identity: Depression

David Karp Chapter 3 “Illness and Identity,” in the book, “Speaking of Sadness” and Tausig Chapter 3

October 23

Societal Attitudes about Gender and Emotion: Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) and Irritable Male Syndrome (IMS)

Tausig Chapter 9, Laura Meade Kirk’s article “Beyond PMS” Shields, S. 2002. Gender and Emotion: That “vivid, unforgettable condition.

ISSUE 15. Is Treating Homosexuality Ethical?

October 28

A Life Course Perspective of Mental Health: At What Age are we the Happiest and Why?

Cockerham Chapters 7, 8 and Tausig Chapters 5, 6

October 30

Munchausen’s Disorder and Hypochondria: Learning from our Parents

Munchausen Syndrome: What is it?

Madeleine Brindley’s article “Mum Put Son at Risk so Husband Would Notice Her,”

Wrennall, L. 2007. Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy/Fabricated and

Induced Illness: Does the Diagnosis Serve Economic Vested Interests, Rather than the interests of children?

November 04

Images of Madness in the Media Allan Beveridge “Images of Madness in the Films of Walt Disney,” Sarah Shea and colleagues’ article, “Pathology in the Hundred Acre Wood,” and Otto Wahl’s Chapter 1 “Madness, Madness, Everywhere”

Schizophrenia: How Families Cope with Mental Illness

Cockerham Chapter 11 and November 28 Susan Sheehan’s article “The Last Days of Sylvia Frumkin”

	ISSUE 4. Are Humans Naturally Violent?
November 06	Review for Exam 2
November 11	EXAM 2
November 13	Library Day—Review Research Paper Guides
November 18	The Mental Hospital or Prison: Voluntary and Involuntary Treatment Gilligan, J. 2001. The Last Mental Hospital Mentis, N. 2003. Importance of General Hospital in the Development of Health Care Chapter 11. Human Face of Mental Disorder in Canada. 2006.
November 20	Mental Illness and Criminal Justice: The Insanity Defense and Coerced Medication Cockerham Chapter 15, Bloom, H. 2005. The Canadian Contribution to Violence Risk Assessment: History and Implications for Current Psychiatric Practice. Virginia Aldige Hiday. 2003. Putting Community Risk in Perspective: A Look at Correlations, Causes, and Controls. ISSUE 12. Does Taking Antidepressants Lead to Suicide
November 25	Who is Responsible for the “Mentally Ill?” Whitaker, R. 2002. Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill. Ambrosini, D. 2007. Psychiatric Advance Directives and the Right to Refuse Treatment in Canada.
November 27	Stigma, Deinstitutionalization, and Public Policy Cockerham Chapter 13, Tausig Chapter 14, “A Report to the U.S. Surgeon General on Mental Health” Skim. Wolf, N. 2007. The Social Construction and Cost of Mental Illness Ping, C. 2008. Stigma in Mental Health Care. ISSUE 13. Is Drug Addiction a Choice?
December 02	Recommended Reading: An International Perspective on Mental Health Care Cockerham Chapters 14, 16 and Tausig Chapter 13. World Health Report. 2001. Mental Health, New Understanding, New Hope. Skim

*******FINAL PAPER DUE*******