MED 6102
Critical Theory in Health and Society
Winter 2012

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Time Winter Session, Term II: Tuesdays, 9 - 12

Location Mostly 2J618 (see Schedule)

Overview

This course provides an in-depth examination of critical theory in relation to society and health. We focus especially on theoretical questions of how one frames 'illness', 'health', 'healing' or 'medicine' as an object of study. We explore questions raised by technologies upon which the practice of contemporary medicine depends, with attention to questions concerning the status of the body. This course focuses in particular on critical perspectives and the connections among power, knowledge, and practice in health and medicine.

Objectives

1) To gain a working knowledge of contemporary theory in social science and health; 2) to examine the roots of contemporary theory in the European philosophical tradition of the 20th century; and 3) to practice applying social science theory to specific topics in relation to health, health care, or community health.

Prerequisites

Students must have completed MED 6220 (Introduction to Community Health), or demonstrate that they have the equivalent experience in critical thinking and writing as outlined in *MED 6220 Evaluation Sheet For Term Paper* .

Requirements

This class will be conducted as a seminar with some short lectures. All participants are expected to have read the required readings prior to class and to be prepared to engage actively in discussion based on the readings. At each class, one student will have been assigned as primary reviewer and one as secondary reviewer for all or a portion of the required reading. The primary reviewer will be responsible for an oral presentation of the material assigned. The secondary reviewer *will also be prepared as if they are to lead the discussion,* and will be expected to supplement or present alternative perspectives to the primary review of the reading. Reviewer assignments will be done on a rotating basis such that each student will be both primary and secondary reviewer at least once during the term.

Two written assignments (one paper worth 35% and one group assignment worth 35%) are required for this course.

Required Texts

Simone de Beauvoir (1949) *The Second Sex*. Translated by C. Borde, S. Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage Books (complete and unabridged English edition published 2011).

Michel Foucault (1961) *History of Madness*. Translated by J. Murphy, J. Khalfa. New York: Routledge (comprehensive English translation published in 2006).

Dorothy E. Smith (1999) *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Evaluation

Primary oral reviews:	20%
Secondary oral reviews:	10%
Group assignment:	35%
Final Paper:	35%

Primary oral reviews --expectation and evaluation:

1. Each primary oral review should take 15 – 20 minutes. An extensive discussion of indeterminate length (subject to time constraints) may arise from the review.
2. Powerpoint or handouts may be used, but are not required.
3. Reviewers will be expected to outline and summarize the key points raised in the readings.
4. Reviewers can refer to their own research, or to aspects of health technology or medicine in general, to explain how and why the theoretical frameworks are useful.
5. Evaluation is based on the extent to which the reviewer has provided an in-depth analysis, and is willing to take 'risks' with their critical analytic perspective.

Secondary oral reviews --expectation and evaluation:

1. Each secondary review should take approximately 5 minutes (though may be longer if time permits).
2. Secondary reviewers will be expected to provide supplemental information to either support or provide alternatives to the perspectives raised in the primary review.
3. Evaluation is based on the extent to which the reviewer has provided an in-depth analysis, and is willing to take 'risks' with their critical analytic perspective.

Group assignment – expectation and evaluation:

Group assignment (approximately 15 pages). Stanley Fish, in his "Dennis Martinez" article (week 2) describes a problem faced by critical theory. He argues that "No activity is theoretical in the strong sense of unfolding according to the dictates of a theory" (Fish, 1987: 1778). If Fish is right, there is no way in which health research or critical social science research can be guided by theory. In Fish's view, theoretical activity and research activity are separate, and it is a mistake to think that researchers can look to theories for rules or norms about how research should be conducted.

It is noteworthy, however, that health researchers use and apply critical theory in their work. We will read a number of examples. This group assignment proposes that we, as a group, come to grips with Fish's critique, and the reality that theory is used in health research. We shall enumerate the various uses of critical theory in health research that we come across in our study of the texts inside and outside of this class. Our goal will be (1) a taxonomy of how critical theories are used in health research, and (2) an argument to answer Fish's depiction of theory.

Each student will be responsible for researching and writing one component of the research paper. Each component will be individually graded. Students must demonstrate that they have understood and applied the concepts taught in the course. The targeted deadline for our first draft of the group assignment is one week after the end of class. We will plan to submit a polished draft of the group assignment to a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

Final paper – expectation and evaluation:

Final paper (approximately 15 pages). The paper will examine the theoretical work of one contemporary social scientist who has written critically about health, health care, or health systems. The paper should explore, in clear terms, how (critical) theories are used in the social scientist's research. The paper should also relate how the student's chosen social scientist and/or the social scientist's theoretical perspectives could be used in the student's own research. The findings from each student's individual final paper can be compiled together to support the argument in the group assignment.

To summarize, the final paper should contain (at least) 3 elements:

(a) An account of a contemporary social scientist's work, and the theories she/he uses in that work
(b) A clear and analytical description of how theories are used in the social scientist's work
(c) A discussion of how the social scientist's ideas or theoretical perspectives might be useful for the student's own research.

Topics must be discussed in advanced with the instructors. A proposal for the paper will be submitted in week 3 of the course. The paper proposal is to be 2-3 pages

(double spaced). It should provide an outline of the topic, sources of information with citations, and argument to be made. A preliminary draft of the paper will be submitted in week 8 of the course. The intent of the draft is to provide enough information to the instructor to receive concrete feedback for revision. The final paper will be submitted one week following the last class of the course.

Both the individual paper and the group assignment should be written in a format as if for submission as a theoretical piece for publication in a refereed journal. It should be 15 - 20 pages, double spaced, in 12 point font; it should include a title page, abstract, and key words; and it should contain no grammatical or typographic errors. Assignments will be evaluated as follows:

1. Follows appropriate style and format as outlined above
2. Contains clear argumentation and clarity of communication
3. Demonstrates critical thinking
4. Demonstrates ability to understand and synthesise theoretical perspectives from course content

Course outline

Week	**Required Reading**
I: FOUNDATIONS, WHY CRITICAL THEORY OF HEALTH?	
Week 1, Jan 10 Room 2J618	**1.1 Introduction to course** Overview of course Assignment of reviews Group discussion of ground rules for trust and support in learning **1.2 Discussion**, *What can theory do?* **1.3 Lecture**, *Backgrounder: contemporary critical theory (Part 1)*
Week 2, Jan 17 Room 2J618	**2.1 Discussion of readings:** (copies available in rm. 2830) Stanley Fish (1987) "Dennis Martinez and the Uses of Theory," *Yale Law Journal* 96: 1773-1800. Emily Martin (1991) "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female

Roles," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16(3): 485-501.

Joshua P. Garoon and Patrick S. Duggan (2008) "Discourses of Disease, Discourses of Disadvantage: A Critical Analysis of National Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plans," *Social Science and Medicine* 67: 1133-1142.

2.2 Lecture, *Backgrounder: contemporary critical theory (Part 2)*

II: CRITICAL THEORY "SAMPLER"

Week 3, Jan 24
Room 2J618

3.1 Discussion of readings:
S. de Beauvoir (1949) *The Second Sex*. Volume I: Introduction, Part One ("Destiny"), Part Two ("History")

3.2 Lecture, background on de Beauvoir
**** proposal due**

Week 4, Jan 31
Room 2J618

****Chris Kaposy will be away****

Instructor-less discussion, peer evaluation of oral reviews

4.1 Discussion of readings:
S. de Beauvoir (1949) *The Second Sex*. Volume II: Introduction, Part One ("Formative Years")

Week 5, Feb 7
Room 2J618

5.1 Discussion of readings:
S. de Beauvoir (1949) *The Second Sex*. Volume II: Part Four ("Toward Liberation")

D. E. Smith (1999) *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. Part I ("Critique"): Chapters 2,3,4.

5.2 Lecture, feminisms, feminist theory, feminist epistemology

Week 6, Feb 14
Room 2J618

6.1 Discussion of readings:
M. Foucault (1961) *History of Madness*. Part One.

6.2, Lecture, introduction to Foucault

Week 7, Feb 21 **No class, winter break**

Week 8, Feb 28
Room 2J618 **8.1 Discussion of readings:**
M. Foucault (1961) *History of Madness*. Part Two.

8.2, Lecture, Foucault

****Draft of paper due.**

Week 9, March 6
Room H2831 **9.1 Discussion of readings:**
(CHH conf room) M. Foucault (1961) *History of Madness*. Part Three (as much as you can read)

9.2, Lecture, Foucault and critical theory

Week 10, March 13
Room 2J618 **10.1 Discussion of readings:**
D. E. Smith (1999) *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations*. Chapters 5,6,7.

10.2 Lecture, what are the ruling relations?

III: THE USES OF THEORY

Week 11, March 20 **11.1** Collaborative Project Work
Room 2J618

Week 12, March 27 **12.1** Collaborative Project Work
Room 2J618

Week 13, Apr 3 **13.1** Round-table, Discussion of final papers
Room 2J618 **13.2** Relating final papers to collaborative project

Written assignments due: April 10th

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Examples of works in critical social theory that could be used as basis for final paper.

P. Bourdieu (1972) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge U Press.

D. Haraway (1997) *Modest_Witness@Second_Mellennium. FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouseTM*. Routledge.

D. Healy (2004) *Let Them Eat Prozac: The Unhealthy Relationship Between the Pharmaceutical Industry and Depression*. NYU press.

M. Lock (1993) *Encounters with Aging: Mythologies of Menopause in Japan and North America*. U Cal Press.

D. Lupton (1995) *The Imperative of Health: Public Health and the Regulated Body*. Sage Press.

E. Martin (1987) *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*. Beacon Press.

P. Rabinow (1999) *French DNA*. U Chicago Press.

N. Rose (2007) *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Subjectivity and Power in the Twenty-first Century*. Princeton U Press.

M. Taussig (1993) *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. Routledge.

M. Taussig (1992) *The Nervous System*. Routledge.