

MENTAL HEALTH & SOCIETY (SOC 395) – 3 CREDITS
Department of Sociology, St. Francis Xavier University
WINTER 2023

This course acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. It is important to understand the history of this land and understand our place within this context. Recognizing we are all Treaty People, students are encouraged to learn about the Peace and Friendship Treaties.*

COURSE INFORMATION:

Instructor: Dr. Katie Aubrecht; Pronouns: She/her; E: caubrech@stfx.ca; T: 902-867-4845
Office: Nicholson Tower Room 619
Office Hours: Mon. 9am-10am, Wed. 9am-10am, Thurs. 12pm-1pm, & Fri. 1pm-2pm AST
Course Meeting Time: Wed. 12:45pm-2pm & Fri. 11:15am-12:30pm AST
Course Meeting Location: Bruce Brown Room 337
Students may change the course, on or before Jan. 16, 2023, or drop the course by Mar. 10, 2023, online in Banner

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

In this course students will analyze mental health and illness experiences, knowledge, policy, and practice from a sociological perspective. Current and historical medical, legal, and social issues and responses related to mental health and illness will be considered and discussed. Course readings and assignments will examine the social structures, conditions, cultural values, professional ideologies and institutions of power that shape interpretations and realities of mental health and illness. Concepts analyzed include capacity, expertise, lived experience, medicalization of behaviour, personhood, psychiatricization, social and structural determinants of mental health inequities, and stigma. Prerequisites: SOCI 101, 102, 251. Three Credits.

Course Materials and Teaching Methods

Required Course Textbook: Rodgers, A. & Pilgrim, D. (2014). *A sociology of mental health and illness, fifth edition*. New York: Open University Press.

Primary source excerpts from influential texts shaping sociological perspectives on mental health and illness will be included in an online course reader that students can access via the course Moodle site.

* Please consult the following resources for additional information about the Peace and Friendship Treaties: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028589/1539608999656>; https://lnuey.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/lnuey_4291_treatyday_ResearchPaper_V01_lowres.pdf

This seminar style course is delivered in-person and supported electronically by a Moodle course site. Moodle will be used to archive course materials and submit participation responses and course assignments. Lectures will not be recorded.

Accessibility & Accommodations

This classroom will be an anti-oppressive and disability, Mad, and D/deaf positive space (more information on what this means can be accessed using the following link: <https://simmons.libguides.com/anti-oppression/anti-ableism>).

Accessibility is a collective project we all have a stake in. One way that accessibility can be addressed is through accommodations. StFX supports academic accommodation for students with disabilities so that they may meet the learning objectives of their courses and be given the opportunity to be fairly evaluated on their understanding of course material. The Tramble Centre for Accessible Learning welcomes students with documented disabilities and offers them a student-centered program of support. **If you have a registered accommodation, please let me know.** If you do not have a registered accommodation but would like to share information about existing or potential accessibility barriers, or if you cannot access the course material for any reason, please also let me know.

Religious, Spiritual or Cultural Observance

Everyone should feel welcome and encouraged to bring their full selves to the class. Please feel free to speak with me about any religious, spiritual or cultural commemorations or celebrations that you plan to observe during the term.

Expectations of Students

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you are going to be absent for more than one class, you must contact me. In the case of a sudden emergency requiring you to be absent for more than five days, you are required to contact the Dean's office. Faculty are required to report to the Dean all unexplained absences of more than three hours over at least two classes in any term.

Our criterion for success is engaged, critical and creative dialogue that is informed by the readings. For this to happen, it is expected that students will have read all of the required readings (as they are listed in the schedule) and come to class prepared to engage. A collective sense of trust, and respect for one another, will be essential to supporting meaningful engagement.

Clear and continuous communication throughout the course is important. I care about your progress. Contact me if you have questions or require clarification around instructions or expectations for assignments using my email caubrech@stfx.ca. In the subject line of your email please include the course title and code.

Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to all academic regulations that are outlined in Chapter 3 of the academic calendar.

Course Assignments

Please include your name and student ID number on each document submission. All submissions must be in WORD (PDF not accepted), double spaced, include page numbers, and have a separate title page and reference page.

It is expected that all submitted writing assignments will include **references to course material** cited in **ASA or APA formatting**, in addition to the student's own reflections and creative contributions. When describing material from outside of the class, indicate where this information is from, using quotations for direct citations, and/or a reference that shows where you retrieved the information from. When you do use a quotation be sure to introduce it and explain the meaning of the passage in your own words (do not let the quotation speak for itself). Limit the use of direct quotations. The lectures are designed to scaffold and expand on the readings. Do not rely on or cite lectures in your assignments - refer to the readings.

Assignments must be uploaded via Moodle on or before the due date. **Marks may be deducted at a rate of 5% per calendar day for late assignments. Assignments without a negotiated extension and which are not received within 10 days of the submission date will not be accepted and will receive an automatic grade of zero.** Extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The midterm grade will be based on the midterm exam only.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR EVALUATED WORK

40% = Shows understanding of course material and a sociological perspective

20% = Shows meaningful engagement (with readings, lectures, discussions)

20% = Displays critical and creative thinking (takes material in new directions)

20% = Technical aspects (proofread for spelling, grammar, and flow)

Due Date		Value
Class Participation	Ongoing	15%
Proposal	Feb. 5	20%
Midterm	Feb. 15	20%
Presentation	Mar. 13	20%
Final Paper	Apr. 14	30%

Assignment Instructions

Participation (15%)

Attendance and participation in class is required. Participation grades are not provided just for attending class. Students must actively contribute to class discussions by offering questions, comments, and/or identifying themes and patterns across the readings, in the form of a written submission uploaded to Moodle each week in advance of the classes in which the readings are discussed. Students are encouraged to share

their reflections in class. The participation grade will be determined at the end of the course and reflect students' overall contributions.

Final Paper Proposal (15%) – FEB. 5

Students will develop and submit a proposal for their final paper that:

1. Presents an issue related to mental health and society from a sociological perspective,
2. Offers a summary of background information on the issue,
3. Poses a research question that will be examined in the final paper, and
4. Outlines a plan for how the question will be addressed in the paper.

The proposal should identify two course readings and two peer-reviewed academic journal articles from outside the class that will be used to examine this issue **sociologically**, explain why these readings were chosen, and present them in proper ASA/APA formatting in a reference list. The body of the proposal should be at least two pages double-spaced, with a separate title and reference page (four pages total).

Mid-Term Exam (20%) – FEB. 15

The mid-term exam will take place in-class and will include short and long answer questions related to content covered in the first half of the course.

Societal Responses to Mental Health or Illness Presentation (20%) – MAR. 13

Students must deliver and record an online presentation on a societal response to mental health or illness. The presentation must:

1. **Identify** a mental health or illness condition, situation, issue, or problem,
2. **Describe** what it is, how/where/when it appears, who it affects, what it means and why it matters,
3. **Select and consider ONE** way this problem is addressed/treated/responded to (a policy, program, approach, or practice),
4. **Analyze and explain** what the response teaches about social order and the social organization of everyday life drawing on the materials from the course (referencing at least three course readings).
 - a. Identify and discuss the social norms, statuses, roles, groups, networks, and institutions made visible by the response.
 - b. Describe how the response could be understood as maintaining and/or restoring social order.
 - c. Describe what the effects of this response are, and whether and how these effects are understood and experienced differently by different groups.
5. **Conclude** with a critical reflection on the response, its strengths, and limitations. Describe whether and how the response could be improved.

This is not a personal reflection. The purpose of this assignment is to apply new knowledge gained from the course by analyzing a mental health or illness as a social reality/situation or issue. Any information used must be properly cited and referenced.

The presentation should be approximately five to ten minutes in duration. It should include seven power point slides (a title slide, one slide for each of the five areas that must be addressed, and a closing slide listing references for any information used in the presentation). Students must record the presentation using Microsoft Teams or Zoom and upload the recording to the assignment drop-box on Moodle.

Final Paper (30%) – APR. 14

The final paper will provide an opportunity to apply knowledge gained from the course and independent academic research to a sociological issue related to mental health and society. In examining the issue sociologically, students should draw on at least four course readings and three peer-reviewed academic articles from outside the course (building on the references cited in the proposal and making changes where appropriate). References must be cited using ASA/APA formatting. The inclusion of other non-academic resources in addition to the required minimum academic resources is encouraged.

The body of the paper must be eight pages, double-spaced, with a separate title page and reference page (ten pages total).

Submission of Assignments: Assignments will be submitted and returned through Moodle. All the assignment drop-boxes have the “Submit” icon in front of them. Click on the appropriate assignment link and click on the “upload file” button. Then click on “add” button and browse in your computer and attach the appropriate assignment. Finally click on “save changes”. **Make sure your file is in MS WORD format.**

Academic Integrity: Everyone in the StFX university community, including faculty and students, is responsible for upholding the values of academic integrity. Students who engage in plagiarism, cheating, falsification, tampering, impersonating another student or any other form of improper academic conduct will be subject to academic discipline. To learn about your obligations as a student, please refer to section 3.8 of the **StFX**

Academic Calendar: https://www.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/sites/registrars-office/files/2022-12/2022_2023_AcademicCalendar_20Dec_0.pdf

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (Jan. 4 & 6): Welcome & Introductions

No required readings.

Supplementary reading:

- Online reader: Allan Horwitz: An overview of sociological perspectives on the definitions, causes and responses to mental health and illness

WEEK 2 (Jan. 11 & 13): Perspectives on Mental Health & Illness

Required readings:

- Course textbook Chapter 1 (pp. 1-20)
- Online reader: Excerpt from Emile Durkheim’s *Suicide*

WEEK 3 (Jan. 18 & 20): Social Stratification

Required readings:

- Course textbook Chapter 2 (pp. 21-36)
- Online reader: Excerpt from Elizabeth McGibbon's *Oppression: A social determinant of health*

WEEK 4 (Jan. 25 & 27): Gender & Sexuality

Required readings:

- Course textbook Chapter 3 (pp. 37-52)
- Online reader: Excerpt from Dorothy Smith's *Women look at psychiatry: I'm not mad, I'm angry*
- Online reader: Sex & Gender Based Analysis Plus (SGBA+) in mental health research

WEEK 5 (Feb. 1 & 3): Race & Ethnicity

Required reading:

- Course textbook: Chapter 4 (pp. 53-69)

Other required resources:

- Podcast: The devastating effects of racism on mental health with Ingrid Waldron (58 minutes)
- Statistics Canada report: The mental health of population groups designated as visible minorities in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic

PROPOSAL DUE FEB. 5 – Submit via Moodle by 9am AST

WEEK 6 (Feb. 8 & 10): Age, Ageing & Mental Health Over the Life Course

Required reading:

- Course textbook: Chapter 5 (pp. 70-86)

WEEK 7 (Feb. 15): Midterm Exam – In Class

WEEK 7 (Feb. 17): Remote Guest Lecture

Danielle Landry, PhD Candidate in Sociology at York University specializing in Mad Studies, Sociology of Health & Illness and Qualitative Research Methods and instructor in Metropolitan University's School of Disability Studies.

WEEK 8 (Feb. 20-25): Winter Reading Week - NO CLASS

WEEK 9 (Mar. 1 & 3): Decolonizing the Mind

Required readings:

- Online reader: Excerpts from Frantz Fanon's *The wretched of the earth* and *Beyond an African revolution*
- Online reader: Excerpt from Paul Gilroy's *Postcolonial melancholia*
- Online reader: Excerpts from Lee Maracle's *I am woman: A native perspective on sociology and feminism*

WEEK 10 (Mar. 8 & 10): Global Mental Health Regimes

Required readings:

- Online reader: Collin King: Whiteness in psychiatry: The madness of European misdiagnoses
- Online reader: China Mills: The global politics of disablement: Assuming impairment and erasing complexity
- Online reader: Excerpt from Katie Aubrecht and Akwasi Bofo: Deconstructing dependency and development in global dementia policy

Supplementary reading:

- Online reader: China Mills and Brenda LaFrancois: Child as metaphor: Colonialism, psy-governance and epistemicide

Remote Guest Lecture: Dr. Susan Hardie, Executive Director, Eviance (Canadian Centre on Disability Studies) on Mental Health and the United Nations Social Development Goals

PRESENTATIONS DUE MAR. 13 – Submit via Moodle by 9am AST

WEEK 11 (Mar. 15 & 17): The Organization of Mental Health Work/Mental Health Work & Professions

Required readings:

- Course textbook Chapter 6 (pp. 87-106)
- Course textbook Chapter 7 (pp. 107-123)

Supplementary reading:

- Online reader: Excerpt from Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*

WEEK 12 (Mar. 22 & 24): The Treatment of People with Mental Health Problems

Required readings:

- Course textbook Chapter 8 (pp. 124-145)
- Course textbook Chapter 11 (pp. 180-196)

Supplementary reading:

- Online reader: Excerpt from Erving Goffman's *Asylums*

WEEKS 13 & 14 (Mar. 29, 31 & April 5): Service User Perspectives

Required readings:

- Course textbook Chapter 12 (pp. 199-219)
- Online reader: Peter Beresford: From 'other' to involved: User involvement in research: an emerging paradigm
- Online reader: Lucy Costa, Jijian Voronka, Danielle Landry, Jenna Reid, Becky MacFarlane, David Reville, Kathryn Church: Recovering our stories: A small act of resistance

FINAL PAPERS DUE APR. 14 – Submit via Moodle by 9am AST

Statement on Equitable Learning

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space – both real and virtual – that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. Please feel free to talk with me about your questions or concerns about equity in our classroom or in the StFX community in general. If I cannot answer your questions or help you address your concerns, I encourage you to talk to the Chair/Coordinator of the Department/Program or the Human Rights and Equity Advisor. The Human Rights and Equity Advisor is Megan Fogarty. Megan can be contacted by email at mfogarty@stfx.ca or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT EQUITABLE LEARNING

- **Student Success Centre**
Location: Angus L. Macdonald library
Phone: (902) 867-5221; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/student-success/>
- **Tramble Rooms Centre for Accessible Learning**
Location: Angus L. Macdonald Library, Room 108.
Phone: (902) 867-5349; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/accessible-learning/>
- **Health and Counselling Centre**
Location: 3rd Floor of Bloomfield Centre (Room 305).
Phone: (902) 867-2263; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/health-and-counselling/home>
- **Financial Aid Office**
Location: 204 & 206 Nicholson Tower
Phone: (902) 867-2374 / 2301; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/financial-aid/>
- **Diversity Engagement Centre**
Location: 4th Floor Bloomfield
Phone: (902) 867-3934; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/student-services/diversity-engagement-centre>
- **Sexual Violence and Assault Prevention**
Location: 313D Bloomfield Centre
Phone: 902-867-5601; Website: <https://www.mystfx.ca/visible-at-x/supports-and-resources>
- **Wellspring Centre**
Location: Wellspring Centre, 2nd Floor Morrison Hall
Phone: (902) 867-5252 or 867-3739; Website: <https://www2.mystfx.ca/wellspring/>

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