

FOUNDATIONS of SOCIAL MEDICINE

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Fall 2016

Tuesday 9-12

PCP 2.264

The Foundations of Social Medicine course offers a critical inquiry into the socio- cultural, technological and political- economic dimensions of health, medical knowledge, and practices. Informed by the social sciences and the humanities, this course emphasizes theoretical, historical and cross- cultural approaches to the study of what has broadly been defined as the social determinants of health. Within the context of this course, social determinants are understood as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system, as well as the ideas, discourses and institutional practices of public health and medicine.

Readings for the term will be drawn primarily from science and technology studies, sociology and anthropology. Topics to be covered include a comparative history of social medicine and biomedicine, an examination of the social and structural determinants of health, critical studies of global health, the political economy of health, medicalization and biomedicalization, war and medicine, environmental health, the ethics of self-care, and the social production of biomedical knowledge.

Students will be evaluated based on their active in-class participation, the quality of their writing and their presentation skills. Students will be asked to submit regular blog posts; additionally they will write and present a major research paper (approx. 20 pages).

OBJECTIVES

- Provide an introduction to the political economic, socio- cultural, technological, ethical, and historical dimensions of health, medical knowledge and practices.
- Contextualize and critically examine social, political and economic policies, practices and discourses related to health and medicine.
- Refine academic & professional writing skills through the synthesis of readings, discussions and current scholarship to formulate a semester- long case study on a relevant health issue.
- Advance oral communication skills through class discussions and the development of a conference- style professional presentation.

Required Texts

Biehl, Joao and Adriana Petryna, eds. 2013. *When People Come First: Critical Studies in Global Health*, Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press. ISBN-10: 0691157391, ISBN-13: 978-0691157399.

Dumit, Joseph. 2012. *Drugs for Life: How Pharmaceutical Companies Define our Health*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Lock, Margaret and Vinh-Kim Nguyen. 2010. *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. UK: Blackwell Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-4051-1071-6

Components of Final Grade

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| In-class participation | 20% |
| Blog participation | 20% |
| Final paper | 40% |
| <u>In-class presentation</u> | <u>20%</u> |
| | 100% |

Evaluation and Grading:

Class Participation, Preparation (20%)

Class Participation: based upon thoughtful contribution to weekly discussion, encompassing good communication and listening skills.

Preparation: careful and complete reading of / reflection on assigned materials; questions and comments prepared in advance of class. Students will be take responsibility for leading at least one (1) class discussions.

Blog Participation (20%)

Through their weekly blog entries students will distill the material and reflect upon it in terms of their own discipline and experience. When applicable, they should also draw upon current events. Students should reference appropriate books and articles in their discipline, demonstrating theoretical or methodological awareness and its connection to Social Medicine. Students will also be expected to comment on each other's blog posts. A handout will follow with more details about Blog assignment.

Final paper (40%) ~ 20 pages

Paper topics reflect the interests of the students, including social medicine issues beyond those presented in class. An excellent paper will choose a subject that can be clearly delimited and dealt with in the space of the paper, but is rich enough to contribute to larger academic conversations. The claim of the paper and the debate it is engaged with will be clearly stated and fluently argued. An excellent paper will demonstrate thorough research, thoughtful scholarship, and a sophisticated understanding / evaluation of some aspect of the political economic, socio-cultural, technological, ethical, historical dimensions of health, medical knowledge and practices. Handout will follow with more details.

Presentation (20%)

Each student will present her/his final paper to the class and invite questions and comments from the group.

THEMATIC ORGANIZATION OF CLASS

- Week 1 – What is Social Medicine?
- Week 2 – Anthropology of Biomedicine
- Week 3 – Medical Pluralism and Anthropology
- Week 4 – Medicalization and Biomedicalization
- Week 5 -- Risk, responsibility and self-governance
- Week 6 – Social determinants of health: structures
- Week 7 – Social determinants of health: infections and disease
- Week 8 -- Health Disparities and Race
- Week 9 – Global Development and Health as a Human Right
- Week 10 - Pharma and the Social
- Week 11 -- Conflict and Displacement
- Week 12 -- Biomedical Bodies and Technology
- Week 13 -- Securitizing Health
- Week 14 -- Religion and Social Medicine
- Week 15 – Environmental Health
- Week 16 -- Student Presentations