

Soci 419.05, Technoscience and Biomedicalization, Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Ariel Ducey

Office Hours: Mondays 9:30-10:30 and by appointment

Office: Social Sciences Bldg, Room 938

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www.soci.ucalgary.ca

Course Overview

This course examines contemporary developments in the understanding of, and response to, health and illness. In particular, we will consider the implications of “technoscience” and “biomedicalization” for how such understandings and responses are changing. Much of the course reading focuses on knowledge and practices in genetics, such as preimplantation genetic diagnosis and population screening for genetic illness, but we will also read about additional issues such as the growing use of drugs/pharmaceuticals and medical interventions that are used to enhance health (rather than merely treat disease). Nonetheless, a scientific background is not necessary to be successful in the course.

Above all, the course seeks to theorize contemporary developments in health and illness by considering how biomedicalization and technoscience may affect the fundamental features of our society, including how we define ourselves as members of that society and are governed by it. Therefore, we will spend some time discussing Foucault’s concept of biopower and will consider and compare a number of different interpretative viewpoints on developments in technoscience and biomedicalization.

The questions that anchor this course, and can guide a reading of the material, are:

- 1) How are boundaries between the normal and abnormal, healthy and ill, drawn? What role does medicine play in drawing those boundaries? How are those boundaries changing because of technoscience and biomedicalization?
- 2) How do developments in our understanding of, and response to, health and illness change possible identities and subjectivities?
- 3) What are the implications of contemporary biomedicine and technoscience for various forms of inequality and suffering?
- 4) To what extent are understandings of, and responses to, health and illness shaped by economic interests?
- 5) What are the relationships between science, technology and society?

Readings

- 1) There are two books for this course, available in the University of Calgary bookstore:
 - a) Sarah Franklin and Celia Roberts, *Born and Made*, Princeton University Press, 2006.
 - b) Barbara Katz Rothman, *The Book of Life*, Beacon Press, 2001. [Also available in hardcover as *Genetic Maps and Human Imaginations*, Norton, 1998].
- 2) There are also a number of assigned articles and book excerpts that will be made available to students.

Class members are expected to read about 50-100 pages per week, depending on the difficulty of the text. Readings must be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned. Longer readings and books will be divided over several days. I may add, omit, or change some readings during the semester as needed. Any changes in the course schedule will be announced in class and class members are responsible for finding out about such changes in the event of absence.

Participation

As a 400-level course with a smaller number of students, participation in class will be expected. This is a rare opportunity at the undergraduate level to practice articulating ideas and questions in a scholarly setting, and excellent preparation for those going on to graduate study.

Students must come to class having read the assigned texts and classmates' critique sheets (discussed below). Students must also come to class prepared to discuss particular questions or issues I ask you to consider in advance (by doing the reading and identifying relevant points and sections of the text).

Members of the class can make a constructive and substantial contribution to class discussion in several ways: by posing relevant questions to classmates in the seminar (or the instructor); being forthright about what you find to be confusing in the readings (though make some effort to think through any problems before class); sharing your epiphanies; and drawing upon the texts and readings to steer the conversation in productive directions. I recognize that not everything you say will deserve to be preserved; the point is for you to practice verbalizing ideas, including what you understand and what you do not. Conversation is also essential to good writing: the more experience you have hearing and responding to others' ideas, the more you will be able to anticipate those ideas in your writing and construct thorough arguments.

Quality of participation will be given more weight than quantity, but regular participation is expected. I will provide students with their in-progress participation grade at approximately midterm, so that anyone not doing well can get feedback from me and have a chance to improve.

In this seminar, we will strive for an environment that is challenging and supportive. I reserve the right to ask anyone to leave the seminar who consistently disrupts such an environment.

Critique Sheets

Students are responsible for preparing six one-page (single spaced) critiques of class readings. The critiques must accurately summarize the aspects of the readings used. Beyond that, students may focus on theoretical positions, core arguments, fascinating moment(s), relationships to other literatures or readings, challenges to conventional wisdom, strengths and weaknesses, implications for future work, or passages that are particularly important or difficult (while showing an effort to understand them).

Students will be randomly assigned three readings on which they *must* write a critique sheet. Students may choose the other three readings on which they would like to write

critique sheets.

The critique sheets must be emailed to me (aducey@ucalgary.ca; use the subject heading “419 Critique Sheet”) no later than NOON on the day prior to the assigned reading (or section of reading). I will then compile and distribute the critique sheets to the entire class by mid-afternoon. Students are required to read the critique sheets before the class meeting.

The critiques should be well written, but they do not have to be formal in style. In particular, they do not need to include formal citations or notes. However, students must use quotes when copying someone’s exact words, *and* provide page numbers for quotes or references to specific points and ideas in the readings. Always include your name and date on the critique sheet.

The critique sheets are not to be distributed beyond members of the class. Students will be required to sign a form agreeing not to do so.

The sheets will be graded on the following scale. One critique sheet will be dropped from the final grade, so students may earn up to 50 points for the critique sheets.

- 10 = Accurately summarizes relevant aspects of the reading; clearly written with appropriate references to reading(s); identifies particularly thought-provoking aspects of the reading(s); shows exceptional level of engagement with text and course themes
- 8 = Accurately summarizes relevant aspects of reading; clearly written with appropriate references to reading(s); raises good questions or ideas; shows effort to engage with text
- 5 = Shows effort to engage with text but has one or more of the following problems: is not clearly written/expressed, inaccurately summarizes relevant sections of reading(s); does not use appropriate references or quotes
- 0 = Critique sheet not turned in or turned in late; and/or critique sheet suggests student has not read assigned text; and/or work is plagiarized in part or whole

In the first two or three weeks of the class, I may distribute the critique sheets with your names removed. We will then use them as the basis for a respectful but open discussion of what makes a good critique sheet.

Final Paper

The final paper will address a major theme in the course. I will provide some themes/questions (based on the questions on the first page of the course outline), but students may also choose their own theme (and may find that they have already begun to develop one through the critique sheets).

The paper should be double-spaced, proofread, and use a citation style from either the American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, or other sociology journal. The total length (not including references) should be no longer than 2,500 words (about 10 pages).

The paper will be due during exam week. Details on the paper content and grading, as well as “conferences” during last week of classes, will be distributed several weeks in advance.

Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

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|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Critique sheets | 50% |
| 2. In-class participation | 20% |
| 3. Final paper | 30% |

The following scale converts percentage grades to letter grades for this class.

A+ = 95-100	C+ = 65-69
A = 90-94	C = 60-64
A- = 85-89	C- = 55-59
B+ = 80-84	D+ = 50-54
B = 75-79	D = 45-49
B- = 70-74	F = below 45

The following description of letter grades comes from the U of Calgary Calendar:

- A indicates superior performance, excellent mastery of the material.
- B indicates above average performance, good mastery of the material.
- C indicates satisfactory performance, a basic understanding of the material.
- D indicates marginal performance, minimal understanding of the material.
- F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

Instructor Contact Information

I am available during office hours and at other times by appointment. My office is Room 938, Social Sciences Building. My office phone number is 220-5054, and my email address is aducey@ucalgary.ca.

In general, I prefer that you contact me by email for administrative purposes only. For instance, you may email me to schedule an appointment outside of office hours. Students with substantive questions should come to office hours or schedule an appointment. If you have questions related to grading, readings, or wish to discuss the course in greater depth, see me during office hours or make an appointment.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Food Court in the Professional Faculties Building.

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may

be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation-- must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

Since it is important that you read and discuss the work of others in academic papers and research, please take the time to review the following website: [Plagiarism: What It Is and How to Recognize and Avoid It](#).

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor’s office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

Course Schedule (as of August 28, 2009, subject to revision)

*available through UofC library digital collection (obtain .pdf version when possible)

**to be provided by instructor

Introduction to the course: what is technoscience and biomedicalization?

Sept 9 & 11

The legacy of eugenics

Sept 14, 16, 18, 21

- **Gould, Stephen Jay. "Eugenics Past and Present," pgs. 306-334 (Chs. 20 & 21) in *the Flamingo's Smile*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1985.
- Katz Rothman, Barbara. "Mapping the Past: The Macroeugenics of Race," pp. 45-110.

Contrasting cases in the genetics of illness

Sept 23, 25, 28, 30, Oct 2, 5, 7

- Katz Rothman, Barbara. "Writing the Body: The Genetics of Illness," pp. 111-172.
- **Wexler, Alice. "Chorea/graphing Chorea: The Dancing Body of Huntington's Disease," pp. 193-208 in *Biotechnology and Culture*, Paul Brodwin, ed. Indiana University Press, 2000.
- **Joseph S. Alper. "Genetic Complexity in Human Disease and Behavior," pp. 17 - 37 (Ch 1) in *Double-Edged Helix: Social Implications of Genetics in a Diverse Society*, Joseph Alper, ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.
- **Evelyn Fox Keller, "The Meaning of Gene Function: What Does a Gene Do?" pgs. 45-72 (Ch. 2) in *The Century of the Gene*, Harvard University Press, 2000.
- *Adam Hedgecoe, "Schizophrenia and the Narrative of Enlightened Geneticism," *Social Studies of Science* 31 (6): 875-911, 2001.

Technologies of reproduction/procreation

Oct 9, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 26

- Katz Rothman, Barbara. "Imagining the Future: The Microeugenics of Procreation," pp. 173-220.
- Franklin, Sarah and Celia Roberts. *Born and Made*, chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, conclusion

Biopower

Oct 28, 30, Nov 2, 4

- **Foucault, Michel. "17 March 1976," Ch. 11 in "*Society Must be Defended*": *Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana [Trans. David Macey], NY: Picador: 2003

Artificiality and Enhancement

Nov 6, 9, 16, 18, 20, 23

- **Rabinow, Paul. "Artificiality and enlightenment: from socio-biology to biosociality," pp. 234-252 in *Zone 6: Incorporations*, eds. J. Crary and S. Kwinter. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992.
- **Rose, Nikolas, and Carlos Novas. 2004. "Biological Citizenship," pp. 436-463 in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, eds. Aihwa Ong, and Stephen Collier. Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- *Martin, Emily. "The Pharmaceutical Person." *BioSocieties* 1: 273-287, 2006.
- *Frank, Arthur. "Emily's Scars: Surgical Shapings, Technoluxe, and Bioethics," *Hastings Center Report* 34 (2): 18-29, 2004.

Global politics of technoscience and biomedicalization

Nov 25, 27, 30

- *Joao Biehl. 2004. "The Activist State: Global pharmaceuticals, AIDS, and Citizenship in Brazil." *Social Text* 22 (3): 105-132, 2004.
- **Petryna, Adriana. "Globalizing Human Subjects Research," pp. 33-60 in *Global Pharmaceuticals: Ethics, Markets, and Practices*, Adriana Petryna, Andrew Lakoff, and Arthur Kleinman, eds. Duke University Press, 2006.

Catch-up, conferences on final papers

Dec 2, 4, 7