Course Description: This course is intended as an overview of the contributions which medical sociologists have made to our understanding of the determinants of health and well-being, the organization and implications of medical care, and the intersections between social changes in society and in medicine. We will be focusing primarily on health and medicine in the United States, although some of your readings will provide comparisons with other countries to broaden our perspective.

This is a graduate level class. The Sociology Department policy is that qualified undergraduate students may take 5000-level classes, but they will be held to the same expectations as the graduate students in the course. Students in this course should expect to be held to a high level of expectations in terms of written work and class participation.

Readings: Social Determinants of Health (1999) by Michael Marmot and Richard G. Wilkinson and Understanding Health Policy: A Clinical Approach (3rd Edition) (2002) by Thomas S. Bodenheimer and Kevin Grumbach. Additional readings will be made available through the course website or handed out in class. All students are expected to come to class having read the material assigned for that day and to be prepared to discuss the topic(s) of the day.

Article Reviews: Every student will be required to write a review on an article they identify which addresses social group differences in physical or mental health. These research reviews will be due by 5pm on Wednesday Sept. 11th and worth 25 points toward your final grade. Copies of your article review will be made available to all other members of the class (with your name removed). Instructions for the review will be given out in class.

Lit Review Paper: Every student will be required to write a literature review on social inequalities in health based on the articles reviewed by the class members for the article review assignment. The articles and reviews will be made available to each student. This assignment is due by 5:00pm on Wednesday, Sept. 25th and worth 50 points toward your final grade.

Beyond the Classroom: Students are expected to complete one of the following options during the course of the semester. Each of the options should result in a paper 2-3 pages long, typed, 12-point font, and one-inch margins. This assignment is due on Nov. 14th and worth 50 points toward your final grade.

1) Do participant observation in a health care setting (hospital, rehab center, doctor’s office, etc). Write a report on what you witnessed. Your report should focus on a particular issue/question: dr/pt. interactions, the bureaucratization of health care, gender and medicine. Draw from course material in your analysis.

2) Interview a health care professional (dr. nurse, pt, ot, etc.) or health administrator on how managed care has affected their everyday work. Prepare questions in advance and be sure to treat them professionally (Remember, this may be an opportunity to get a foot in the door). Draw from course material in your analysis.

3) Do a content analysis of health intervention materials. Collect at least 5 brochures or other intervention materials (videos, self-help books, etc) geared toward educating patients on a particular health condition. What kinds of messages are they using to
change people’s behavior (fear, family responsibility, the “manly” thing to do, etc)? To what population are they targeting their intervention? What percentage of those with this condition are represented by this population? Draw from course material in analyzing these materials.

4) Develop another option and discuss it with the professor.

**Semester Project:**

Every student will choose a semester-long project in which s/he is interested in engaging, worth a total of 150 points toward the final grade. There are generally three options for these semester-long projects. Students with ideas which are variations on these options are invited to discuss them with the professor. I encourage you to choose an option and topic which is both interesting and useful to you.

1) A Literature Review Paper
2) A Research Proposal
3) A Research Paper

Specific guidelines will be given out in class on these options. All of these options will result in an interim product at least 5 pages long due October 17th (25 points), a final written product which is approximately 15-20 pages (but may be longer) and due by the end of the day on Monday, December 9th (100 points), and a final presentation which will be approximately 20 minutes long followed by discussion/questions (25 points). Students should schedule a time to meet with the professor to discuss the option they are interested in and the specific topic of their work. These meetings must be completed by the end of the day on September 26th. Students will sign up for end-of-the-semester presentation days on October 24th.

**Paper Feedback:**

Every student in the class will be expected to comment on the interim product of another student in the class (25 points) which they will receive on October 17th. The feedback partner should make corrections on the paper itself (if appropriate) and type up at least one page of comments which identify strengths and weaknesses of the paper with suggestions for improvement. This feedback should be constructive in nature and signed by the author. The paper and comments should be turned in to the professor no later than 5:00pm on Tuesday, October 22nd. They will then be returned with the graded paper to the author on October 24th.

**Reflections:**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate actively in the discussion. This requires advance reading and thinking about the course material. Periodically in class I will ask you to take a few minutes to write your reflections on the readings for the day. These will be graded on a pass/fail system. These reflections will be worth a total of 25 points toward your final grade. You may miss one reflection for any reason.

**ASA Style:**

Unless specifically given approval to do otherwise, students are required to use the American Sociological Association style in their written work. This style is described in the American Sociological Review February and August issues and available on the course website.

**Final Grade:**

I grade on a ten-point scale. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article Review</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the Classroom Assignment</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Feedback</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>325</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = 293+ points, B = 260 - 292, C = 228 - 291, D = 195 - 227, F = 194 and below