**UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS**

**SOCI 3120: SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH & ILLNESS -Fall 2021**

**Instructor:** Associate Professor/Dr. Gül Seçkin

**TA:** Adriane Savage, M.S.

**Class Dates/Location/Time**: Tuesday & Thursday/Life A419/11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

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**Office Hours:** In-person (Tuesday& Thursday 1:00 pm-2:00 pm) and virtual meetings are scheduled as needed.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course will examine how health is a product of a social context. You will explore how health is also a social construct by drawing on the rich contributions of medical sociology and related disciplines (e.g. public health, demography, gerontology, economics, and public policy). The reciprocal dynamics between biomedical science and society will be exposed and debated. You will learn about how diverse societal factors affect our biological functioning and health in multitude of ways. The course will encourage you to consider complex *socio-medical* issues and their unique impact on diverse populations beyond *biomedical approach*. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

1. Identify the pathways and mechanisms through which social context impacts individual health and illness.

2. Identify the ways in which changing social demographics, emerging social trends, and scientific and technological advancements influence the current the field of medical sociology and biomedical practice by health providers.

3. Consider the distinct challenges facing individuals of diverse backgrounds.

**REQUIRED COURSE READINGS**

**(1)** Christakis, N.A. (2020). *Apollos’s Arrow. The Profound and Enduring Impact of Coronavirus on the Way We Live*. Hachette Book Group/Little Brown Spark. ISBN: 978-0-316-62821-1.

**(2)** Cockerham, W. C. & Cockerham, G.B. (2021). *The Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says about the Social*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-367-69330-5.

**(3)** White. K. (2017). *An Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness*. Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4739-8207-9/

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Course schedule specified below is subject to revision as deemed necessary by the professor. Make sure that you are aware of any announcements made on canvas.

**Week 1: Aug. 24-26**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 1: Introduction

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Preface
* **Exercise 1** due on Sunday, August 29, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 2: Aug. 31-Sept. 2**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 2: The Social Construction of Medical Knowledge

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 1: An Infinitesimal Thing

*Reading from the Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says About the Social* by Cockerham

* Introduction to the Covid-19 Pandemic
* **No assignment** due-Enjoy Labor Day weekend

**Week 3: Sept. 7-9**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 3: The Development of the Sociology of Health

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 2: An Old Enemy Returns
* **Exercise 2** due on Sunday, September 12, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 4: Sept. 14-16**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 4: Postmodernity, Epidemiology and Neo-Liberalism

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 3: Pulling Apart
* **Exercise 3** due on Sunday, September 19, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 5: Sept. 21-23**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 5: Materialist Approaches to the Sociology of Health

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 4: Grief, Fear, and Lies

*Reading from the Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says About the Social* by Cockerham

* Chapter 6: Authoritarianism, Outbreaks, and Information Politics
* **No assignment.** Catch up with your work.

**Week 6: Sept. 28- 30**

* **Book Analysis 1** due on Sunday, October 3, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 7: Oct. 5-7**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 6: Parsons, American Sociology of Medicine, and the Sick Role

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 5: Us and Them
* **Exercise 4** due on Sunday, October 10, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 8: Oct. 12-14**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 7: Foucault and the Sociology of Medical Knowledge

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 6: Banding Together
* **Exercise 5** due on Sunday, October 17, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 9: Oct. 19- 21**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 8: Health, Gender and Feminism

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 7: Things Change
* **Exercise 6** due on Sunday, October 17, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 10: Oct. 26-28**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 9: Race, Ethnicity and Health

*Reading from Apollos’s Arrow* by Christakis

* Chapter 8: How Plague Ends
* **Exercise 7** due on Sunday, October 24, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 11: Nov. 2-4**

*Reading from Introduction to the Sociology of Health and Illness by White*

* Chapter 10: Conclusion

*Reading from the Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says About the Social* by Cockerham

* Chapter 9: Ethnic Disparities in Covid-19 Mortality: Are Comorbidities to Blame?
* Chapter 11: Herd Immunity or Suppression Strategy to Combat COVID-19
* **No assignment.** Catch up with your work.

**Week 12: Nov. 9- 11**

* **Book Analysis 2** due on Sunday, November 7, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 13: Nov. 16- 18**

*Reading from the Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says About the Social* by Cockerham

* Chapter 12: Public Health Response to the Initiation and Spread of COVID-19 in the U.S.
* Chapter 13: Characteristics of Persons who Died with COVID-19-U.S.
* Chapter 16: Strong Social Distancing Measures in the U.S. Reduced the COVID-19 Growth Rate.
* **Exercise 8** due on Sunday, November 14, 2021 by 11:59 p.m.

**Week 14: Nov. 23-25** (Thanksgiving Break)

*Reading from the Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says About the Social* by Cockerham

* Chapter 17: Understanding COVID-19 Risks and Vulnerabilities Among Black Communities in America: The Lethal Force of Syndemics
* Chapter 18: Early Signs Indicate that COVID-19 is Exacerbating Gender Inequality in the Labor Force
* **No assignment.** Enjoy Thanksgiving Weekend.

**Week 15: Nov. 30-Dec. 2**

*Reading from the Covid-19 Reader. The Science and What It Says About the Social* by Cockerham

* Chapter 19: Visualizing the Geographic and Demographic Distribution of COVID-19
* Chapter 24: How Pandemic Ends
* **Take-Home Final Exam** due on Tuesday, December 7, 2021 (with a possibility of extension).

**COURSE GRADE COMPONENTS**

(1) *Weekly Critical Thinking Exercises*: In order to encourage critical thinking, you will be responding to questions, most of which will be taken from your course textbooks. There will be eight weekly exercises, each of which will count 40 points towards your course grade. Total points for this component of the course is 320. Detailed instructions for each exercise will be provided on Canvas.

(2) *Book Analysis*: The purpose is to provide you with a practice in critical evaluation of a published research. There will be two analyses. Each analysis will count 75 points. Total points for this component of the course is 150. Detailed instructions for what/how you will prepare your critique will be provided on Canvas.

(3) *Final Exam*: You will implement your knowledge of the course material and your critical thinking skills in response to the questions provided. It will count 130 points towards your course grade. Detailed instructions will be provided on Canvas.

**GRADING**

Total points you can earn in this class is 600. Points you earned will be converted to 100 metric system via Canvas course grade calculation. The following distribution will be used to determine your final course grade:

A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; F: 59 or below

**SPECIFIC COURSE POLICIES**

Success in this class is measured by the degree to which students demonstrate effort, understanding, and critical analysis of the subject matter. All assignments must include the following: • Cover page including title, name, date submitted, course number, course title • One-inch margins • 1.5 spacing • Times New Roman, 12-point font.

**UNT POLICIES**

I recommend you to refer to UNT Policies (regarding withdrawals, student accommodation with health challenges, absence due to athletic events, student misconduct, academic dishonesty and the services). Pertinent Information can be found at the following websites:

<https://disability.unt.edu/>;

<http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>;

<http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/withdrawals>

**Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences.** According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

**ADA Accommodation Statement.** UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at [disability.unt.edu.](http://disability.unt.edu/)

**Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** (Policy 16.004). The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

**Access to Information – Eagle Connect.** Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: [my.unt.edu.](http://www.my.unt.edu/) All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: [eagleconnect.unt.edu/](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/)

**Emergency Notification & Procedures.** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

**Student Evaluation Administration Dates.** Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via *IASystem* Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at [www.spot.unt.edu](http://www.spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

**Retention of Student Records.** Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student’s records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University’s policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

**References and Cross References**.

UNT Policy 04.008, Records Management and Retention

UNT Policy 06.035, Academic Freedom & Academic Responsibility

UNT Policy 06.038, Safety in Instructional Activities

UNT Policy 06.039, Student Attendance and Authorized Absences

UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity

UNT Policy 16.001, Disability Accommodation for Students and Academic Units

UNT Policy 16.005, Sexual Harassment