SOC 307 Sociology of Medicine

SOC 307 01 Winter 2026

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How do social inequalities, access to health care, and the structure of health care systems shape health and wellness?

This course explores how systemic gaps in the U.S. health care system affect individuals and communities—and how these challenges can be addressed through personal wellness practices and meaningful social action.

So, what is this course about? What is the official course description?

This course is about understanding health in the United States from a critical, engaged social science perspective. The official description is: This class provides a sociological and anthropological analysis of health and medical institutions, including mental health care. Topics include: practitioner-patient relationships, cultural and social factors determining health and illness, medical education, the cost and organization of medical care delivery systems, innovation in providing health care, as well as the relationship between health and the environment. Prerequisite: SOC 111 or permission of instructor.

What are the methods used to studying this material?

While some traditional educational methods of lecture and quizzes are used, the current state of the US health-care system and lack of preventative health dictates action. Therefore, the major learning method is experiential through practicing personal wellness techniques, engaging in social action, and working with the BATS (Business Arts Theatre and Sociology) interdisciplinary program for community engagement.

Core Argument for Social Action and Personal Self-care

Health and wellness are shaped less by individual behavior than by social, political, and economic conditions. Community organizing directly intervenes in these conditions by changing who has power, whose needs are prioritized, how resources are distributed as well as restoring agency and community connection. At the same time, self-care and science-based mind-body techniques that empower, avoid feelings of overwhelm, and engender wellness go hand-in-hand with being able to help others. In this sense, organizing is a form of upstream public health work.

Student Social Action & Campaign Guidelines

All student social action campaigns must comply with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and must not violate any university policies or any local, state, or federal laws. Students are free to select social action campaigns based on their own interests and values, independent of the professor's personal political views. The professor does not direct or endorse specific political positions. However, the professor retains final authority to determine whether a proposed campaign is appropriate for the course and in full compliance with applicable laws, university policies, and human rights standards.

Mind–Body Practices: Participation & Boundaries

Participation in mind–body practices in this course is entirely voluntary. Students are not required to engage in any breathing, meditation, visualization, movement, or related activities. Students may choose to sit quietly, observe, or engage in an alternative reflective activity. All mind–body practices presented in this course are self-help and educational techniques, not therapy or mental health treatment. No personal sharing is ever required; students may choose an "I pass" option at any time without explanation or penalty.

REQUIREMENTS	POINTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL GRADE
Mid-term and Final Exam may be non-traditional and oral.	80 (40 points each)	16%
Campaign Binder	70	14%
10 Portfolio Assignments	200	40%
5 Quizzes (0nline	50 (two attempts)	10%
Attendance in class and in out-of- class events (Note that alternative assignments are available for public-facing events)	100	20%
Total Points	500	100%

Course Schedule – Sociology of Medicine

This schedule is subject to change with reasonable notice. Any changes will be announced in class and/or in Canvas.

Week	Class Session A: Tuesdays	Class Session B: Thursdays	Readings / Major Assignments
Week 1: Jan 12-18	Course introduction: Overview of syllabus and class activities What is the sociology of medicine? Biomedical vs. social models	Medicalization; Power and health; Discussion	Weitz, Sociology of Medicine, Ch. 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and FDR Declaration Take Quiz 1 online due Sun 11:59 pm
Week 2: Jan 19-25	U.S. healthcare system; Comparative health systems; Access and cost	Race, class, gender, disability, and health inequalities	Sociology of Medicine, Ch. 2 Take Quiz 2 online due Sun 11:59 pm
Week 3: Jan 26-Feb 1	Social determinants of health and wellness; Structural inequality How do we define wellness from a personal and social perspective?	The science behind Mind-body medicine and self-help.	Sociology of Medicine, Ch. 3 CMBM Readings Packet: The Science of Mind–Body Wellness Self-help readings to support learning and personal wellness throughout the semester

			Quiz 3 online due Sun 11:59 pm
Week 4: Feb 2-8	Social Action Introduction & Key Concepts, Issue Identification. Where do your passions lie concerning wellness?	Issue Development Where do your passions lie concerning wellness? Define the issue. Choosing Your Campaign	*For Tuesday*: Myers-Lipton, Student Victories, Preface, & Chapter 1: Issue Development (p. xi-xvii, 1-5, students bring campaign ideas to class) For Thursday: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 1: Issue Development (p. 5-16) Portfolio Assignment 1: Due Sun 11:55 pm
Week 5: Feb 9-15	Setting the Tone: What do you know about social change? What wellness issue do you believe you can change?	Change Theory: Comparing the Woman-Centered Model with the Alinsky Model and Conflict Theory. Which one(s) are compatible with a wellness campaign?	*For Tuesday;* Myers-Lipton, Chapter 2 Portfolio Assignment 2: Due 11:59pm *For Thursday:* Myers-Lipton, Chapter 3 (if 10-week course, possibly remove) Portfolio Assignment 3: Due 11:59pm
Week 6: Feb 16-22	Building Power: What is Power? Who has power regarding wellness on campus	Research: 1) Historical analysis	*For Tuesday:* Myers-Lipton, Chapter 4

	or the local area? How do you develop power? Develop organizational rap, Privilege and Power caution.	2) Target/decision -maker analysis 3) Power mapping	For Thursday: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 5 For Research: BWell Report – Health in Saginaw
Week 7: Feb 23-29	Group Dynamics: How do we develop healthy groups? What skills are needed to facilitate a group?	Tactics and Strategy: Choosing strategies: Working with the BATS group; action strategies and accountability session.	*For Tuesday:* Myers-Lipton, Chapter 6 For Thursday: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 7
Week 8: Mar 2-8	Mid-Semester Break		
Week 9: Mar 9-15	Campaign Kickoff Mind Body 1: Drawings: Personal and Campaign Roles	Debrief	For Tuesday: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 8
Week 10: Mar 16-22	Mind Body 2: Autogenics, Biofeedback	Health Care in the United States	Weitz Chapter 8 Sociology of Medicine Quiz 4 online due Sun 11:59 pm
Week 11: Mar 23-29	**Campaign Plan** Mind Body 3: Expressive Meditation	Mid-term Exam/Exercise – in class	For Tuesday: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 9
Week 12: Mar 30-Apr 5	Mind Body 4: Guided Imagery	Social Action presentations and peer feedback	Social Action portfolio
Week 13: Apr 6-12	Medicine, politics, and policy; Who defines health?	Advocacy and policy change; Connecting action to systems	Weitz, Sociology of Medicine, Ch. 11

	Mind Body 5: Emotions and Dialogue/ Journaling with a symptom, problem or issue.		Quiz 5 online due Sun 11:59 pm
Week 14: Apr 13-19	Mind Body 6: Mindful Eating and Healthy Nutrition. Discussion: Food Deserts, Inequality in CCESs to Healthy Food	Campaign Evaluation: Binder presentation	*Reading*: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 10 Campaign Binder Due in Class on Thursday
Week 15: Apr 20-26	Integrating sociology, wellness, and social action Mind Body 7: Breathing	Heroes & Sheroes Journey	*Reading*: Myers-Lipton, Chapter 11
Final Exam Week	Final Exam: Tuesday Apr 28 at 2:30pm Celebration Mind-Body Closing 8: Final Drawings Visualizing your Course Journey		

Exams and Quizzes

What will my quizzes and exams look like? There will be 5 online quizzes that include multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions. Your major grades will not be contingent on exams or quizzes, but rather in participation and portfolio assignments.

Portfolio Assignments; Out-of-Class Activities

The portfolio assignments are group submissions that answer specific questions regarding your wellness campaign. Each person in the group will receive the same grade unless a lack of participation is documented.

The social action campaigns and activities will necessitate some out-of-class time. Alternative assignments are available for public-facing engagements if needed.

Campaign Binder

Guidelines for the Campaign Binder

During the semester, your portfolio assignments will help you develop the class campaign binder that may possibly be passed to another class or group to continue the campaign, The directions for the binder are in Myers-Lipton pp 122-124. This is a class project, but each student is expected to contribute to the final binder. Photos, materials, and evaluation of the campaign will contribute to the binder. A campaign presentation will be part of your final exam/evaluation.

Discussions and Groups

We need to use our class time together to explore the timely thought-provoking work involved in this class. I expect you to read the chapters in your book. Group work is an integral part of this class.

Course Policies



Citizenship, Netiquette, and **Professionalism** has to do with how you treat others. Most wars, fights, retaliations, and insults happen when people feel their dignity has been assaulted. So please, respect each individual's opinions and beliefs--even if you disagree. I will do my best to do the same. You may disagree, but politely. You will be graded on this. Disagree with the idea, not the person. No personal attacks will be permitted. Group relations are important.



Please keep your **cell phones** on silent (or take it outside for emergencies) so that we can focus! Again, it's a dignity/respect thing. We all know that feeling when you're talking to a friend and his or her attention is on the phone.

Attendance is highly encouraged. You are responsible as a professional student for attending class and engaging in class-related activities. Participation online and class does count toward your grade. Coming to class significantly raises your grade and you get points for it! Attend class regularly and be on time. Participation is mandatory.



I get there are emergencies or things that come up. Do your best to tell me in advance (at least a day before if possible). An authorized note (from a doctor, employer, etc.) may excuse an absence or lateness, but only if submitted. Telling me you will get a note and forgetting to submit one will not excuse you.



The **readings** form the core of our class discussions, so please come prepared.



The Technical Stuff…

Course Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, what will you be able to do?

1. Define sociology, medical sociology, anthropology, and medical anthropology and describe how these fields are related, and how the sociological and anthropological perspectives differ from a biomedicine perspective.

2. Understand and have experiential knowledge of how to conduct a social action campaign relating to wellness.

3. Understand, if not also practice, mindful self-care techniques learned in this class.

5. Describe the American health care system, the societal factors influencing it, its outcomes and costs in comparison with selected other countries.

7. Use a critical approach with the sociological perspective to examine the profession of medicine, physician-patient relations, and medical education in the U.S.

Course Policies and Academic Integrity

Values and Netiquette for Success:

1. Tolerance and Politeness: A learning atmosphere of respect and tolerance is needed, that includes being polite and respecting others. Therefore- you can criticize a position, not the person. Everyone should be allowed to have a voice and respect the rights of everyone to speak. Discussions are designed to solicit an advanced understanding of the class material.

2. Team Spirit: Even if you have opposing ideas, you are working together to learn the material, concepts, and solve problems. Group dialogue means listening carefully, resolving problems, and shifting the dialogue to a higher level of discussion. In the case of working in teams to solve problems, a team spirit of success for each team member is crucial.

3. Maintain a Positive and Professional Attitude: Sometimes you will encounter challenges. Negativity in the classroom will be considered unprofessional student behavior. Please come to see me if you are having negative emotions about class. We can work though those anxieties together. Maintain a professional student attitude at all time in class. A positive attitude is a recipe for success.

4. Read the Assignment before Coming to Class or Posting online! I expect students to be responsible and be prepared in doing the readings before class. The rule of thumb is that

8. Conduct research including 1) historical analysis of an issue,2) target/decision-maker analysis, and 3 power mapping as well as writing and producing campaign materials.

Course Grading Rubric:

93 – 100	A
90 – 92	A-
87 – 89	B+
83 – 86	B
80 – 82	B-
77 – 79	C+
70 – 76	C
69 – 60	D
Below 60%	F

There is no curve in this class. Most students do very well without the need to curve the exams. Extra credit possibilities may be nced in annouclass and no student can do more than 10 points of extra credit for 5% of their total grade in extra credit assignments. Providing extra credit assignments is at the discretion of the professor.

Last day to withdraw with 100% refund January 16, 2026.

Last day to withdraw with a "W" grade is March 27, 2026.

Check other important dates.

Exams and Quizzes:

Exams can include multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions. Makeup exams will be provided for students with valid excuses for emergencies, but the professor reserves the right to deny a makeup exam.

Quizzes: There will be at least 5 online quizzes during the semester. Falling behind in this class can damage your final grade.

you should be spending at least two hours outside of class for every one hour spent in class. It is better to do readings and keep up with the class than cramming the night before the exam.

5. Get Help as Soon as Possible: If you are confused, you need to come to get help as soon as possible. Please contact me for an in-person or Zoom office hours or drop by my office hours as early as possible. We can work together to achieve your success. If you're having trouble in the course, there is also help and tutoring available in the library for certain classes and topics. I cannot help you save your grade the day before the final- it is too late by then.

6. Technology in the Classroom: Students are required to have a laptop and Internet access to be able to connect online. This also means having a microphone and the ability to video via Zoom. Keeping your computer operating system current and having virus protection are required. You will need to be able to access Canvas through your Browser, and submit assignments as a PDF or Word document;

7. Copying PowerPoints Verbatim: Do not try to copy the PowerPoint presentations verbatim; they will be provided in Canvas. However, it may be a good idea to print them out and to write notes on the printouts.

Course and College Policies, Practices and Services

Students are responsible for following the rules of conduct of Saginaw Valley State University. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated so that a cordial and positive class environment can be maintained. Students will be required to attend class and attendance will be taken. The class discussions, in-class materials, and in-class activities will be used on exams- so attendance and participation are critical. Of course, professional student behavior is required.

Course Completion and Late Projects

All exams, assignments, and other work must be completed in order to receive a grade in this course. Arrangements for "excused lateness" must be made in advance and approved by the instructor. Unexcused late course work may lose 2% of its points for each weekday that it is late or be refused acceptance for a zero grade. Please avoid this problem by turning in your assignments in on time.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a 0.0 grade for the assignment and can result in a 0.0 grade in the class. In addition, cheating or plagiarism may be reported to the Coordinator of Student Conduct who will be notified in writing by the instructor or the Academic Dean. This also applies to cheating on exams and other dishonesty. (See AI policy below). Plagiarism is taking or using materials that you did not write without accurately attributing the source in your work.

Why? Who likes a cheater? You don't want this on your records for the rest of your life.

Writing Support

If you would like assistance with writing assignments, you are encouraged to use the SVSU Writing Center in the Zahnow Library.



Disability Accommodations: You have the right to be accommodated if you are a student with a documented disability. I am happy to accommodate students with disabilities, however in order to do so please notify me within the first week of classes, or as early as possible. Please do not wait until the day before the exam to give me notice. We need time to plan for your needs. You must be registered with the SVSU Office of Accessibility Resources and Accommodation 206B Wickes Hall or call 989-967-7000 for assistance. **

Other Course Information

Note: The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus and the schedule to facilitate learning. Students are required to keep track of any changes to the syllabus or schedule.

**SVSU does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical impairment, disability, Vietnam-era or other veteran status in the provision of education, employment, and other services.

Commercialization of Course Notes and Materials: Dr. Rosina Hassoun does not allow commercialization of class materials. You may not sell or make any commercial gain from class materials. Why? The reason is that past attempts have introduced errors and misquotes and

further hampered learning. Using previous exams or selling exams to other students is not considered to be cheating. You may resell your books.

AI and Academic Integrity Policy: Saginaw Valley State University's Academic Integrity Policy requires students to take responsibility for their own work and avoid unauthorized assistance, including the use of unauthorized technologies. Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, AI writing assistants, code generators) qualify as assistance or materials that require explicit instructor permission; using them without permission may constitute a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

To support clarity and fairness in this course:

- AI use is permitted only when expressly authorized by the instructor for a specific assignment or context.
- When AI tools are allowed, students must clearly document and cite their use, just as they would cite other sources or assistance.
- Students must adhere to SVSU's Academic Integrity Policy and the Student Honor Code in all work.

This policy helps uphold academic honesty while encouraging ethical, transparent engagement with emerging technologies.