

GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

HTS 4086: SEMINAR IN HEALTH, MEDICINE, AND SOCIETY

Semester: Spring 2015

Day/Time: Wednesday 9:05am – 11:55 am

Location: Old Civil Engineering, Room 104

Instructor: Jennifer S. Singh, PhD, MPH

Office: Old Civil Engineering, G22

Hours: MW 3 – 4 pm or by appointment

Phone: 404-894-7445

E-mail: Jennifer.singh@hts.gatech.edu - Please contact me through T-square

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is an advanced undergraduate seminar that explores the intersections between health, medicine, and society. The course will be based on selective literature drawn from medical sociology and science and technology studies. The goal of this course is to introduce students to key theoretical frameworks and case studies that critically engage in issues of health, medicine, and society in the 21st century. After an introduction to theories of medicalization and biomedicalization, units will focus on issues raised in key areas: the influence of clinical diagnosis, pharmaceutical companies, and epidemiological science in defining diseases and the conduct of everyday lives; and the politics of health social movements from HIV/AIDS to stem cell research. After taking this course, students will be able to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior through the examination of complex relationships between medicine, health, and society. Students will demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcome by: writing a critical analyses based on weekly assigned readings and discussing these issues in class; facilitating a class discussion using a contemporary examples of medicine/biomedicine and connecting it to the course content; and a research project that investigates the intersections of medicine, health and society broadly defined. The projects will require primary research and a written analysis that utilizes theoretical concepts from the course and other relevant academic sources. Each student will also present their research findings through a formal presentation in class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In addition to Area E social science objective described above, because of taking this course, students will:

- Be able to think critically about the social, cultural and political contexts of contemporary biomedical issues;
- Be able to compare and contrast key theoretical engagements in biomedicine from diverse interdisciplinary perspectives;
- Be able to conduct a sociological analysis on a contemporary issue in biomedicine;
- Develop skills in facilitating a seminar discussion;
- Gain experience in developing a research topic and collecting primary data on a specific

- biomedical issue;
- Be able to conduct, analyze, and present original research in oral and written form.
 - Develop critical thinking, analytical, reading and writing skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Participation (15% of total grade)

This course is designed as a doctoral seminar in which participation from all students is necessary if everyone is to profit. Therefore, a portion of the final grade will be based on the quality and appropriately relative frequency of participation, which, it is assumed, will be based on careful reading of all assigned materials. Do not assume that these are automatic points. You must earn them by contributing in class. The participation grade will not be based simply on the frequency of comments, but also upon the quality of your comments. For example, bringing up a point from the reading that was unclear or critiquing an argument in the reading is more involved (and of more quality) than merely reciting descriptive information in the text. If you have a question or comment or need something clarified, raise the issue in class.

2) Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class, except in the case of documented personal illness, family/personal emergency, observance of a religious holiday or university related trips. Beginning with the 2nd unexcused absence, 1% will be deducted from your final grade.

3) Reading Responses (20% of total grade)

All students in the course will share responsibility for preparing reading responses of one chapter for each of the books we read in class. These responses are intended to help you help each other grasp the ideas and implications of the readings. Each student is required to complete one response/one chapter each week. They are due on T-Square at 5 PM the day before of class. **Please post your response on T-square/Blogs.**

By having prepared a response to the material in advance and sharing your evaluations with the rest of the class, it is my hope that you will be better prepared to engage in productive class discussions and that you will gain more from each other's analyses than you would otherwise. I will be looking for clear intellectual engagement with the materials, coherent examination of the topic, and thoughtful, relevant discussion questions.

At the end of each week, each of you will sign up for the chapter you will review for the next week. **A template and questions to think about for your response and class discussion are at the end of the syllabus.**

4) Current events paper and class facilitation (20% of total grade).

Throughout the course, each student is required to find an article, either in print or online (using LexisNexis or the paper's online archive), from a reputable newspaper or news magazine (e.g., New York Times, Boston Globe, Time, Newsweek, etc.) that addresses an issue related to medicine, health and illness that you want to discuss in relation to the weekly themes of the course. Facilitation will require that you send the article to the professor by noon the Monday before class. The professor

will post the article on T-square. Everyone is required to print, read, and bring the articles to class. Facilitators will be required to describe (not read) the article and [a] explain how it connects to the major themes or theoretical concepts of the topic of the week and [b] explain how it could be re-conceptualized through a sociological lens based on the questions below.

The purpose of this assignment is to engage the theoretical writings in the context of contemporary issues facing medicine, health and society. In other words, to what extent does theoretical perspectives (medicalization/biomedicalization) and other sociological concepts give you better understanding of the current biomedical issue you choose? In what ways are they limited? For the facilitation, you should use this article to draw connections between what we have learned in class, the book of the week, and the contemporary biomedical issue you choose. You may also address reading response questions and/or class questions to aid in discussion.

For the paper, also answer to the following questions (these can also be part of your facilitation):

- Briefly identify the biomedical issue highlighted in the article and provide a brief summary of the article. Why do you consider this an issue worthy of discussion?
- What part of society is most affected by this biomedical issue?
- How is this issue related to the week's reading?
- How is it related to processes of medicalization and/or biomedicalization
- Using either of the theoretical frameworks discussed in class (medicalization or biomedicalization) and/or any concepts that we have learned throughout the course, analyze the article through a sociological lens.
- What are the social factors or social processes that are important to understanding this biomedical issue? What people, institutions, technologies are involved?
- What are some of the social implications of this biomedical issue?

This paper should be 4-5 pages, double-spaced, and all references (including article) must be cited. The papers are due the day you sign up and present to the class (final draft due by midnight- T square/drop box). Papers can also serve as a springboard into your final paper.

5) Research Project (45% of total grade)

This course requires students to do a research project that culminates in a research paper. These papers need to focus on medicine, health, and society broadly defined. This project could focus on sociological questions at the macro or micro levels of analysis. It could be on a specific disease (illness experience, treatment or diagnosis), medical technology, health inequality based on race, social class, gender, a specific health social movement, and many others. This project must be based on primary research, which might include oral history, interviews, archival materials, government statistics, or the like. Papers also need to draw on and incorporate concepts from the course and other relevant academic sources (books, journals, etc.). Instructions for paper are at end of syllabus.

Summary of grade breakdown:

Participation.....	15%
Reading Responses.....	20%
Current Events Paper and Class Facilitation.....	20%
Research Project.....	45%
Presentation (10%) and Paper (35%)	

Total..... 100%

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

The project involves essentially six assignments: a meeting with me, attend information session with Bruce Henson in the Library, a bibliographic exercise, a short summary, a research presentation, and a final paper. This project is meant, in part, to demonstrate to students that writing and research are processes that do not end with the first draft (or begin the night before it is due). Also, by breaking this project into several parts, I hope to facilitate students' completion of the final paper. To get full credit for the research project, all assignments must be completed by the date indicated.

Research Project Timeline

Jan 14 – Jan 28 – Schedule a time to meet with Professor Singh to discuss project ideas.

March 11 – Share ideas for project with class.

March 13 – Turn in annotated bibliography and Endnote File by midnight – T-Square/Drop box

March 27 – Summary and/or Outline of Final Paper by midnight – T-Square/Drop box

April 8 & 15 – Present research project to class

April 29 – Final Papers Due by midnight – T-Square/Drop box

- 1) First, by the ***fourth week of class (January 28th), students will meet individually with me*** to discuss ideas for the research paper. You should come to the meeting with at least two ideas. Therefore, you should begin thinking about topics now. I have attached a list of possible ideas that students might consider analyzing. Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and you may choose to study a topic not on this list. To help narrow down a broad topic, browse review articles in sociology journals on the topics of interest to you. Students will ***share their research idea in class on March 11.***
- 2) Second, an ***annotated bibliography is due by March 13 at midnight.*** For this exercise, you need to find 4 academic sources (e.g., journal articles, books) and 2 primary sources (e.g., newspaper articles, Congressional hearings, government statistics, etc.) to use in your research paper. (Websites do not qualify as academic sources.) For each resource, provide a brief explanatory or evaluative commentary of the citation. Be sure to cite each source using your favorite citation style. The bibliographic assignment should start with a brief statement about your research topic and the questions the research will be addressing. Information about Endnote will be passed out in class.
- 3) Third, you will need to turn in a paper ***summary or outline on March 25th at midnight.*** This paper should be about 5-7 pages (typed, double-spaced). In it, you will want to describe your research topic in more detail, the research strategy description (what type of data are you collecting and when/how it will be collected), a re-statement of research questions and an outline of the paper, including the theoretical approaches/sociological concepts you will be drawing on and an indication of research findings. You should include a brief bibliography with this paper of all the sources being used (academic and primary sources).
- 4) Forth, students will ***present their research to the class on Weeks 14 and 15th (April 8th and April 15th).*** These presentations will follow the standard time allotment at academic conferences: about 15 minutes. All presentations must be placed in your T-square drop box if using slides/power point/etc.

- 5) Finally, you need to turn in a final paper. This paper should be approximately 20-25 pages long, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, in Times New Roman 12-point font or a font of similar size. The paper should include: a) an introduction indicating the topic and question, and why it is interesting/important, b) a review of relevant prior research and theories, leading to a more precise statement of the research question, c) a statement of the methods you have used in collecting and analyzing your data, d) a statement or summary of your research findings, and e) a discussion of how your findings relate to prior research and the theories/sociological concepts used for your analysis. You must draw on the theories of medicalization and/or biomedicalization or other relevant frameworks, and f) a concluding section in which you show how (or the ways in which) your findings answered your research question and the significance of your findings for the prior studies and theories you reviewed (how does this research add to the existing literature?), and highlight any interesting implications you foresee of this research topic, such as for daily life, health policy, or future research. In the conclusion, you must also write a paragraph about how your own social location may be influencing what you examine or how you interpret your observations. In this self-reflexive paragraph, also describe what was most challenging about this experience and what you learned most from the process. Please use ASA citation style – references will be available in T-Square/Resources/Final Paper. This paper should have at least 10 academic sources and several primary sources. A bibliography should be included at the end of the paper. ***The final paper is due by midnight on April 29th (Wednesday, Finals Week).*** Please drop it into your T-Square drop box.

POLICIES FOR WRITTEN WORK

All written papers (including the final exam) are to be typed, double-spaced, using 12-pt. time New Roman font, and must include page numbers, proper use of citations, and bibliographies. Please use ASA citation style. I have posted a quick guide to ASA citation style on T-Square/Resources/ASA citation.

All papers will be turned in through T-Square Drop box. Late papers will be deducted 5% each day it is late. If you have a personal or family emergency and are unable to complete an assignment, you must speak with me as soon as possible so we can discuss how and when you will complete the assignment. **Do not assume that you may hand in all of your assignments at the end of the course, or that you will be granted an extension.**

Research/Writing Resources at Georgia Tech: <http://libguides.gatech.edu/research>: This guide will help you learn how to conduct research, how to write well, and how to avoid plagiarism by citing your sources.

The Communication Center at Clough Commons also provides tutoring in communication-related assignments or projects regardless of discipline. The **CommLab** is located on the 4th floor of the Clough Commons:

<http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/>

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

Academic Integrity Statement: Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. The immediate objective of an Academic Honor Code is to prevent any Students from gaining an unfair advantage over other Students through academic misconduct. The following clarification of academic misconduct is taken from Section XIX Student Code of Conduct, of the Rules and Regulations section of the Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog: Academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include but need not be limited to the following:

Plagiarism: Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source." I will check all papers for plagiarism and your papers will be considered as "plagiarized" in part or entirely if you do any of the following:

- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.
- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references.
- Submit a paper in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.

If caught plagiarizing, you will not receive credit for the assignment and you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with disabilities needing reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Office of the Dean of Students, ADAPTS Disability Services Program is available to assist us with the reasonable accommodations process. More information at:

<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/index.php>.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

- Please **silence** cell phones, and **turn off** iPods, or other electronics during class.
- Computers are allowed in class to take notes only. Please refrain from using e-mail, Facebook, You-Tube, or any other non-related electronic material. It disrupts not only your learning but also the learning of those around you.
- Late arrivals & early departures disrupt not only me, but also other students; therefore, if you know you will be late or need to leave early—please talk to me *before* class (or email me).
- Since this course discusses controversial issues, I expect you to respect and listen to everybody's opinions and perspectives. I value and respect your contributions. Please do the same for others in the class. Our class is a space free of sexist, racist or other offensive comments.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Medical Sociology Resources:

Somatosphere, Science, Medicine and Anthropology: A collaborative weblog covering the intersections of medical anthropology, science and technology studies, cultural psychiatry and bioethics. <http://www.somatosphere.net/2010/12/50-years-of-medical-sociology.html>

Sociology of Health and Illness: Podcasts Key Thinkers and Debates:
http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/shil_enhanced/podcasts.asp#podcast2

Sociology Subject Guide: This guide highlights health data available at the state, federal and international level in several areas of health care and health administration. Primary sources are the Federal Government and international agencies:
<http://resources.library.lemoyne.edu/content.php?pid=88173&sid=1521742>

Medical Sociology Guide: <http://www.medicalsociologyguide.com/faq/>

Medical Sociology Online: <http://www.medicalsociologyonline.org/>

American Sociological Association – Medical Sociology Section:
<http://www2.asanet.org/medicalsociology/>

General Sociology Resources:

American Sociological Association: www.asanet.org. There is a section for students that will let you browse the site and find information that could be applicable for this class.

Socio-Web: The SocioWeb is an independent guide to the sociological resources available on the Internet and is founded in the belief that the Internet can help to unite the sociological community in powerful ways. <http://www.socioweb.com/>

Sociological Images: Sociological Images encourages people to exercise and develop their sociological imaginations with discussions of compelling visuals that span the breadth of sociological inquiry. <http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/>

Dictionary of Sociology: <http://www.webref.org/sociology/sociology.htm>

Mainstream Medical Journals:

- Lancet
- Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)
- New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)

Web Sites (there are hundreds of good websites on health):

US Food and Drug Administration www.fda.gov
Institute of Medicine www.iom.edu
National Institutes of Health www.nig.gov
National Library of Medicine www.nlm.nih.gov
National Women's Health Network www.womenshealthnetwork.org
Center for Genetics and Society www.genetics-and-society.org
American Cancer Society www.cancer.org
American Heart Association www.americanheart.org
American Lung Association www.lungusa.org
Center for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov

Georgia Tech Library Resources

Medical Journal Searches: [PubMed](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)
Media searches: [Lexis-Nexus Academic Database](http://www.lexisnexis.com/)
Social Science Databases: [JSTOR](http://www.jstor.org/) and/or [Web of Science](http://www.webofscience.com/)

Other Websites

Criteria for evaluating news stories: <http://www.healthnewsreview.org/>

READING SCHEDULE

We will be reading each of the books as indicated in the reading schedule below.

Week 1: January 7

Course introduction: Why critically analyze the intersections of Medicine, Health, and Society? What theoretical constructs help us to understand complex health issues in the 21st century?

Read NYT Articles posted in T-Square/Resources/Jan.7

Overview of Sociological Research: Difference between primary and secondary data.
Visit the Library at 11 am – Everyone must attend.

*****JAN 9 – LAST DAY TO REGISTER/SCHEDULE CHANGE DEADLINE ****

Part I: FROM MEDICALIZATION TO BIOMEDICALIZATION

Week 2: January 14

The Medicalization of Society by Peter Conrad

Week 3: January 21

Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health and Illness in the U.S. by Clarke et al. (Chapters 1-4 plus one other chapter – your choice).

Be prepared to discuss the extra chapter in class. How does this chapter relate to the framework of biomedicalization?

PART II: WHO DEFINES DISEASE: DIAGNOSIS, BIG PHARMA, AND SCIENCE

Week 4: January 28

Project Assignment 1: Schedule a meeting with Prof. Singh to discuss ideas for research project. Please bring a list of ideas to the meeting.

Putting a Name to It: Diagnosis in Contemporary Society by Annemarie Jutel, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Week 5: February 4

Drugs for Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define our Health by Joe Dumit

Week 6: Feb 11

Heart Sick: The Politics of Risk, Inequality, and Heart Disease by Janet K. Shim, NYU Press, 2014.

PART III: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH & HEALTH

Week 7: Feb 18

Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge by Steven Epstein
(Introduction, Ch. 5 – Conclusion)

Week 8: Feb 25

People's Science: Bodies and Rights on the Stem Cell Frontier by Ruha Benjamin, Stanford University Press, 2013

Week 9: March 4

Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination by Alondra Nelson, University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Week 10: March 11

Reading Assignment: Information on how to write an annotated bibliography and how to write a research report will be available in T-square/Resources/Research Project.

Dr. Singh will give tutorial on Endnote Referencing software. Free application available to GaTech students. See: <https://software.oit.gatech.edu/request.php?platform=osx&audience=students&filter=>

Class Assignment: Students will share their research topic ideas with the class. Be prepared to discuss your topic, how you will gather data, and the theoretical framework (medicalization or biomedicalization) you plan to use. Try to be as specific as possible – an outline or abstract may be helpful. The goal is to generate and share ideas with your classmate.

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Project Assignment 3: Annotated bibliography and Endnote File assignment due March 13th by midnight. T-square/Drop Box.

*****MARCH 12 – LAST DAY TO WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE *****

Week 11: March 18 – SPRING BREAK

Week 12: March 25

Reading Assignment: Read a monograph of your choice that will help inform your research project with approval of Dr. Singh. Write up a critical review and be prepared to share a 10-minute presentation to the class about the book.

Questions to consider:

How does this book relate to the themes of the course? What specific concepts discussed in the course are useful for thinking through some of the issues brought up in the book? What new ideas are brought up that we have not discussed? How does this project relate to your research project?

Week 13: April 1

Reading Assignment: Read chapter available on Presentations in T-Square/Resources/Research Project. Bring to class examples of one good and one bad presentation you can find on the Internet to share with the class (keep them short).

Professor Singh will present a 15-minute talk to help prepare for final presentations.

Week 14: April 8

Student Presentations

Week 15: April 15

Student Presentations (if needed)

Week 16: April 22

NO CLASS: Revise Research Papers.

Week 17: April 29 Research Papers due at midnight. Please drop your paper in your T-square drop box.

READING RESPONSE TEMPLATE

CITATION: Properly cite the book/chapter

MAJOR CONCEPTS AND/OR THEORIES ADDRESSED (feel free to define concepts that are new and that you are learning for the first time. These will be concepts used to help analyze your research papers).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (2): These questions can be broad to the course or specific to a particular aspect of the book. What questions came up for you when you read this book?

READING RESPONSE: Use these questions to help with your response. Not all questions need to be answered. These questions will be used as starting points for our class discussion.

What does the piece say?

What research question does the reading address? (Or, what theoretical question?) What argument does the reading make? Is the reading clear? Are there difficult or problematic points that we should address in class?

How does the piece support its claims?

Is the argument based on systematically collected data, personal experience, theory, criticism/appreciation of others' ideas, or something else?

If based on data: Does the data support the author's claims? How strongly? Are there gaps or weaknesses in the analysis?

If based on theory: What are the author's basic theoretical assumptions, e.g. about medicine, health, disease, illness, human behavior, or the workings of organizations or other social groups? Are these assumptions plausible?

How does it compare to other works on similar subjects?

How are the author's claims similar to and/or different from those of other works we have read?

Who would this author agree with, and who would s/he disagree with? What would they agree/disagree about?

Who cares?

Does the piece have practical implications, e.g., does it tell us anything about how we ought to live our lives, organize our collective affairs, structure our major social institutions and policies, etc.?

Does it yield theoretical insights, e.g. does it tell us anything about how people, society, medicine, etc. work *in general*?

Does it include useful interpretations, e.g. does it cast familiar situations in fresh light or help us

understand our experiences in new and perhaps better ways?

Does it make a methodological contribution, e.g. does it demonstrate new ways of collecting and analyzing data or weighing ideas that might be useful in examining other topics?

How broadly do these insights apply? Do they apply to every person (or every innovation, every audience, etc.) in the world always? Or only to a particular society? To a particular society at a given time? To only certain people in that society at that time? Does the author make any claims about how broadly his or her conclusions apply, and do you agree?

What do you think overall?

What do you like and dislike about this reading? Why? Do you agree or disagree with the argument? Why?