TEACHING ASSISTANT:

Zoe Hyman Levy, MPH MSW
Pronouns: she/her
Student Hours: Mondays, 10:00am-noon (via Zoom)
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COURSE OVERVIEW

A core tenet of sociology is that social arrangements, processes, and institutions substantially influence individuals’ lives, including health. In this course, we will study mental health and illness through a sociological lens. We will explore three broad areas of sociological research on mental health and illness: definitions and measurement; social origins; and societal responses. By the end of this course, you will understand mental health and illness as a product of social circumstances (i.e., interpersonal, institutional, and cultural factors), rather than as solely a product of genetic- and individual-level factors.

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, you will be able to do the following:

- Explain the social construction of mental illness.
- Describe the social distribution of mental health and illness.
- Compare and contrast theoretical approaches to studying mental health and illness.
- Critically assess the social antecedents and consequences of mental health and illness.

MY TEACHING PERSPECTIVE

Welcome to Sociology 310! I am looking forward to working with you during this course. When I was an
undergraduate student, my favorite classes were engaging, challenging, and provided the opportunity for me to learn from, and feel supported by, both my instructors and my peers. As your professor, my goal is to provide you with a challenging but supportive environment in which you, and every other student, have the opportunity to succeed. While mastering a discipline is an important part of the undergraduate learning experience, I also strongly believe that developing and practicing “soft-skills” (e.g., teamwork, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, integrity) that will help you succeed beyond this course and your time at McGill is incredibly important. I therefore incorporate classroom policies, activities, and assignments that will provide you with opportunities to develop and practice some of these skills throughout the course.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

- I refer to the textbook as “HSMH” throughout the syllabus
- Available for purchase at McGill University Bookstore or online.

All other required texts and multimedia will be available on the course page.

The readings listed for each week should be completed before class on Tuesday.

**HOW IS SUCCESS MEASURED IN THIS COURSE?**

Your final grade in the course will be based on the following:

![Grading Graph]

**WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS:**

Each week you will have two assignments: a “making connections” discussion post, and a learning assessment in the form of a quiz.

- **Making connections (MC):** The goal of this assignment is to help you prepare for class discussions and activities by reflecting on the assigned academic texts (e.g., textbook chapters, articles, podcasts) and making connections between those texts, other texts we have read and discussed, and the world around us. Note that this type of reflection and application exercise is
a common practice among academics, and helps to refine critical thinking skills. For this assignment you will do **one of the following in 200 words or less** (based on the wordcount on the Discussion Board in MyCourses):

- **CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER TEXTS**: Pick one text for the week, and explain in 200 words or less: 1) What is the main argument / findings of the text?; 2) How do(es) your chosen text relate to other text(s) that we’ve engaged with this semester?; and 3) How doe(s) the text help us to understand the overarching question we are examining in the current class unit?

- **CONNECTIONS WITH THE WORLD AROUND US**: Find and share a source (e.g., news article, podcast, TikTok video, Tweet, Instagram post, infographic, movie, novel, etc.), and explain, in 200 words or less, how it relates to one of the assigned text(s) for the week.

Post this as a discussion in our weekly thread on MyCourses by noon on Monday each week. Your post will be graded on a **check-plus** (20 points, high quality work), **check** (14 points, completion), **check-minus** (11 points, incomplete) scale. Assignments that are not submitted by 10 am on Monday will be scored as 0. Your lowest grade will be dropped.

- **Learning assessments (LA)**: You will complete four learning assessments in the form of a quiz on MyCourses. During the week of the LA, the quiz will become available in MyCourses after class on Wednesday and will close by **Friday at 5 pm**. Material from all assigned texts, lectures, and class discussions / activities, are fair game for quizzes. Quizzes are timed. You may consult your assigned texts / notes, but you may not consult another human when taking your quiz. You also may not consult ChatGPT or other AI tools while taking your quizzes. Please abide by McGill’s standards for academic integrity. Quizzes that are not submitted by 5 pm on Friday are scored as 0. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**SEMESTER-LONG GROUP PROJECT:**

We will not be able to cover several interesting and timely issues related to mental health and illness in this class. During the semester, you will collaborate with a group of your peers to **research** a timely and important mental health topic. You will then **synthesize** the material we explored during the semester, **apply** it to your mental health topic, and **create a professional, informative, engaging, and concise 6 to 8-page issue brief (excluding references)** that could be used to teach others about the sociological impacts of mental illness in our society. We will assign you to a group based on the interests that you rank in our first week of class. This project will be broken down into 5 smaller assignments:

1. A **project description and annotated bibliography (100 pts)**;
2. An **outline of the most important facts (100 pts)**;
3. A **peer review (50 pts)**;
4. A **final issue brief that is professional, informative, engaging, concise and includes appropriate visuals (150 pts)**. 
5. A **final presentation (100 pts)**.

More detailed instructions about all of the assignments for this course can be found in the “Syllabus & Assignment Guidelines” Folder under “Content” on MyCourses.
GRADING:
Grade inflation at the secondary school level can sometimes lead to unrealistic expectations of grades at the university level. Assessments in this course are graded using the full available scale, from A to F:

A: 850 - 1000 pts
A-: 800 - 849 pts
B+: 750 - 799 pts
B: 700 - 749 pts
B-: 650 - 699 pts
C+: 600 - 649 pts
C: 550 - 599 pts
D: 500 - 549 pts
F: 499 or less

On any given assessment, a "good" answer (i.e., one that answers the question well, taking all instructions into account) will receive a score ranging from B to A- (e.g., 7-8 points on a question with a maximum score of 10). This leaves room at the top to reward especially thorough and nuanced work. There are no pre-set limits on how many students can receive an A (on an assessment and/or overall), but no one should expect that to be the default grade. I will provide you with a guidance sheet for each assignment with some tips on preparation. We will discuss this in class several weeks before the assignment is due, so that you have a chance to ask questions and I can address any questions that you may have. While general feedback will be provided (normally during class discussion time), no full grading rubrics will be circulated.

Please note that to ensure equity and fairness, final course grades will not be rounded up or down at any stage.

GRADE APPEAL/DISCUSSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

We make every effort to fairly and consistently evaluate student work. We are happy to correct any errors we made in grading but we will not alter our grading rubric. We are also happy to discuss feedback to provide more context.

Assignments and quizzes in this course will largely be graded by the TA, using a rubric provided by the instructor. In the interest of fairness and consistency, students may not request a re-grade from the instructor because they hope to gain a point or two here and there, or because they would prefer to have the instructor’s subjective assessment instead of the TA’s. Grade appeals will only be entertained if there appears to have been a major issue with grading, and the procedure outlined below must be followed.

- If you would like to discuss the comments and grades (but are in no way appealing your grade), you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your grade. Do not e-mail the TA or the instructor until after this waiting period has passed.
  2. Carefully re-read your paper/assignment in light of feedback provided.
  3. Within 7 days of receiving the grade, arrange to discuss the matter with a TA.

- If the issue is an error simply alert the TA of the error. Be sure to clearly state the assignment
and the error. Examples of errors are addition mistakes (in the event an assignment has multiple components that are combined for a total score) or a clear typo (e.g., the only comment was Great Job, but you received a grade lower than a C).

- In the case of more substantive appeals, you must:
  1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your grade. Do not e-mail the TA or the instructor until after this waiting period has passed.
  2. Carefully re-read your paper/assignment in light of feedback provided.
  3. Within 7 days of receiving the grade, arrange to discuss the matter with a TA.
  4. If, after meeting with the TA, you wish to appeal, you must submit to the instructor a written explanation of why you think your mark should be altered. Please note statements such as “I worked very hard on this” or “I need a higher grade to apply to law school” are not compelling arguments. Appeals relying on these or similar arguments will not be granted. If your argument is that we took off points on your assignment but not on your friend’s, you must tell us your friend’s full name. Note, the correction we make may be to take off points on your friend’s assignment.

The appeal period ends 7 days after a grade has been received.

If we accept your appeal, we may regrade the entire assignment. This means your total grade may not change or may go down.

**COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Preparation.** For every hour that we spend in class, you should plan to spend 2-3 hours outside of class to read, reflect on the material, and/or work on course assignments. You are also responsible for all announcements made during in-class sessions, via email, and on MyCourses, therefore please check for new announcements on MyCourses and monitor your email consistently.

**Attendance** We will not take attendance in this course. Regular attendance, however, is expected, as it will help you to retain the material, to improve your critical thinking and analytic skills, and will optimize the learning experience for both you and your classmates. We expect you to come to class on time and prepared to learn, discuss, and engage with the teaching team and your classmates. We also expect for you to remain engaged in only this course during class time.

**Class Participation and Peer Engagement.** We encourage you to ask questions during class. During class discussions and when engaging in group work / assignments, you are expected to:

1. Be respectful of each other’s thoughts and contributions;
2. Commit to learning, not arguing;
3. After reviewing assigned texts, you should be able to:
   • Identify the central argument(s)
   • Identify and evaluate the methods used (if applicable)
   • Evaluate the evidence used to support the argument(s)
   • Evaluate the central theory used
   • Identify and evaluate how the text(s) help us to understand the key question that we will try to answer in each unit throughout the course
   • Identify and evaluate how the text(s) relate to other material we have discussed this semester.
Criticize ideas, not individuals; 4) Assume best intentions; 5) Avoid inflammatory language, insults, and blame; 6) Deliver feedback that is constructive and kind; 7) When in doubt, speak from and/or to the course texts, and 8) Engage fairly during group discussions and group work so that no one else feels that they are doing more than their share.

Diversity and Preferred Gender Pronouns. In this class we will respect and value the perspectives of students from all backgrounds, including those who have a different ethnicity, race, gender identity, national origin, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, parental status, political background, and/or physical and learning ability. We will work together to make sure that our class meetings are an inclusive space for all students. We will also affirm people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you would prefer for the teaching team and your peers to call you by a different name than what is listed on the class roster, or by a different pronoun, please let us know. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the teaching team.

Student Hours. Please talk to Dr. Dennis or the TA about your concerns, needs, and/or questions as early as possible. To make the best use of student hours, please come prepared with specific questions or a specific problem you’d like to discuss, and think ahead about how the teaching team might be able to help you. You are also welcome to come to student hours if you don’t have a problem or question, and just want to chat about something. If you have a standing conflict during student hours, please email the teaching team to set up another time.

Emails. For simple questions, the quickest way to reach the teaching team is by email. Please email the TA first, and the TA will consult with Dr. Dennis if the response requires a more complex answer. This email policy ensures that all students are receiving the same guidance to their questions about the course. The TA will aim to respond to your email within 48 hours. Please note that the TA will refer you back to the syllabus or assignment instructions if the answer to your question is already addressed in one of those documents. For more difficult questions, please make an appointment to chat with the TA or Dr. Dennis via student hours.

Developing “soft-skills” that will help you succeed beyond this course and your time at McGill is incredibly important. One of these skills is professional communication, which we will practice in this class. Please abide by the following guidelines when sending emails for this course to the teaching team and to your classmates:

1) In the subject line, include the name of the course and a brief description of what the email is about (e.g., SOCI 310: question about homework);
2) Begin your email with an appropriate greeting (e.g., Dear Dr. Dennis, Hello Prof. Dennis,);
3) Write in complete sentences, and use respectful language; and
4) Include a closing / signature (e.g., Thank you, Beyoncé; Sincerely, Drake).

Academic Integrity. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, ALL students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under
the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003). (See McGill’s guide to academic honesty for more information.)

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et procédures disciplinaires. » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill.)

Extensions and Late Work. It is best if you keep up with the course schedule by turning in all assignments on time. There are no extensions on individual weekly assignments, because the lowest grade on the MC posts and the weekly learning assessments will be dropped at the end of the semester. For major assignments, each group will have one, “Extension Coupon” for a three-day extension that can be applied to Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, or Part 4a of the research project, with no questions asked. In order to redeem your extension coupon, communicate with the TA. If your group does not use your coupon for an assignment extension, it will be applied as extra credit to your final project grade. Regarding late work, one letter grade is deducted per day that a major assignment is late.

Pandemic Learning & Hardships. If you experience a major hardship during the semester (e.g., illness, accident, family crisis) that may negatively impact your ability to keep up with the course, please communicate with Dr. Dennis as soon as you feel comfortable doing so. Let me know what the circumstances are, and we can discuss a reasonable way to move forward. Additional supportive resources that are available across campus are listed under “Resources for Success” below.

Syllabus Changes. This is a flexible syllabus. This means that Dr. Dennis may make changes to the syllabus that are in alignment with the syllabus’ course content and evaluation schemes (e.g., swapping out assigned texts or pushing back assignment due dates), when unforeseen circumstances arise. Dr. Dennis will announce these changes as early as possible in class, on MyCourses, and via email so that you can adjust your schedule accordingly. In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

<p>| “I need an accommodation for this class.” | Students with Disabilities or Students who are Pregnant – If you have a long-term or temporary disability; a chronic or episodic medical condition; or pregnancy complications that make it difficult for you to demonstrate your abilities, you should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009 or <a href="mailto:disabilities.students@mcgill.ca">disabilities.students@mcgill.ca</a> as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. Please also arrange a time to meet with Dr. Dennis to discuss your situation. If you experience an emergency this semester, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students: <a href="mailto:deanofstudents@mcgill.ca">deanofstudents@mcgill.ca</a>; 514-398-4990 |
| “Je dois soumettre mon travail en français” | In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009). |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conformément à la Charte des droits des étudiants de l'Université McGill</strong>, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être notés. (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009)</td>
<td>Students will not be penalized if they cannot write examinations or be evaluated otherwise on their religious holy day(s) where such activities conflict with their religious observance(s). Students who, because of religious commitments, cannot meet academic obligations other than final examinations -- on certain holy days are responsible for informing their instructor at least two weeks in advance of each conflict. When the requested accommodation concerns a final examination, students are responsible for advising their faculty office as soon as possible and not later than the deadline for reporting conflicts. Additional documentation confirming their religious affiliation may be requested.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>This exam conflicts with my Religious Holy Day</em></td>
<td>Students will not be penalized if they cannot write examinations or be evaluated otherwise on their religious holy day(s) where such activities conflict with their religious observance(s). Students who, because of religious commitments, cannot meet academic obligations other than final examinations -- on certain holy days are responsible for informing their instructor at least two weeks in advance of each conflict. When the requested accommodation concerns a final examination, students are responsible for advising their faculty office as soon as possible and not later than the deadline for reporting conflicts. Additional documentation confirming their religious affiliation may be requested.</td>
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<td>Nikki Tummon is the Liaison Librarian at McGill who works with the Sociology Department. Nikki is happy to help you with your research project. She can help you find, access, and evaluate sources. You can email her to ask a question or to set up an appointment for a consultation: <a href="mailto:nikki.tummon@mcgill.ca">nikki.tummon@mcgill.ca</a>. If you have a quick question that any librarian could answer, you can also send an email or chat a librarian here. Also make sure to check out the resources on the Sociology Department's Library Resource Guide. Visit the teaching team during student hours to chat about your project. If you have a conflict and cannot make student hours, please email Dr. Dennis or the TA to schedule an alternative time.</td>
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## COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>SCHEDULE &amp; TOPIC(S)</th>
<th>ASSIGNED TEXT(S) – BEFORE CLASS ON TUESDAY</th>
<th>DEADLINES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>WED 8/30: Course Overview</td>
<td>Syllabus &amp; MyCourses Site</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HSMH Chp. 1  
McLeod, Jane D. “Chp. 12 Social Stratification and Inequality” in *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health* [pgs. 229-238 ONLY; Stop at “Social Evaluation Processes”] |           |
ADD/DROP DEADLINE: 9/12 | Szasz, T. 2010. “Fifty Years After the Myth of Mental Illness”  
Smith, Tyson and Owen Whooley. 2015. “Dropping the Disorder in PTSD”  
Contexts 14:38-43.  
HSMH Chp. 2 [pgs. 23-25 & 30-35 ONLY] | 9/15: Project Topic Rankings Due @ noon |
HSMH Chp. 7 [pgs. 126-133 ONLY]  
HSMH Chp. 9 [pgs. 180-185 & 187-193 ONLY] | 9/18: MC Post Due @ noon |
| 5    | MON 9/25 – WED 9/27: Theories II. Structural Strain, Stigma & Labeling Theory | HSMH Chp. 7 [pgs. 133-144 ONLY]  
HSMH Chp. 19  
Wachs, Stephanie. 2020. “A Mental Health Emergency” Last Day podcast (59 minutes) [https://lemonadamedia.com/podcast/a-mental-health-emergency/] | 9/25: MC Post Due @ noon  
9/29: LA 1 due @ 5pm |
| 6    | MON 10/2 – WED 10/4: Research Week  
Note: 10/2 will be a Guest Lecture (Nikki Tummon)  
10/4 will be a Project Planning Work Day | Read the Final Research Project Assignment & think about possible topics within your area of interest.  
Review the Group Work Agreements Assignment  
## UNIT 3: WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE MENTAL ILLNESS THAN OTHERS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MON 10/9 – WED 10/11</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Have a fun and safe Thanksgiving / Fall Break!</td>
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10/16: MC Post Due @ noon |
| 9    | MON 10/23 – WED 10/25: Socioeconomic Status & Gender | - HSMH Chp. 12 [pgs 239-252, 261-265 ONLY]  
- HSMH Chp. 13 | 10/23: MC Post Due @ noon  
10/27: LA 2 due by 5 pm |
| 10   | MON 10/30 – WED 11/1: Race & Ethnicity | - HSMH Ch. 14  
AND, PICK 2:  
| 11   | MON 11/6 – WED 11/8: Nativity & Culture | - HSMH Chp. 8 [pgs. 145-152 only]  
- Chartier et al. 2014. “Are There Mental Health Differences Between Francophone and Non-Francophone Populations in Manitoba?” Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. Revue Canadienne de Psychiatrie 59(7):366–75. | 11/5: Project Part II Due @ 11:55 pm  
11/6: MC Post Due @ noon  
11/11: LA 3 due by 5 pm |
| UNIT 4: HOW DO SOCIAL STRUCTURES CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS? |
|---|---|
| 12 | **MON 11/13 – WED 11/15:**

Social Support & Integration

**Wed 11/15:** Guest speakers from L’Abri en Ville

- HSMH Chp. 10

| 11/13: MC Post Due @ noon  
11/17: Project Outline/Draft due to peer review group by 5pm |
|---|---|
| 13 | **MON 11/20 – WED 11/22:**

Marriage, Work, and Family

- HSMH Chp. 11
- HSMH Chp. 16
- “The Struggle for Working Mothers During the Pandemic: 1A: NPR” (35 minutes) https://www.npr.org/2020/10/02/919384597/the-struggle-for-working-mothers-during-the-pandemic |

| 11/20: MC Post Due @ noon  
11/22: Project Part III due to teaching team (and feedback to peer review group) by 5pm |

| UNIT 5: HOW DO SOCIETIES RESPOND TO THOSE AFFECTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS? |
|---|---|
| 14 | **MON 11/27 - WED 11/29:**

Mental Health Policy & Treatment

**AND THURS 11/30:** Course Wrap Up & Final Presentations

- HSMH Ch 23.

**WED 11/29 & THURS 11/30:**

- **Final Presentations:** Come prepared to ask questions

| 11/27: MC Post Due @ noon  
11/29 OR 11/30: PROJECT PART IVb. DUE @ noon on Presentation Day  
11/30: PROJECT PART IVa. DUE @ Noon (all groups) |
|---|---|
| 15 | **MON 12/4:**

Course Wrap Up & Final Presentations

- **Final Presentations:** Come prepared to ask questions

| PROJECT PART IVb. DUE @ noon on Presentation Day |