AS/SOSC 2101.30

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

YEAR
FALL 2015

YORK UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
Department of Social Science
HEALTH AND SOCIETY PROGRAMME

PROFESSOR
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S 708 Ross / Tel. 736-5054 ext. 33298
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores challenging global Health issues and analyses them from a critical standpoint using the political economy as a theoretical framework. It covers the social, economic and environmental factors of health and discusses the constructions of health definitions and the health–illness process. Special attention is given to the Health Transitions in Industrial Societies, Environmental Health and the Medical Industrial Complex. It provides also introductory notions of the Health Systems in the Western World.

CONTENT

- SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS AND THE HEALTH-ILLNESS PROCESS
- CONSTRUCTIONS OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS
- THE BIOMEDICAL MODEL
- THE MEDICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

REQUIRED READING MATERIAL

KIT is sold by York University Book Store (York Lanes).

- KIT Social Science 2101.03, The Political Economy of Health: International Perspectives, (Fall 2015).

IMPORTANT BOOK FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL PROJECT:


NOTE: It is your responsibility to follow the course guidelines!!
# ASSIGNMENTS AND SCHEDULE

## ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>DATESLINES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 READINGS ASSIGNMENT (*) (See template on Webpage)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>According to schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 READINGS ASSIGNMENT (*) (See template on Webpage)</td>
<td>Additional No grade</td>
<td>According to schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 QUESTIONS ONE PAGE ASSIGNMENT (**) (See template on Webpage)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>According to schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUMMARY (team of two-work): Topic, Goals and Research Objectives (1 page) (***)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>September 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>RESEARCH PROPOSAL (team of two-work): (Complete work)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>November 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION SEMINAR (Team of two)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>According to schedule</td>
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<td>PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Throughout term</td>
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(*) You can choose the Readings from the Syllabus. However each Reading Assignment and Questions Assignments needs to be presented in class the day allocated for the reading or before. Late assignments will not be accepted.

(**) You CAN NOT use the same reading for both assignments. The assignments are typed using the template (My remarks File) that you can download from the Web page: http://www.yorku.ca/jlwolff/

(***) Professor will accept individual grading if demanded. Professor could request a personal discussion on the submitted research proposal work.
VERY IMPORTANT NOTES:

You decide which will be the 3 Reading Assignments and 2 Questions Assignments you wish to be graded on.

You need to complete the following Assignments:

- 3 Reading Assignments (for grade)
- 2 Questions Assignments (for grade)
- 1 Reading used for your presentation (you can not submit and assignment on this reading)
- 10 (Non Graded) Competent Reading Assignments

Penalties: For each required Reading or Question assignment not submitted you will be penalized with 2 points on the Final grade.

Bonus: If you complete all of the above plus 3 additional competent Reading assignments (total of 19) you will receive 3 bonus points on the Final Grade. If you complete all of the above plus 5 additional competent Reading assignments (total of 21) you will receive 5 bonus points on the Final Grade.

(*) Competent = Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and understanding with considerable skill in using them to

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IMPORTANT:

The use of Notebooks and any other electronic equipment is NOT permitted and will be penalized.

Cell phones and texting devices are obviously not allowed and must be turned off prior to entering classroom.
Reference

Keywords
1. Medical pluralism  
2. Los Naturistas  
3. Urban Bolivia  
4. Indian, Mestizo, white  
5. Traditional vs. biomedicine  
6. Explanatory models

Thesis, main arguments and debatable issues
Thesis: Authors argue that the Los Naturistas, a group of healers in urban Bolivia, offer tremendously valuable health care to the Indian and Mestizo populations of the country in a pluralistic system already offering services from traditional and professional sectors.

Main Arguments: The Los Naturistas represent the Mestizo population of Bolivia and believe in the Andean tradition that a person’s health is determined by the ‘hotness’, ‘coldness’, ‘dryness’ or ‘dampness’ of his/her body which is affected by the environment. Los Naturistas incorporate both traditional and modern techniques in order to ensure that a patient receives appropriate care.

Debatable Issues: The Los Naturistas incorporate both traditional and modern techniques in their healing, but as a result, they often have to consider a multitude of factors causing a single illness. From a biomedical perspective, this may present complications to the diagnosis and treatment of a person’s condition; to a naturopath, this may allow for a more holistic understanding.

Personal comments/opinions
I was surprised by the extent of research that was covered in this article on the Los Naturistas of Bolivia. We do not always have to be dualistic in terms of maintaining our health, choosing one system over another, but can be holistic. This is an interesting concept because it challenges the notion of medical pluralism.

My questions for further inquiry. Note: Expand in the case of Questions Assignment
1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of pluralistic medical care and how would your response change if practices from different sectors were combined rather than divided?
2. Would we incorporate aboriginal health practices as a ‘traditional’ method or use those of other ethnic groups who have immigrated to this country?
3. Is it not possible that with the rise of ‘Western’ diseases, such as coronary heart disease and leukemia, the Los Naturistas needed ‘Western’ medical care even if they did not agree with it?
**QUESTIONS ASSIGNMENT** (Example) (1 page)

DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE FROM WEB PAGE: http://www.yorku.ca/jlwolff/

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**My questions for further inquiry. Note: Expand in the case of Questions Assignment**

1. In the article, authors present medical pluralism as a system that offers people with a choice in terms of how they wish to receive health care. But are there other reasons for implementing this system over one which is singular in nature? What are the advantages and disadvantages of pluralistic medical care and how would your response change if practices from different sectors were combined rather than divided?

2. In Bolivia, the Los Naturistas incorporate traditional and modern medical techniques in their diagnosis and treatment of patients, but would this philosophy in health apply as successfully to the health care system found in Canada when we have so many different cultures, customs and traditions to contend with? Would we incorporate aboriginal health practices as a ‘traditional’ method or use those of other ethnic groups who have immigrated to this country?

3. In the article, the Los Naturistas had already incorporated biomedical knowledge into their traditional practices and beliefs, but where did this knowledge come from and why was it accepted? Was there resistance or were their hands tied? Is it not possible that with the rise of ‘Western’ diseases, such as coronary heart disease and leukemia, the Los Naturistas needed ‘Western’ medical care even if they did not agree with it?

4. You need a fourth question …..

5. You need a fifth question ….
VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: You are doing a Research PROPOSAL related to one or more Readings listed for this course and NOT a Research or Essay.

Work requirements. Please revise carefully the format (below):

The research topic and goals

General Research topics will be discussed in class.
(Your goal is the purpose: what you want to achieve)

The research objectives. (PURPOSE AND CONCRETE ISSUES)
(The objectives are the concrete and specific issues you would like to study. Be very specific)

The hypothesis and questions. (YOUR HYPOTHESIS AND QUESTIONS)
(Present a set of relevant questions you would like to work on. These questions should be related to your research objectives. Prepare (3) three hypotheses you would like to test. An hypothesis is a formal research statement to prove right or wrong. Note that a good hypothesis can be proved either right or wrong.)

The rationale/justification of the research objectives and hypothesis (WHY?)
(Explain why you think that your objectives and hypothesis are interesting and deserve to be tested and why your objectives are important and valid research targets)

The methodology you will use for your work. (HOW?) (WHERE IS THE DATA?)
(Explain how you are going to undertake your work. Indicate, the instruments for collecting data (use of primary or secondary sources), the empirical instruments to be used if applicable, etc.)

An accurate bibliography and data sources. (HOW MUCH I KNOW ALREADY?)
(Compile 12 sources and choose 3 to write a one paragraph annotation that explains why you think this would be a key source to use. Use: APA Style)

Final Comments: (WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCE?)
(Write a one page articulated comment, avoiding generalities, on your experience and NOT on the work content. Remember that you learn more from your mistakes)
Research Proposal Format (Team work = 10 pages)

Papers should be typed in Arial 12, using 1.5 spacing. Justify (align) **BOTH** left and right margins.

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<tr>
<td><strong>The research topic and goal:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selection of questions and a three (3) Research hypothesis</strong></td>
<td><strong>The rationale</strong></td>
<td><strong>The rationale</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(Field and purpose of your study)</td>
<td>(An hypothesis is a formal statement to be tested)</td>
<td>(The justification of the research objectives and hypothesis) (You will use bibliographical references for supporting arguments)</td>
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<th>Page 9</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The methodology</strong></td>
<td><strong>An accurate bibliography</strong></td>
<td><strong>Three annotated references</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Comments:</strong></td>
<td>Extra page if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(How you will do the work and where you will get the information)</td>
<td>(12 original and academic sources)</td>
<td>(Why these 3 readings are useful for your Research)</td>
<td>What did you learn from your work experience?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No generalities</td>
<td>Note: Peer review references only. Academic publications.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Be specific and articulated. Write about yourself and not about the content of the work.</td>
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I strongly advise students to consult NEUTENS, James & RUBINSON, Laurna, Research Techniques for the Health Sciences, Benjamin Cummings, 2002. RESERVE at Scott Library.
The **Discussion Seminar: Moderators** (30 minutes). The moderators will do the following:

a) Present a **very brief summary** of the given and scheduled Reading: (Only 5 minutes will be allowed).

b) Bring forward **Questions** for discussion seminar (maximum 20 minutes): determine a number of questions and issues arising from the article and submit to class for open discussion. You will be responsible for the group discussion.

c) Conclude, presenting your points for further inquiry and criticism (5 minutes)

There will be two or three Readings Discussion Seminars scheduled weekly

**Important Notes:**

1. The team will be evaluated according to its capacity to briefly present the work and to stimulate a rich and dynamic discussion seminar.

2. The **weekly schedule** of Discussion Seminars will be defined at the beginning of the term and will be determined for the whole duration of the term.

3. I strongly recommend sending yourself your presentation as an attachment in case you have technical problems when reading your memory key.

4. The only material allowed for distribution in class is the list of questions for discussion.

5. Send me your presentation using **ONLY** the following format for the file name and the subject matter of your email: PP3101(2013).Short title. Your last names.

PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION: Students are expected not only to attend but to truly participate in lectures and Discussion Seminars. Participation represents an important 25% of the final grade. Commitment, preparation and active participation are important ingredients for a shared learning experience. Questions are always welcome.

Note: Please do not misunderstand the concepts of Attendance and Participation. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend ALL lectures, arrive on time and leave at the end of lecture time. However only attending lectures does not mean that you are necessarily an active student and that you will receive a good participation grade.

I wish you a successful year at York. Please remember that I am always available to answer your questions or provide further counsel in your academic work.

Please feel free to drop in at my office at anytime AM or PM or better, to make an appointment.

Office location:
South Ross Building - Office 708 (7th Floor)

Telephone: 736-2100 ext. 33298 (office)
E-mail: jlwolff@yorku.ca
IMPORTANT NOTES:

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY / PLAGIARISM

At the beginning of the reading KIT there is a University policy statement on Academic Dishonesty. Please read the statement very carefully and make sure you are VERY CLEAR about what constitutes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Explanations will be given in class at which time any question you have about it can be raised. **The direct insertion of material from literature or electronic sources without paraphrasing or attributing it to the author (including another student paper) constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious offence.**

“I didn’t know” or “I didn’t understand” do not constitute mitigating circumstances for the offence, so please be sure you understand what constitutes plagiarism so you do not unwittingly engage in it. The penalty for such academic dishonesty at York normally involves a grade "0" and a confidential note in the student’s file.

Assignments policy

Please make note now of the dates of all assignments, tests and exams. Students who miss an assignment, test or exam must provide a valid medical certificate in order to be eligible for a make-up.

Withdrawal from the course without academic penalty

Please take notes of the University dates to withdraw from the course without academic penalty. It is your responsibility to follow the regulations, policies and stipulated dates to avoid failing the course.

- Any petition for reappraisal of grades should be submitted in writing directly to the instructor.

Note:

It is requested that all students registered in the course attain a York University email account (name@yorku.ca)

A York email account will allow you to access the resources of York’s libraries.
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Week 1  (September 15)

• Organization
• Logistic
• Course Planning
• Assignments
• Concepts and definitions

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH

Week 2  (September 22)

• The Political Economy of Health & Course Planning update


Week 3  (September 29)


SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS AND THE HEALTH-ILLNESS PROCESS

• Health patterns
• Social factors of health and illness
• Comparative analysis
• Social class and culture
• Variations in Mortality and Morbidity

Week 4  (October 6)


Week 5 (October 13)


Week 6 (October 20)


CONSTRUCTIONS OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS AND THE BIOMEDICAL MODEL

- Concepts and definitions
- Role of medicine
- Bio-Medical Model
- Health Care Ethics
- Role of technology

Week 7 (October 27)

10) TONG Rosemarie, New Perspectives in Health Care Ethics, (2007), Pearson, Prentice Hall, Chapter 4: Biological Givens or Social Constructions, pages 61-79


Week 8 (November 3)


Week 9 (November 10)


Week 10 (November 17)


THE MEDICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

- The Pharmaceutical Industry
- Strategies Marketing and Advertising

Week 11 (November 24)


Week 12 (December 1)


REFERENCE READING FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL WORK