

**FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY: DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED  
NEW COURSE OR MODIFICATION OF AN EXISTING COURSE**

X  New Course        Modification

Department/School  Sociology  Date  9/3/20

Graduate or Undergraduate Course:  Undergraduate

Course No. or Level  376  Title  Sociology of Mental Health & Illness

Semester hours  3  Clock hours: Lecture  3  Laboratory  0

Prerequisites:  SOCI 201 or permission of the department

Enrollment expectation  30

Indicate any course for which this course is a (an)

modification \_\_\_\_\_  
(proposed change in course title, course description, course content or method of instruction)

substitute \_\_\_\_\_  
(The proposed new course replaces a deleted course as a General Education or program requirement.)

alternate \_\_\_\_\_  
(The proposed new course can be taken as an alternate to an existing course.)

Name of person preparing course description  Jessica Burke

Department Chairperson's/Dean's Signature  *Jessica Burke*

Provost's Signature  *Peter King*

Date of Implementation  Fall 2021

Date of School/Department approval  September 10, 2020

Catalog description: This course examines issues of mental health and illness from a sociological lens. The main objective is to understand mental health and illness from a social, cultural, and institutional standpoint as opposed a medical or psychological context. Several topics will be explored: theoretical perspectives on mental health and illness, research methodology, social patterns and trends, the importance of social factors that contribute to mental illness, social stressors, stigma and labeling, and treating mental illness.

Purpose: 1. For Whom (generally?)

This course will be suitable for any Sociology major, minor, or any student who has completed SOCI 201 (Principles of Sociology).

2. What should the course do for the student?

This course will allow students to gain an understanding of mental health and illness using a sociological lens, thus examining mental illness in a social context, emphasizing environmental/societal factors that contribute to mental illness and reactions to mental illness (mental health/illness labels). This course will also allow students to learn about the sociological theoretical perspectives and research methods used to examine mental illness

Teaching method planned:

This course will primarily comprise of lecture with discussion. Students will also be assigned papers and a presentation.

Textbook and/or materials planned (including electronic/multimedia):

Cockerham, William C. 2017. *Sociology of Mental Disorder*. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Rutledge.

Course Content: (Please explain the content of the course in enough detail so that the Academic Affairs Committee can make an informed judgement. Include a syllabus for the course.)

This course will address the following topics:

1. Defining Mental Illness
2. Theoretical Perspectives on Mental Health & Illness
3. Mental Disorder as a Deviant Behavior
4. The Epidemiology of Mental Illness & Social Patterns of Distress
5. Social Class & Mental Disorder
6. Age, Gender, Marital Status, and Race
7. Individual and Group Differences in Mental Illness
8. Seeking Treatment & the Hospital
9. Mental Illness in the Media – Social Institutions
10. Stigma and Labeling
11. Focus on Bipolar Disorder, Outcomes, & Family Responses
12. Mental Illness & the Law
13. Mental Illness & Public Policy
14. Research Methods & Data Sources

**Sociology of Mental Health & Illness**  
**Fall 2021**

Professor: Dr. Jessica L. Burke, Associate Professor of Sociology

Class Days & Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:45-2:00

Class Location: 251C Founders Hall

Professor's Office Location: 244 Founders Hall

Professor's Office Phone: 661-1656

Professor's Email: [jburke@fmarion.edu](mailto:jburke@fmarion.edu)

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-4:00 PM

Wednesdays 10:00-11:30 AM; 2:30-4:00 PM

Or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course examines issues of mental health and illness from a sociological lens. The main objective is to understand mental health and illness from a social, cultural, and institutional standpoint as opposed to a medical or psychological context. Several topics will be explored: theoretical perspectives on mental health and illness, research methodology, social patterns and trends, the importance of social factors that contribute to mental illness, social stressors, stigma and labeling, and treating mental illness.

**Course Objectives**

1. To gain an understanding of mental health and illness using a sociological lens.
2. To understand the sociological perspectives used to analyze mental illness.
3. To apply the information learned in this course to mental health and illness representations in the media, society, and everyday experiences.
4. To enhance oral and written communication skills.

**Required Textbook**

**Cockerham, William C. 2017. *Sociology of Mental Disorder*. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Rutledge.**

**Course Requirements**

**1. Class Participation (100 Points)**

Class discussion and participation is an important component of this course and includes the following:

- **Partner Presentations (70 Points)** – Each student, along with a partner, will give a presentation to the class on a topic relating to mental health or illness found on the news, TV, or social media. The purpose of this assignment is to gain an understanding of how society views particular mental disorders and responds to them. Each student will receive the same grade. I expect the presentations to involve an equal partnership and you will be graded as such. Further instructions and information on the presentation guidelines will be given in class at a later date.

- Overall Class Discussion (30 Points) – Participating in class is required in this class and is worth 30 points. Asking questions and making comments count as class discussion. However, I will also ask questions to initiate class discussion. I encourage all students to participate.
2. Midterm (100 Points): A midterm is given in the course that will contain short answer and essay questions. The midterm will be completed in class. A study guide will be given in class.
  3. Final (100 Points): A final exam is given in the course that will contain short answer and essay questions. The final is non-cumulative and will include only the information given since the midterm. A study guide will be given in class.
  4. Application Paper #1 (100 Points): You are required to write a 3 page double-spaced paper applying critical thinking to a film shown in class. This film will be determined later and will be shown in class (see course schedule). The film will be focusing on mental institutions. Further instructions will be given in class.
  5. Application Paper #2 (100 Points): You are required to write an additional 3 page double-spaced paper applying critical thinking to a film shown in class. This film will be *Silver Linings Playbook* and will be shown in class (see course schedule). The film will be focusing on a specific disorder and reactions and responses after a hospital stay. Further instructions will be given in class.

### Grading Scale

A=90.00% to 100%	C+=76.00% to 79.99%	D=60.00% to 64.99%
B+=86.00% to 89.99%	C=70.00% to 75.99%	F=59.99% to 0%
B=80.00% to 85.99%	D+=65.00% to 69.99%	

**All grades are final. The grade you receive is the grade you earned. Do not ask me to add points to your final grade. Grades are not negotiable.**

**To calculate your final grade:** Divide your total number of points earned by the total number of points in the class (500). The total number of points that you earn in this class is located in Blackboard. Move the decimal over two places and you will get a percentage (for example, 89.6). Refer to the grade scale above. An 89.6 is a B+. If your final grade is close to the next grade category, such as an 89.9, I may or may not round your grade. I will make this decision at the end of the semester. Please note that I am not required to round any grade.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance is taken in this class. A sign-in sheet will be distributed at the beginning of class. If a student is absent more than twice the number of required classes per week during the semester, a grade of F or W will be assigned. Twice the number of required classes per week is 4. **Once you miss more than 4 classes, or the 5th absence, you will be assigned a grade of F or W.**

**\*\*Please see page 63 in your FMU student catalog on Class Attendance Policy.**

I will not accept doctor's notes, funeral notices, or court appearances to excuse these four absences. Thus, these four absences will include both excused and unexcused absences. However, if there are certain circumstances, such as athletic commitments or an illness that will cause you to miss more than these four absences, PLEASE SEE ME. If you are a student athlete, please provide a schedule that includes the dates you will have to miss class.

Do not sign your absent friend's name to the attendance sheet. If you do, you and your absent friend will both be marked absent. In addition, you and your absent friend will be reported to the Sociology Department Chair and/or the Provost for academic dishonesty.

### **Classroom Policies**

If you are caught not paying attention to lecture, or not doing what you are supposed to be doing while in class, I will impose a 10 point deduction to your final grade for each incident. So if you are caught doing something you should not be doing during class on three separate occasions, you will have 30 points subtracted from your final grade (or the total number of points you earned at the end of the semester). I may or may not inform you of this deduction, and the decision to take such action is up to the instructor. This policy also applies when the class is completing work in groups and your group is finished before other groups. It also applies when students are completing class assignments individually.

**Cell phones and other electronic devices are prohibited and must be turned off before the beginning of class. Cell phones should not be visible on your desk at any time. If I see a cell phone, this will result in a 10 point deduction.**

**You cannot use your cell phone or tablet to take pictures of the PowerPoint slides used during lectures. If you are caught doing this, you will have a 10 point deduction.**

The following other violations will also result in a 10 point deduction:

1. Cell Phones, Texting, and using your smart phone to access the Internet.
2. Listening to iPods, MP3 players, smart phones, and using headphones.
3. Using a laptop or tablet to access the Internet during lecture and class assignments. You may use a laptop to take notes during lecture. You may use a tablet, such as a Microsoft Surface or iPad, to take notes in class. However, the tablet must have a keyboard in order for you to use it for note taking purposes.
4. Sleeping during lecture and during class assignments.
5. Talking during lecture.
6. Completing work for another class during this class.
7. Packing up your items before class is over, and while I am still lecturing.
8. If you are caught violating any of the above policies while taking an exam, you will lose 10 points from your final grade, and receive an automatic zero on the exam and you will be asked to leave the classroom. Also, the above policies apply while classmates are giving their presentations.

Arrive to class on time. Class begins once I shut the door. If you are late, you will be counted as absent. You will not be able to sign the attendance sheet. You will also be counted absent if you leave class early. If a situation arises where you have to leave early, or come to class late, please

do so as quietly as possible. Also, if you have to leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class.

**Excessive coming and going in the middle of class is disruptive and will not be tolerated. If this becomes a pattern (i.e., every class period or on a weekly basis) for any student, I will begin locking the door. Therefore, if you get up to leave, you will not be able to get back into the classroom that day. This type of behavior is very distracting to your fellow classmates and the professor.**

I EXPECT ALL STUDENTS TO BE RESPECTFUL, CONSIDERATE, AND NONJUDGMENTAL OF EACH OTHER. I also expect you to be respectful and courteous to the instructor at all times. It is the responsibility of BOTH the instructor and the students in the class to provide a positive learning environment. Please do not talk during the lecture portion of the class and please try to not interrupt your peers during class discussions. If you are disrespectful to your classmates or the instructor, you will be asked to leave for the remainder of that class period. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior may also be reported to the department chair and the Provost's office. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, expulsion, or other sanctions. Please refer to the Francis Marion University Honor Code in your FMU student catalog (page 56).

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism and/or cheating will not be tolerated. Any student who cheats on an assignment, plagiarizes someone else's work (e.g., claiming someone else's work as your own), or helping someone else to cheat or plagiarize will receive a zero for that assignment. **Any student who cheats on an exam will automatically receive a zero on the exam and may receive an F in the course.** The department chair and the Provost's office will be notified of the offense.

According to the FMU Honor Code, "cheating includes, but is not limited to, wrongfully giving, taking or presenting any information or material by a student with the intent of aiding him/herself or any other person on any academic work which is considered in any way in the determination of the final grade." "Plagiarism involves the use of the ideas or writings of another without acknowledgment of that use." See page 57 in your FMU student catalog.

### **Exam Make-Up Policy**

I do not allow make-up exams for any circumstance. If you happen to miss an exam, you will have an opportunity to take a cumulative exam at the end of the semester to replace the missed exam. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor regarding the missed exam and to schedule a date and time to take the cumulative replacement exam. Final exams cannot be made up – there are no exceptions.

### **PLEASE KEEP IN MIND**

- You are responsible for all material covered in class and in the textbook.
- All information presented in class is subject to appear on your exams. This includes information from the textbook that was not discussed in class.
- If you miss class you are responsible for any missed notes.
- It is your responsibility to know what announcements are made in class.

## Tentative Course Schedule

### **Week 1:**

Course Introduction & Defining Mental Illness

Readings:

- Chapter 1 in Cockerham
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### **Week 2:**

Theoretical Perspectives on Mental Health & Illness

Readings:

- Chapter 4 in Cockerham
  - The Stress Process by Pearlin (located on Blackboard)
  - A Longitudinal Investigation of Social Causation and Social Selection Processes Involved in the Association Between Socioeconomic Status and Psychiatric Disorders” by Johnson, Cohen, Dohrenwend, Link, & Brook (located on Blackboard)
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### **Week 3:**

Mental Disorder as a Deviant Behavior

Readings:

- Chapter 3 in Cockerham
  - Chapter 5 in Cockerham
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### **Week 4:**

The Epidemiology of Mental Illness & Social Patterns of Distress

Readings:

- Chapter 6 in Cockerham
  - Social Patterns of Distress by Mirowsky & Ross (located on Blackboard)
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### **Week 5:**

Social Class & Mental Disorder

Readings:

- Chapter 7 in Cockerham
  - Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease by Link & Phelan (located on Blackboard)
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### **Week 6:**

Age, Gender, Marital Status, and Race

Readings:

- Chapter 8 in Cockerham
  - Chapter 10 in Cockerham
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### **Week 7:**

Individual and Group Differences in Mental Illness

Reading:

- Why Are Some People More Distressed Than Others by Mirowsky & Ross (Located on Blackboard)
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MIDTERM EXAM

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**Week 8:**

Seeking Treatment & the Hospital

Readings:

- Chapter 11 in Cockerham
  - Chapter 12 in Cockerham
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**Week 9:**

FALL BREAK

Mental Illness in the Media – Social Institutions

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**Week 10:**

Mental Illness in the Media – Social Institutions (cont.)

Film: To Be Determined

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**Week 11:**

Stigma and Labeling

Reading:

- Chapter 13 in Cockerham
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**Week 12:**

Film: Silver Linings Playbook

Focus on Bipolar Disorder, Outcomes, & Family Responses

DUE: APPLICATION PAPER 1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

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**Week 13:**

Mental Illness & the Law

Mental Illness & Public Policy

Readings:

- Chapter 14 in Cockerham
  - Chapter 15 in Cockerham
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**Week 14:**

Research Methods & Data Sources

No Readings

DUE: APPLICATION PAPER 2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

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**Week 15:**

Student presentations (A presentation sign-up sheet will be distributed in class the week prior).

THANKSGIVING BREAK

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**Week 16:**

Final Exam