

# **SOCIOLOGY 419: SOCIOLOGY OF MENTAL ILLNESS (4 Credits)**

Winter Quarter 2020 2:00-3:50 Mondays & Wednesdays; 401 Cramer Hall

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to give you an overview of the ways a sociological perspective informs our understanding of mental health and illness. While sociologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and others all deal with issues of mental illness, they often approach the topic in very different ways. In general, a sociological perspective tends to focus on aspects of the social environment that we often ignore, neglect, or take for granted. It calls attention to how society or groups are organized, who benefits or is hurt by the way things are organized, and what beliefs shape our behaviors. In viewing mental illness, sociologists have primarily challenged dominant views of mental illness, examined how social relationships play a role in mental illness, questioned the goals and implications of mental health policy and researched how mental health services are organized and provided.

The course is divided into three sections, each exploring different aspects of this sociological view of mental illness. In the first section we will explore various definitions of mental illness, critically analyze different forms of mental illness, and examine the social process of labeling mental illness. In the second section we will analyze theories of mental disorder and how factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, race, and age affect mental disorder. The third section will examine historical and current social responses to mental illness.

Students are expected to read two textbooks. One paper and two examinations are also required. Finally, students are expected to participate in class and small group discussions.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course was designed with four objectives in mind:

1. To introduce a sociological perspective on mental illness, and to discuss how this perspective differs from those offered by psychiatry, psychology, and other relevant disciplines.
2. To describe and analyze the history of definitions of mental illness and of the dominant treatment modalities, particularly in the United States.
3. To provide basic information about the distribution of mental illness and psychological distress in the population, and about the theories that have been offered to explain the distribution.
4. To improve students' skills at reading and critiquing sociological theory and research, and at applying sociological concepts to examples of mental illness.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Scheid, Teresa L. and Eric R. Wright (Editors). 2017. *A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health: Social Contexts, Theories, and Systems*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Cambridge University Press (abbreviated as S&W throughout this syllabus).
- Karp, David and Gretchen E. Sisson. 2010. *Voices from the Inside: Readings on the Experiences of Mental Illness*. Oxford University Press (abbreviated as K&S throughout this syllabus).

## COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

- Late/Missed Assignments. Assignments, exams, and readings should be completed by the beginning of class on their due date. Late work is penalized 10% per day. Please document any family or medical emergency and notify the professor or TA before class (email preferred). Missed in-class participation activities **will not** be accepted without an excused absence.
- Exams. Each examination will include multiple choice and essay questions. The examinations are intended to test your knowledge of the major theoretical perspectives and empirical findings from the sociology of mental illness. They will cover material from readings, group discussions, lectures, and films. Make-up exams are only allowed in the event of a documented emergency. You must contact me *before* the test to arrange a make-up exam (email preferred).
- Class Notes. If you must miss class, get notes from one of your classmates. Then see the TA or professor to clarify anything you do not understand. I will post the PowerPoint slides on D2L so you can view missed notes (D2L can be accessed at [d2l.pdx.edu](http://d2l.pdx.edu)). One note of warning, however: I view my PowerPoint slides as an outline of the day's lecture and they should in no way be considered sufficient as a replacement for attending class, paying attention, and taking your own notes.
- Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities. PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
  - Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
  - For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the [Fire and Life Safety webpage \(https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety\)](https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) for information.
- Classroom Etiquette. Failure to meet minimal standards of classroom etiquette is disruptive to your classmates. Therefore, you are expected to come to class on time, stay throughout the class period,

and to refrain from inappropriate conversation. You are also expected to turn your cell phones off or mute them. If you are using a laptop or tablet, you are expected to use it *only* for note taking purposes and not for checking email, playing games, or any other purpose.

- Academic Misconduct. According to the PSU Student Code of Conduct, a student is subject to disciplinary action for academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is the act of knowingly or intentionally seeking to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or participation in such acts. This includes, but is not limited to: (a) cheating, (b) fraud, (c) plagiarism, such as word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (d) The buying or selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (e) Performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons; (f) Unauthorized disclosure or receipt of academic information. Students engaging in academic misconduct will receive a failing grade on that assignment.
- Title IX Reporting Obligations. Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available.

Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672 or schedule Online at <https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me>.

You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to:

- PSU's Title IX Coordinator: Julie Caron by calling 503-725-4410, via email at [titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu) or in person at Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center (RMNC), 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Yesenia Gutierrez by calling 503-725-4413, via email at [yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu](mailto:yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu) or in person at RMNC, 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Dana Walton-Macaulay by calling 503-725-5651, via email at [dana26@pdx.edu](mailto:dana26@pdx.edu) or in person at Smith Memorial Union, Suite, 1825 SW Broadway, Suite 433

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors **are required to report** information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the Title IX Coordinators will keep the information confidential and refer you to a confidential advocate.

For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

- Resources to Help You Succeed at PSU.
  - Writing Center (<https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>)
    - One-on-one help with writing, on a walk-in or appointment basis

- 188 Cramer Hall, 725.3570
- Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) (<http://www.pdx.edu/shac/>)
  - Mental health, physical health, dental, and testing services. 1880 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., 725-2800
- Online grammar and writing resource:
  - The OWL at Purdue University [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- 10% Active class participation. Students must come to lecture prepared to discuss the day's readings; this will be measured via group discussion write-ups and individual exercises.
- 30% Midterm Exam. Multiple choice and essay exam.
- 25% Paper. You are required to write and submit one 5-7 page paper, chosen from among three available paper assignment options.
- Each paper has its own due date throughout the quarter.
  - The paper assignments are designed to help you develop your communication, analysis, and critical thinking skills by writing clearly and persuasively to connect course material to additional scholarly publications on a topic of your choice. The paper assignment is also intended to develop your ability to recognize and discuss alternative perspectives on mental illness.
  - Details of the three paper options are provided following the course schedule on the final pages of this syllabus.
  - Papers must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. *Note*: My policy is to deduct 10% for *every day* late (*not* every class day).
- 35% Final examination.
- The final exam is cumulative but focuses on material covered after the midterm exam.

## Course Schedule

Course schedule subject to change with reasonable notice

Week/Date	Topic, Required Readings, and Relevant Page Numbers
<b>WEEK 1:</b>	
Monday, Jan. 6	<u>Course Introduction</u>
<b>PART I: THE SOCIAL DEFINITION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS</b>	
Wednesday, Jan. 8	<u>What is Mental Illness?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Scheid &amp; Wright, “Theoretical Perspectives on Mental Health and Illness: Introduction to Part I” [Pp. 1-5]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “The Illness Experience” [Pp. 11-16]</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 2:</b>	
Monday, Jan. 13	<u>What is Mental Illness?, continued</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Schwartz &amp; Corcoran, “Biological Approaches to Psychiatric Disorders: A Sociological Approach” [Pp. 98-125]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Manning, “Undercurrents” [Pp. 222-235]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Jan. 15	<u>Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Mental Illness</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Horwitz, “An Overview of Sociological Perspectives on the Definitions, Causes, and Responses to Mental Health and Illness [Pp. 6-19]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Hornbacher, “Wasted” [Pp. 236-244]</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 3:</b>	
Monday, Jan. 20	<b>No class: MLK Day</b>
Wednesday, Jan. 22	<u>Theories of Mental Illness and Medicalization</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Link &amp; Phelan, “Labeling and Stigma” [Pp. 393-408]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “The Stigma of Mental Illness” [Pp. 165-169]</li> <li>• on D2L: Rosenhan, “On Being Sane in Insane Places”</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 4:</b>	
Monday, Jan. 27	<u>Theories of Mental Illness and Medicalization</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Whooley, “Defining Mental Disorders: Sociological Investigations into the Classification of Mental Disorders” [Pp. 45-65]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “The Meanings of Medication” [Pp. 121-125]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Jan. 29	<u>Theories of Mental Illness and Medicalization, continued</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Thoits, “Sociological Approaches to Mental Illness” [Pp. 126-144]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Karp, “Teens Talk” [Pp. 137-148].</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 5:</b>	
Monday, Feb. 3	<u>Forms of Mental Illness and the Illness Experience</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K&amp;S: “An Unwelcome Career” [Pp. 16-24]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “Flights of the Mind” [Pp. 24-32]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “The Eden Experience” [Pp. 33-43]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Feb. 5	<b><u>MIDTERM EXAM</u></b>

Week/Date	Topic, Required Readings, and Relevant Page Numbers
<b>WEEK 6:</b>	
<b>PART II: THE SOCIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY OF MENTAL ILLNESS</b>	
Monday, Feb. 10	<u>Validity and Reliability of Psychiatric Diagnosis</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Leftley, “Mental Health Systems in Cross-Cultural Context” [Pp. 145-172]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Wakefield &amp; Schmitz, “The Measurement of Mental Disorder” [Pp. 20-44]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Feb. 12	<u>Psychiatric Epidemiology</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Schnittker, “What Outcomes Should the Study of Mental Health Try to Explain?” [Pp. 82-97]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Scheid and Wright, “The Social Context of Mental Health and Illness: Introduction to Part II” [Pp. 173-179]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Wheaton &amp; Montazer, “Studying Stress in the Twenty-First Century: An Update of Stress Concepts and Research” [Pp. 180-206]</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 7:</b>	
Monday, Feb. 17	<u>The Social Stress Model, SES and (Un)Employment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Brown &amp; Ciciurkaite, “Understanding the Connection between Social Support and Mental Health” [Pp. 207-223]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Limonic and Lennon, “Work and Unemployment as Stressors” [Pp. 224-238]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Eaton and Muntaner, “Socioeconomic Stratification and Mental Disorder” [Pp. 239-265]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Feb. 19	<u>Stress/SES, continued, &amp; Race, Ethnicity, and Culture</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Williams, Costa, &amp; Leavell, “Race and Mental Health” [Pp. 281-303]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Keith &amp; Brown, “African American Women and Mental Well-Being: The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Socioeconomic Status” [Pp. 304-321]</li> </ul>
<b>WEEK 8:</b>	
Monday, Feb. 24	<u>Gender, Parenthood, Marital Status, and Age</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Rosenfield, Kato &amp; Smith, “Gender and Mental Health” [Pp. 266-280]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Karp, “In Sickness and in Health” [Pp. 85-93]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Feb. 26	<u>Gender, Parenthood, Marital Status, and Age, continued</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Williams, Frech, &amp; Carlson, “Marital Status and Mental Health [Pp. 322-337]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Mirowsky &amp; Ross, “Well-Being across the Life Course” [Pp. 338-356]</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>**Paper Option #1 due**</b></p>
<b>WEEK 9:</b>	
<b>PART III: SOCIAL RESPONSES AND TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS</b>	
Monday, Mar. 2	<u>Help-Seeking, Mental Hospitalization, and Deinstitutionalization</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Scheid &amp; Wright, “Mental Health Systems and Policy” [Pp. 387-392]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “Caregivers Speak” [Pp. 73-77]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: “Hospitalization [Pp. 95-99]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Mar. 4	<u>Mental Health Treatment and Stigma</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S&amp;W: Pescosolido &amp; Boyer, “The Context and Dynamic Social Processes Underlying Mental Health Treatment” [Pp. 409-430]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Millet, “The Loony-Bin Trip” [Pp. 100-109]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Owen, “To Tell or Not to Tell” [Pp. 169-179]</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>**Paper Option #2 due**</b></p>

Week/Date	Topic, Required Readings, and Relevant Page Numbers
<u>WEEK 10:</u>	
Monday, Mar. 9	<u>Mental Health Treatment, Deinstitutionalization, and the Criminal Justice System</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K&amp;S: Schiller, “The Quiet Room” [Pp. 109-120]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Watson, Adams, &amp; Jackson, “Mental Health Policy in the United States” [Pp. 573-590]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Avison, “Epilogue: The Three Solitudes of the Sociology of Mental Health” [Pp. 591-594]</li> </ul>
Wednesday, Mar. 11	<u>Mental Health, Crime, and the Law</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K&amp;S: “In the Community” [Pp. 193-197]</li> <li>• K&amp;S: Earley, “The Ninth Floor” [Pp. 197-206]</li> <li>• S&amp;W: Hiday &amp; Ray “Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System” [Pp. 467-492]</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>**Paper Option #3 due**</b></p>
<u>FINALS</u> <u>WEEK:</u>	
Wednesday, Mar. 18	<b><u>FINAL EXAM: 12:30-2:20pm</u></b>

## Instructions for All Papers

The following instructions apply to each of the three paper options:

### Format:

- Include a title page with a title, your name, the name/number of the class, and instructor name.
- Write 5-7 pages of text (not including the title page or references page), double-spaced, using Times New Roman 12-point font, with page numbers, and 1-inch margins.

### Overall style:

- Write an introductory paragraph that provides an overview of what the paper is going to be about.
- Write a concluding paragraph that summarizes the main points that you made in your paper.
- Develop the body of your paper in a logical, analytic fashion; it will help if you create an outline before you start to write your paper.
- Be sure to organize your paper into discrete paragraphs; no paragraph should be much longer than ½ of a page.
- Look for run-on sentences and sentence fragments.
- Write a rough draft of your paper; take a break and revise your paper at least once.
- Before submitting, proofread! Edit your paper closely so that you do not submit papers containing spelling or grammatical errors.

### Inclusion of scholarly references:

- Include a minimum of three peer-reviewed scholarly sources in your paper. Identify, read, and cite articles published in scholarly journals related to your topic, which you can find via Google Scholar or through PSU's library. The library has a Social Sciences librarian who can help you identify sources if you're struggling to find them on your own.
- Cite your sources in the text whenever you refer to something that you read *and* include a REFERENCES page at the end of your paper.
- Choose a citation style to cite your sources. The PSU library website has examples of how to cite your sources here: <https://library.pdx.edu/research/citing-sources/>. I am not picky about which style you use (APA, MLA, and ASA are all acceptable), instead I just want you to be sure you're citing your sources in a consistent manner.
- A major consideration in grading will be your ability to successfully tie class material to your other sources. Therefore, you *are* expected to refer to class material, such as lecture and required readings. When you refer to the Scheid & Wright textbook, the Karp & Sisson book, or to class notes/PowerPoint slides, be sure to provide a citation [e.g., (Scheid & Wright 2017) or (Karp & Sisson 2010) or (class notes 2/10/2020)].



### **Paper Option #1: The Social Antecedents of Mental Illness (due week 8)**

Due Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class

You have recently learned a great deal about how exposure to various types of stressors, and access to personal and social resources, affects mental health and mental illness.

Pick one type of stressor, and one resource, and conduct further research on that topic. For example, you could pick “traumatic life event” stressors and the personal resource of “sense of control” or the social resource of “social support.” What is important is that you pick something that you find interesting. Your job is to conduct further research on that topic and present your findings, explaining how they relate to class material, including readings, lectures, and other elements of the class.

Once you begin your research, you are likely to find a great deal of published material on the specific topic you chose, and you may need to narrow your topic in order to focus your research. If you get stuck trying to choose a topic or narrow your focus, please contact Professor Thompson or PSU library’s Social Sciences librarian ([Anders Tobiason](#)) for help.

Here are some prompts to help you in your search for material to write about:

- What evidence is there to link the stressor and resource you chose to overall mental health (or to a specific mental illness)?
- Is there any conflicting evidence that challenges that pattern?
- What theoretical explanations have you found that explain the mental health consequences of this stressor (or resource)?
- Do any explanations you have found seem to contradict what you have learned elsewhere, or contradict something else you have read? If so, how would you reconcile those contradictions?
- Can you identify any weaknesses in the arguments you have read, or the methodologies used to substantiate those weaknesses? If so, describe them, and explain how you would go about fixing them.
- What is not yet known about the stressor or resource that you have chosen to study, and how do you think scholars should go about filling in the blanks of what is not known?

### **Paper Option #2: The Social Distribution of Mental Illness (due week 9)**

Due Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class

You have recently learned a great deal about the social distribution of mental illness as well as of overall psychological well-being versus psychological distress. You now know how social inequality in several forms predicts people’s mental health.

Pick one axis of social inequality (e.g., social class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc.) and one important aspect of mental health or illness that is systematically related to the axis of inequality. For example, you might choose the inverse relationship between social class and the likelihood of having depression, or you might choose women’s greater likelihood of anxiety disorders, or men’s greater likelihood of substance abuse disorders. What is important is that you pick something that you find interesting. Your job is to conduct further research on that topic and present your findings, explaining how they relate to class material, including readings, lectures, and other elements of the class.

Once you begin your research, you are likely to find a great deal of published material on social inequality and mental health. You may find that you will need to narrow your topic in order to focus

your research. If you get stuck trying to choose a topic or narrow your focus, please contact Professor Thompson or PSU library's Social Sciences librarian ([Anders Tobiason](#)) for help.

Here are some prompts to help you in your search for material to write about:

- What evidence exists to substantiate the example of a social pattern of mental health or illness that you have chosen to write about?
- Is there any conflicting evidence that challenges that pattern?
- What theoretical explanations have you found that explain this social pattern?
- Do any explanations you have found seem to contradict what you have learned elsewhere, or contradict something else you have read? If so, how would you reconcile those contradictions?
- Can you identify any weaknesses in the arguments you have read, or the methodologies used to substantiate those weaknesses? If so, describe them, and explain how you would go about fixing them.
- What is not yet known about the social pattern you have chosen to study, and how do you think scholars should go about filling in the blanks of what is not known?

### **Paper Option #3: Social Institutions and Mental Illness (due week 10)**

Due Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class

You have recently learned about how social institutions (work, family, neighborhoods, religion, the educational system, the mental health system, etc.) are related to mental health and illness.

Pick one of these institutions to study further. What is important is that you pick a social institution that you find interesting. Your job is to conduct further research on that topic and present your findings, explaining how they relate to class material, including readings, lectures, and other elements of the class. Because each social institution is so broad, you will likely need to focus on a single dimension. For instance, within the institution of family, you may focus on marriage, or within the institution of work, you may focus on workplace conditions.

Once you begin your research, you are likely to find a great deal of published material on the specific topic you chose, and you may need to narrow your topic in order to focus your research. If you get stuck trying to choose a topic or narrow your focus, please contact Professor Thompson or PSU library's Social Sciences librarian ([Anders Tobiason](#)) for help.

Here are some prompts to help you in your search for material to write about:

- Describe the dimension of the social institution you have chosen to focus on and how it is related to mental health or illness.
- Summarize the evidence that links that dimension to mental health or illness.
- Is there any conflicting evidence that challenges that pattern?
- What theoretical explanations have you found that explain the mental health consequences of this dimension of a social institution?
- Do any explanations you have found seem to contradict what you have learned elsewhere, or contradict something else you have read? If so, how would you reconcile these contradictions?
- Can you identify any weaknesses in the arguments you have read, or the methodologies used to substantiate those weaknesses? If so, describe them, and explain how you would go about fixing them.
- What is not yet known about this social institution that you have chosen to study, and how do you think scholars should go about filling in the blanks of what is not known?