Research in Social Psychology: The Sociology of Mental Health and Illness
Sociology 448M: Research in Social Psychology
Mondays and Wednesdays 12:30-1:45 p.m.
Fall 2014
Art-Sociology Building, Room 3203

Instructor: Kathleen Denny
Office: Room 4131
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Office phone: 301-405-6428
E-mail address: kdenny@umd.edu

Course Description
What is Mental Illness? How do definitions vary across cultures? Who is likely to become “ill”? What social forces affect stressors people experience, resources they have to fight problems, and the outcomes themselves? How are social factors predictive of labeling? When someone is diagnosed with a mental problem, what are societal reactions to this? How do families get help for relatives with problems, and how do these problems emanate into families and communities? This course, an in-depth overview of sociological approaches to mental health and illness, helps us understand how mental health and illness is strongly created and shaped by social forces.

In the first part of the course, we’ll explore classic and contemporary perspectives on mental health and illness, focusing on key concepts and theories. How social scientists empirically examine mental illness will be considered and students will conduct their own social research to engage in deep analysis of these topics. The class will examine in detail the extent to which these mental health processes are inextricably tied to the social structural inequalities of social class, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and to institutional roles like work, family, and education. Finally, we will focus on the early life course, assessing causes and consequences of children’s and adolescents’ problems.

Course Goals
* Learning and Applying Social Psychological Perspectives on Mental Health and Illness
Social Psychology is the study of how the behavior, thoughts, and emotions of individuals are created and modified by the social and cultural conditions in which they live. Besides the medical or psychiatric model, we’ll consider several social psychological perspectives on mental illness, including social constructionist, structuralist/conflict, and symbolic interactionist.

* Developing Your Sociological Imagination
The Sociological Imagination is the ability to shift our viewpoint from individual circumstances to social patterns. Given the nature of the class material, there is a strong temptation to rely exclusively on your personal experiences with family and friends when thinking about mental health. I value your stories and mine. Yet, as we progress through the semester, we want to increasingly tap into sociological theory and research to understand social patterns related to the mental health. Develop and use your sociological imagination. You’ll be amazed at the insights that you’ll continue to have well beyond the end of this course.

* Doing Social Research
This is an advanced social psychology course with a prerequisite of research methods. You will conduct independent research in this course. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn deeply and more practically speaking, to prepare well for graduate school or the job market. Make the most of it.
**Required Readings:**
Daily lecture notes and/or PowerPoint slides
Various chapters, empirical articles, and video clips

**Course Requirements:**

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Final Grade %</th>
<th>Key Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis &amp; Critique Papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Throughout session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Sketches</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Wednesday, September 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Analysis</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Project</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Friday, December 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Friday, October 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam II</td>
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<td>Friday, October 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam III</td>
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**Major Scheduled Grading Events:** All dates listed immediately above (October 3, October 8, October 29, October 31, and December 19) are considered Major Scheduled Grading Events.

I. Reading and Participation
Reading is imperative. To be successful in this class, it is essential that you keep up with the reading. As you read, be certain you understand the main points of each chapter or article; also focus on making connections among ideas in readings, from lecture, and discussion. Reading assignments are drawn from one textbook and selected academic readings. The book is available for purchase at the UMD Bookstore or the Internet. All remaining articles and reading assignments required for the course will be available on our Canvas course website ([www.elms.umd.edu](http://www.elms.umd.edu)). I will provide most of these articles to you in hard copy. **All reading assignments should be completed by the dates listed on the syllabus.**

Classes include lecture, discussion, films, and participation exercises. I expect you to attend all classes and actively engage in class discussions with thoughtful comments and questions. Class lectures will draw on works outside of your readings and any materials presented in class can appear on the exams. Participation exercises are designed to aid your learning, which in turn prepares you for discussions, assignments, and exams. The nature of the participation exercises varies but may include small-group exercises, comprehension quizzes, and formulation of discussion questions. Class participation exercises (10 percent of your course grade) are graded on a scale from 0 to 3 where 0 = fail, 1 = low pass (C), 2 = pass (B), and 3 = high pass (A).

II. Film Analysis
We will analyze concepts in the sociology of mental health through film. You have two options for this assignment. You can either find a film clip of your choice (approx. 5-10 minutes long) or you can conduct an analysis on the film we watch in class, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (OFOCN).* Either way, you will examine how the film/clip illuminates and/or extends a concept in the sociology of mental health, such as the social construction of illness, medicalizing, labeling, support resources, social support, mattering, help seeking, and so on. Your analysis is a 3-4 page write up, 1) discussing the context of and briefly summarizing the clip, 2) clearly defining the concept you use, and 3) discussing in detail your application of the concept --- that is, how it is illuminated and perhaps extends our understanding of the concept through the video material. We will all watch and discuss *OFOCN* (partly in class, partly as homework) whether you write on it or not.
II. Synthesis and Critique Papers
You will write two Synthesis and Critique (S&C) papers over the course of semester. S&C papers are 2-page (typed double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) papers in which you a) thematically synthesize the readings we have done for that topic area and b) provide a critique of one or more of the readings in that area. Critiques may be methodological or substantive in nature or may outline an agenda for future research in the area. There are six opportunities to write S&C papers, denoted with an asterisk (*) below. You must submit one in the first set of three and one in the second set of three (in other words, choose one from the 1 – 3 set and one from the 4 – 6 set...this helps both of us distribute things more evenly). You do not need to indicate in advance which weeks you choose to write on – just be sure you have submitted two (1, 2, or 3 AND 4, 5, or 6) S&C papers (10 percent of your course grade, 5 percent each) by the end of the semester. Be prepared to lead discussion of the articles in class for the days you choose to write.

III. Research Project
The research project is the capstone of this course. You will conduct all the phases of original research just as professional social scientists do – formulating a question, situating your study in the literature, finding or collecting data, analyzing your findings, and writing and presenting results. You will have the opportunity to conduct either a quantitative or qualitative project, depending on your interests and methodological preferences. If you choose a quantitative project, you will use one wave of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health, for short) and conduct a multivariate regression analysis on a topic that is of interest to you based on the available data. If you choose a qualitative project, you will conduct an interview study on mental health networks – that is, the relatives, friends, and/or care providers of those with mental health problems. You will analyze your data using concepts we learn in class. Everyone, whether you choose a quantitative or qualitative project, will write a full length (approx. 15-20 pages) research paper with an introduction, literature review, methods section, results section, and conclusion. Elements of the project will be due throughout the semester, and the final draft will be due to me on December 12th. Each person will also present her/his research to the class in a 10 minute presentation. More detailed information about the project will be handed out during the course.

IV. Exams
There will be three exams in this class. All three will be in-class exams consisting of short answer and essay-type questions. The exams are scheduled for October 3, October 31, and December 19. Together these three exams are worth a total of 35 percent of your course grade. Exams are cumulative in the sense that concepts introduced early on will be used throughout the course. To prepare adequately requires that you read the materials thoroughly, take notes, and are able to integrate readings, lectures and discussions.

Absence and Late Work Policies
In the event of an absence, do not ask me for notes or to recap the discussion - it is your responsibility to consult with another student to obtain a complete set of notes and to find out about any assignments that you may have missed. Although occasionally you will have a printer problem, mild illness, traffic delays, etc., these are not university-authorized reasons for being late to class, missing class or turning in assignments late. Plan accordingly by arriving on campus early and doing your work completely before the due dates and times.

According to University policy, students are allowed one medically necessitated excused absence per semester on days that are not considered Major Scheduled Grading Events (listed above); only a self-signed note is required to be considered excused on that day. Additional or prolonged absences or absences that occur on Major Scheduled Grading Events due to illness require documentation of the
illness from the Health Center or from an outside health care provider. For illnesses, pink slips from the health center are not acceptable. For other university-authorized excuses for missing class (including a dependent’s illness, religious observance, participation in university activities at the request of the university, etc.), it must be documented in writing and turned in the following class period (for missed in-class exercises) or attached to your late assignment for consideration. See the undergraduate course catalog at http://www.umd.edu/catalog/ for details.

Participation exercises will not be announced ahead of time and cannot be made up without a university-authorized excuse for missing class. Similarly, exams cannot be made up without a documented university-authorized excuse. If you do end up missing a graded in-class exercise or exam because of an authorized absence, I will work with you individually to schedule a make-up session.

All papers, including S&C papers, the film analysis, and final research project, will be penalized one-third of a letter grade (e.g., B- to C+) for each weekday the paper is late, up to two whole letter grades. Papers are due in class at the beginning of class; those turned in after class begins on the due date are considered one day late. This means that if you are late to class that day, your paper is also late. Late papers must be time/date stamped in the main sociology office (Art-Soc 2112, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday) and put in my mailbox in order to be considered.

**Grading**

In conjunction with the University of Maryland grading scale, the following letter grades, including plusses as minuses, will be awarded:

- **F**: failure to understand the subject and unsatisfactory performance (below 60%)
- **D**: borderline understanding of the subject and marginal performance (60-69%)
- **C**: acceptable mastery of the subject and the usual achievement expected (70-79%)
- **B**: good mastery of the subject and good scholarship (80-89%)
- **A**: excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship (90-100%)

*Beginning Fall 2012, the University implemented the plus-minus grading policy which assigns differential point values to the ‘+’ and ‘-’ designations for letter grades.*

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<tr>
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**Academic Integrity**

As part of a community of scholars, as well as a moral community which is responsible for the integrity of scholastic work, you are required to uphold the University of Maryland code of academic integrity. Cheating or any form of academic dishonesty usually results in a permanent grade of “F/dishonesty” for the course. Written documents regarding absences or late assignments that contain false information are considered academic dishonesty cases and will be handled accordingly.

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. These are defined by the Code of Academic Integrity as follows:
Cheating: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Fabrication: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitation: intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of the Code of Academic Integrity.

Plagiarism: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.

For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf

In accordance with university policy, on every written assignment and exam, you must write by hand the following honor pledge at the top of your work:

“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/exam” and sign your name.

If you refuse to sign the pledge, write the reason at the top of the assignment. This is in accordance with the University of Maryland policy.

CourseEvalUM
Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. CourseEvalUM will be open for you to complete your evaluations for courses at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing online at Testudo, the evaluation reports for the thousands of courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented physical or learning disability, necessary accommodations will be made. Contact me within the first week of class to discuss this.

Screen-Free Zone

Turn off all electronic devices, including cell phones, laptops, iPads, iPods, etc. prior to the start of class. This is a rare time of focused, shared discussion. If you have a documented need to use a computer or other electronic device during class, necessary accommodations will be made. Contact me to discuss this within the first week of class.
Course Outline and Readings
subject to change; (*articles for S&C papers)

Sept. 3: Introduction to the Sociology of Mental Health and Illness
Introductions and syllabus review
Projects: Overview and Ethics

Sept. 5: What is Mental Illness? Medical versus Social Models
McLeod & Wright (M&W), Part I: Definitions of Mental Illness
Conrad, Peter. “Medical Model of Madness: The Emergence of Mental Health”

Sept. 10: What is Mental Illness? Medical versus Social Models
McLeod & Wright, Part I: Definitions of Mental Illness
Bruce, Martha Livingston. “Mental Illness as Psychiatric Disorder.”
Kleinman, Arthur. “What is a Psychiatric Diagnosis?”
Projects: Central Issues in the Research Process

Sept. 12: Sociological Perspectives on MI: Social Construction of Mental Illness
McLeod & Wright, Part I: Definitions of Mental Illness
Conrad, Peter. “The Discovery of Hyperkinesis”

Sept. 17: Sociological Perspectives on MI: Social Construction of Mental Illness*
Horwitz 2011. “Creating an Age of Depression.” SMH.
Projects: Measurement Issues
Project Proposal Sketches due (give participation grade)
S&C #1 due
Guest lecturer: Joanna Pepin

Sept. 19: Issues in Measurement, Diagnoses and Epidemiology of Psychiatric Disorder

Sept. 24: Issues in Measurement, Diagnoses and Epidemiology of Psychiatric Disorder*
Projects: Emotional issues
S&C #2 due
**Sep. 26: Prevalence and Patterns of Mental Illness**  
McLeod & Wright, Part II: Prevalence and Patterns of Mental Illness  
Switzer, Galen E., Mary Amanda Dew, and Evelyn J. Bromet. “Issues in Mental Health Assessment.”

**Oct. 1: Prevalence and Patterns of Mental Illness**  
Horwitz, Allan V. and Jerome C. Wakefield. “The Epidemic in Mental Illness: Clinical Fact or Survey Artifact?”  
Exam Review

**Oct. 3: Exam I**  
Exam I, in class

**Oct. 8: Mental Illness, Family, and Social Networks**  
McLeod & Wright, Part VI: Mental Illness, The Family, and Society  
Projects: Preliminary Issues and Questions

Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due

**Oct. 10: Mental Illness, Family, and Social Networks**  
Schulze and Angermeyer 2003  
SMH.  
Interview Question Writing Workshop

**Oct. 15: Sociological Perspectives on MI: Stress Process (Structuralist/Conflict) Models**  
McLeod & Wright, Part III: The Social Origins of Mental Health and Illness  
Mirowsky, John and Catherine E. Ross. “Sex Differences in Distress: Real or Artifact?”  
Lee and Turney 2012. “Investigating the Relationship between Perceived Discrimination, Social Status, and Mental Health.” SMH.

**Oct. 17: Sociological Perspectives on MI: Stress Process (Structuralist/Conflict) Models**  
Tausig, Mark and Rudy Fenwick. “Recession and Well-Being.”  
S&C #3 due

**Oct. 22: Social Perspectives on Mental Illness: Interactionist models**  
McLeod & Wright, Part IV: Stigma and the Social Dimensions of the Experience of Mental Illness  
Link, Bruce et al. “A Modified Labeling Theory Approach to Mental Disorders: An Empirical Assessment.”  
Karp, David. “Illness and Identity.”
Oct. 24: Social Perspectives on Treatment of Mental Illness
McLeod and Wright, Part V: The History and Social Organization of Mental Health Policy and Treatment
Rothman, David J. “The New World of the Asylum.”
Drunk History clip; First 45 minutes of One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest

Oct. 29: Media and Mental Illness
Clarke 2010
Finish OFOCN as homework (streaming on Canvas)
Film Analysis due (either OFOCN analysis or film clip of your choosing)
OFOCN discussion and individual presentations

Oct. 31: Exam II
Exam II

Nov. 5: The Early Life Course: Social Causes & Consequences of Distress in Childhood*
S&C #4 due

Nov. 7: Early Life Course: Social Causes & Consequences of Distress in Adolescence*
S&C #5 due

Nov. 12: The Early Life Course: Social Causes & Consequences of Distress in Childhood (slight out of order)
Guest Speaker: Dr. Pamela Pine, Stop the Silence

Nov. 14: Social Causes & Consequences of Distress, Stressful Life Events*
Silver, Eric and Brent Teasdale. “Mental Disorder and Violence: An Examination of Stressful Life Events and Impaired Social Support.”
S&C #6 due

Nov. 19: Independent work on research projects
Finish collecting data, conduct analyses, and begin writing paper (due in 2.5 weeks)

**Nov. 21: OFF, Thanksgiving Break**

**Nov. 26: Wild Card**
TBD

**Dec. 3, 5, and 10: Presentations of Research Papers**
Class presentations (approx.. 10 minutes each)

**Dec. 12: Wrap-Up and Review**
Wrap-Up and review for Final Exam
*Research papers due at the beginning of class, 12:30pm*

**Dec. 19: Final Exam**
Final Exam, 8:00-10:00am, Room 3203