Course Description: This course applies a sociological approach to medical culture and the medical profession. Medical sociology emerged as a distinct field of study in the 1950s in part due to prominent studies of medical education such as *The Student Physician* by Robert K. Merton and Howard Becker’s *Boys in White*. Since then, sociologists and other social scientists have written extensively about how issues of race, gender, aging and ethnicity are tied to issues of medical education, medical training, medical socialization and physician decision-making. Using a life course perspective, this course will examine how lives in medicine change over time; in particular, we’ll study changing workforce patterns, physician satisfaction, and burnout. Other topics to be covered include contemporary ethical issues and alternative professional health careers. The course provides an overview of how medicine and medical practice have a profound influence on—and are influenced by—social, cultural, political and economic forces. In short, you’ll become familiar with how scholars outside of medicine cast a sociological gaze on the profession.

Course Requirements: To complete this course, you must satisfy the following requirements.

1. **Attendance and Participation**—worth 20% of your grade. Because this is a seminar course, your presence and active participation are required for success. I’m interested in how you react to the material and how it fits with, challenges or extends what you already know. I’m interested in developing and fine-tuning our sociological perspectives and I believe this happens best through interaction. Finally, I’m interested in your intellectual growth, not your ability to memorize material, and have designed the course with emphasis on the former.

2. **Presentation/Discussion**—worth 15% of your grade. Students will pair up (in the case of an odd number, one group may have 3 presenters) to present readings and lead discussion during the course.

3. **Short Papers**—worth 60% of your grade. You will write three papers. Each will require a rough draft and a final draft.

4. **Final Reflection**—worth 5% of your grade.

"MEDICINE is the most distinguished of all the arts, but through the ignorance of those who practice it, and of those who casually judge such practitioners, it is now of all the arts by far the least esteemed."

Hippocrates
460-377 B.C.
REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:


The other required readings will be available via Blackboard.

Tentative Course Schedule of Topics and Readings

**Week One, May 12-16**

Learning Sociology, Reading Physicians
Sociology 101: Structural, Systematic and Critical
  -Applied to Doctors:

**A Short History of Medicine**
  -Dittrick Medical Museum

**A Short History of Medical Sociology**
  -Unique Contributions

**The Sociology of Medicine as A Profession**
  -How does the profession maintain and control expertise?
    -professional authority, training for uncertainty, medical socialization

**A Sociology of Medical Education**

Early Career
Medical School Experiences
Medical Specialty Choice
Residency
Practice Setting Choice
Practice Setting

Friday Movie: *The Doctor*

Paper #1 Due at start of class on Friday.

**Week One Readings**

Hafferty, Frederic. “Reconfiguring the Sociology of Medical Education: Emerging Topics and Pressing Issues.”
Week Two: May 19-23

Understanding the Health of Patients: A Sociological Perspective

Improving the Health of Society: What role the physician?
-Poverty Medicine

Mid Career
Work/life issues; professional growth and development; full-time vs. part-time; decision-making; overwhelm; burnout; suicide; physician satisfaction and health.

A Note on Alternative Careers

FRIDAY Movie: Miss Evers’ Boys

Paper #2 Due at start of class on Friday.

Week Two Readings

Farmer, Paul. Infections and Inequalities. (Excerpt)
Hinze, Susan. Am I Being Oversensitive?
McCord and Freeman: “Excess Mortality in Harlem”
Takakuwa, Rubashkin and Herzig: Part II: Shifting Identities.
Wilkinson: Mortality Rates: The Impact of Inequality.

Week Three: May 26-30
Tuesday Movie: *Wit*

**The Doctor-Patient Relationship**

**Late Career Issues**
Work/life issues; Decision-making; Ethical dilemmas; Malpractice; Career Change; Retirement

Thursday: Panel Discussion with Real, Live Physicians

**The Future of Medicine and What it Means for YOU**

มวล Week Three Readings


Mechanic, David: “Physician Discontent: Challenges and Opportunities.”


Stone, Deborah. “_doctoring as a business: money, markets and managed care._”

Takakuwa, Rubashkin and Herzig: Part III: _Confronted._

Waitzkin: “Changing Patient-Physician Relationships in the Changing Health-Policy Environment”


⇒⇒⇒⇒ ⇒⇒⇒⇒ Paper #3 Due between Friday, May 30 and Monday, June 2nd (Noon)