

SOCIOLOGY 207.20: Health Justice
ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY, WINTER 2023
Dr. Riley Olstead

Contact Info:

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Office Hours:

Wednesdays 12-2 PM

Fridays Thursdays 10-11 AM

Class Times:

Wednesdays 9:45 AM –11 AM

Fridays 8:15 AM -9:30 AM

Classroom: SCHW 289

In this class, students will approach the study of human health from an intersectional, critical sociological perspective that emphasizes the links between social, political, economic and environmental justice. After establishing a clear understanding of the dominant biomedical approach, the class will in its first step, engage with a social determinants of health approach as a framework for learning about and exploring links between our biologic systems and the profound injustices of our political and economic systems. Yet this is not where we will rest. As our second step, we will push even further to learn about decolonizing health. In this, we will consider the necessity—not just of addressing ‘the social and political inequalities’ of our systems, or actualizing ‘health justice’ as such— but of an ontological shift in which we come to regard our biological selves as fundamental expressions of vital earth systems. Students should note that while the curriculum relies heavily on Indigenous histories, knowledge, epistemologies and ontologies, at present this course is taught by a settler.

University and Classroom Policies

Plagiarism: Familiarize yourself with the university plagiarism policies and punishments. You are responsible for understanding them and abiding by them. The StFX library has links, tutorials, and definitions at this site: <http://sites.stfx.ca/library/plagiarism>. The StFX calendar outlines the procedures concerning and penalties for committing plagiarism.

StFX Equity Policy: Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space—both face-to-face and online—that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. These values and practices are in accord with the StFX Discrimination and Harassment Policy which can be found at <http://www.mystfx.ca/campus/stu-serv/equity/>. Please feel free to talk to me about your

questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor.

Electronics: Although electronic technologies have the potential to enhance learning in certain contexts, recent studies suggest that the use of personal computers and other electronic devices can be detrimental to students' learning. See:

<https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/technology-and-student-distraction>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/laptop-use-lowers-student-grades-experiment-shows-1.1401860>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/04/28/why-students-using-laptops-learn-less-in-class-even-when-they-really-are-taking-notes/>.

For this reason, phones and computers should be turned off and away while class is being held. Some students genuinely require supportive technologies, for instance, a computer to take notes (where handwriting notes is not an option)—in such instances, students should let me know.

Course grades and lecture policy: I do not post/provide my lectures to students. **Students who miss classes are responsible to get missed lecture notes from another student in the class.** I also, do not discuss or provide grades over email.

Students Services

Please refer to the STFX Academic Calendar for a full description of student services and supports. Students can drop a course online, using Banner. Please refer to the calendar of events in order to ensure you process your course drop before the deadline.

Required Reading: Texts available at Curious Cat Café on Main Street

1. Marya, R. and Raj Patel. (2020) *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, NY.
2. Duran, E. (2006). *Healing the soul wound: Counseling with American Indians and other native peoples*. Teachers College Press.
3. Online links have been made available throughout this outline but if those do not work for you, please check to see if readings are available through the STFX library.

Evaluation:

- A. 5 Weekly Reflections: 60% (First 3 worth 10% each, and the last 2 worth 15% each).
Due each week as indicated in the syllabus
- B. Final Exam: 40%

Long Description of Assignments:

A. 5 Weekly Reflections: (First 3 worth /10 each and last two worth 15% each): Due each week as indicated throughout the syllabus.

Under no circumstances will late submissions be accepted for reflections.

Suggested length: Approx. 2 typed double-spaced pages per week

In accordance with the schedule set out in the syllabus below, students are required to submit a reflection which considers the theme examined during the week, indicated. Resources or information external to the course should not be included.

Here's how to approach a reflection:

Using all the resources examined during the select week—the readings assigned, lecture material, guest speaker, class discussion, audio/video etc..., respond to the following:

1. Using the course resources directly, carefully and rigorously explain the main message from the week in terms of an argument. **DO NOT JUST DESCRIBE OR SUMMARISE, POSE YOUR REFLECTION AS AN ARGUMENT.**
2. Do you feel you understand the issue clearly? If so, comment on whether this issue is new to you, or if some aspect of it is new? If you do not fully understand the issue, what aspect is unclear? Please be careful to respond to this question in a deep way—casual or seemingly superficial reflections will not garner positive results. More specifically, simply saying you don't understand something is not useful here if you have not demonstrated effort in working with an idea or topic.
3. Include any further questions, frustrations, thoughts or comments you have about the topic.

Note: Spelling, grammar, tone, word choice, *depth of contemplation* and tone matter are very important in my assessment of your submission. Do not simply provide superficial comments, for these will only result in a marginal score. Be thoughtful, careful and consider the topics and ideas rigorously. The goal of this assignment is to engage meaningfully, and richly with a complex, multifaceted health issue. Formal sourcing of resources is unnecessary-however students must be clear about where they are getting their support from. Students can do this by simply indicating the title of the resource, the theorist, or refer to a lecture, discussion etc..

B. Final Exam (40%) Date TBA

Schedule of Weekly Readings, Tests and Assignments

Week 1: Introductions

Jan. 4th & Jan. 6th **THERE IS NO IN-PERSON CLASS THIS WEEK**

On your own time, please access a video posted on Moodle titled, 'Course Introduction and Syllabus'.

Week 2: Approaching Health Problems as Social Issues

Jan. 11th and Jan. 13th: **IN PERSON CLASSES START NOW**

- Chapter 1: “Imagining health problems as social issues”
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2190/HS.39.3.a>

Week 3: The History of Public Health and Canadian Health Care

Jan. 18th and Jan. 20th

- Canadian Dimension article on birth of Canadian medicare:
<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/the-birth-of-medicare>
- Schafer, A. “Waiting for Romanow: Canadian Values Under Fire”. Available at:
https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/philosophy/ethics/media/Waiting_for_Romanow.pdf

Week 4: The Immune system

Jan. 25th and Jan. 27th

- Introduction and “Chapter 1”, “Immune System” of *Inflamed*.

Week 5: Cancer

Feb. 1st and Feb. 3rd

- Brym, R. “The social bases of cancer”:
<https://archive.org/details/sociologyaslifeo0000brym/page/n5/mode/2up>
- Film: *Pink Ribbon, Inc.* (1.37 hrs)

Start working on Reflection #1: Due Friday, February 10th (Cancer)-Worth 10%

Week 6: Circulatory Systems

Feb. 8th and Feb. 10th

- Chapter 2: *Inflamed*
- Salmon and the trees <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un2yBgIAxYs> (Suzanne Simard 18.3 mins)

Hand in Reflection #1: Friday, February 10th (Cancer)

Start working on Reflection #2: Due Friday February 17th (Circulatory Systems) -Worth 10%

Week 7: Digestive Systems

Feb. 15th and Feb. 17th

- Chapter 3: *Inflamed*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukCFmh2UsYA> (44 mins The Nature of Things: It takes guts)

Hand in Reflection #2: Friday, February 17th (Circulatory Systems)

Start working on Reflection #3: Due Friday, March 3rd (Digestive Systems) -Worth 10%

Week 8: Reading Break: NO CLASSES

Feb. 22nd and Feb. 24th

Week 9: Respiratory Systems

Mar. 1st and Mar. 3rd

- Chapter 4: *Inflamed*

Hand in Reflection #3: Friday, March 3rd (Digestive Systems)

Week 10: Trauma and the Soul Wound

Mar. 8th and Mar. 10th

- Chapters 1-5 of *Healing the Soul Wound*
- Bessel Van Der Kolk on Trauma, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_YApSkqsxM

Start working on Reflection #4: Due Friday, March 17th (Trauma and the Soul Wound)-Worth 15%

Week 11: Reproductive Systems

Mar. 15th and Mar. 17th

- Chapter 5: *Inflamed*

Hand in Reflection #4: Friday, March 17th (Trauma and the Soul Wound)

Week 12: Nervous Systems

Mar. 22nd and Mar. 24th

- Chapter 8: *Inflamed*
- Film: *Fantastic Fungi* (1.20 min)

Start working on Reflection #5: Due (Nervous Systems) -Worth 15%

Week 13: Deep Medicine

Mar. 29th and Mar 31st

- Last chapter: *Inflamed*

Hand in Reflection #5: Friday, March 31st (Nervous Systems)

Week 14: Exam Preparation

- Preparation for final exam (40%)

