

S324: Sociology of Mental Illness

Ann McCranie
Class 1: Introduction

Syllabus

A copy is posted on Oncourse

- My contact information: email or Oncourse preferred
- Office hours and location: we'll decide right now
- Oncourse site: check it regularly
- You can call me "Ann."

Office Hours

During office hours, I will be online and available to chat on Oncourse when I am not meeting with another student in person. If you have a matter you need to discuss in absolute privacy, we should schedule a time to meet individually in my office in SISR 212.

- Mondays, 5-6:30 p.m. - Ballantine 204
 - Will be canceled on July 5, IUB holiday

Expectations of You

1. Come to class and stay for the duration
2. Do your readings listed in the syllabus and watch the films assigned
3. Take two exams
4. Take online (announced) and in-class quizzes (unannounced)
5. Write one five-page paper
6. Participate in person and/or online
7. Bring your own knowledge and experience to the classroom
8. Talk to me if you are having problems

What I Will Do

1. Keep track of your participation online and in class
2. Explain to you how you are graded and what you can do to improve your grade
3. Be available at set hours online and in person to meet with you to discuss your concerns
4. Answer your emails in a timely manner
5. Give you a break during each class session to use the restroom, to get a drink or some food
6. Provide you with a lecture sheet on Oncourse you can print out before each class to help you organize your notes and study for your exams
7. Give you quizzes in class and online that reflect the readings you were assigned or previous lecture topics

Your grade

Grade Distribution

- 15% **Quizzes** in class and online
- 10% **Participation**
- 20% **Exam 1** (Online, available July 7)
- 25% **Reaction Paper** (Mon. Aug. 2, 6:30 p.m.)
- 30% **Final Exam** (Wed., Aug. 11, 6:30 p.m.)

Remember

- Participation is both online and in class.
- I don't count attendance, but you can't make up quizzes without an excuse
- Makeup quizzes or exams are all essay-based
- You can earn up to 5% extra credit

Other important details

- Terms List
- Themes list
- Textbook, readings, and reading abstracts
- Break
- Food and caffeine
- Opinion-based questions on quizzes
- Testing or other accommodations
- Respectful tones and approach in class discussion
- What to do if you miss class

questions?

Social theoretical perspectives

- *Social constructionism*
 - *Society is actively and creatively produced by humans in social interaction. A researcher can't "take it for granted" and it is not "naturally" any particular way.*
- *Symbolic interactionism*
 - *Interested in way that meanings emerge through interaction; how people give meaning to their bodies, to their feelings, selves, histories and biographies, situations, the wider world, etc...*
- *Conflict theory*
 - *Views social order as a process of coercion rather than consensus; emphasizes conflict between groups for resources and the inequalities that can occur because of it.*

Themes for this class

- *Biological vs. Psychological vs. Social*
- *Causation*
- *Consequence*
- *Counting/quantifying illness*
- *Iatrogenesis*
- *Media Portrayal*
- *Medicalization*
- *Perspective*
- *Stigma*

Defining mental disorder

What is it?

What is mental disorder? DSM view

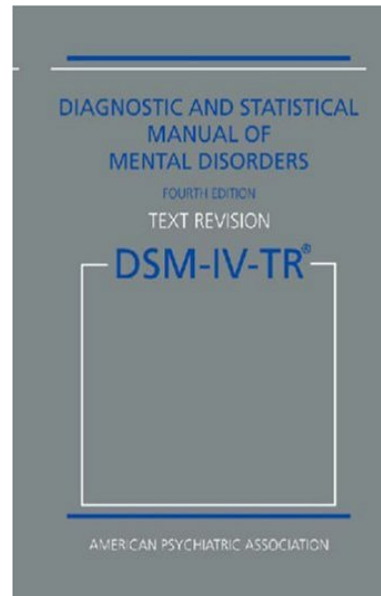
"A **clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern** that occurs in an individual and that is **associated with present distress** (e.g., a painful symptom) **or disability** (i.e., impairment in one or more important areas of functioning) or **with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom.**"

Also: "(M)not be merely an expectable and culturally sanctioned response to a particular event, for example, the death of a loved one. **Whatever its original cause, it must currently be considered a manifestation of a behavioral, psychological, or biological dysfunction in the individual.** Neither deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual) nor conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society are mental disorders unless the deviance or conflict is a symptom of a dysfunction in the individual, as described above."

Terms: DSM

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

The reference handbook of the American Psychiatric Association (currently being revised for DSM-V) that sets out criteria for different mental disorders so they can be diagnosed. Used in treatment and research.



Terms: Disciplines

● **Sociology**

- *The study of society, social relations, and how individuals, groups, and institutions interact with one another.*

● **Biology**

- *The study of living organisms - their structure, functions, origins, evolution, growth distributions, and interaction with physical environment*

● **Psychology**

- *The study of mental functions of individuals (human and animal) and their social interactions. Increasingly interested in neurological and physiological aspects of the brain. In addition, the clinical field of treatments for mh probs, largely through behavioral and cognitive therapies.*

● **Neuroscience**

- *The study of the nervous system, including the brain - focusing on development, structure, function and dysfunction, evolution, etc*

● **Psychiatry**

- *The study of the care and treatment of mental disorders. Also, the clinical field of medical treatment for those disorders.*

● **Social Work**

- *The study of ways to improve living conditions of people. Also, a service field devoted to improving the welfare of needy people and the general population.*

Terms: Often confusing



- **Psychopathology**
 - *The study of the causes and processes of mental disorders*
- **Psychopharmacology**
 - *The study of the medications used to treat mental disorders*
- **Psychosis**
 - *a condition of an individual marked by disordered thought, feeling, or perceptions and loss of contact with reality - such as hallucinations and delusions.*
- **SMI/Serious or Severe Mental Illness**
 - *an imprecise term used widely to denote mh problems that have serious impact on a person, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression.*
- **Psychopath/Sociopath**
 - *Term used to describe someone who acts to hurt other people and lacks conscience, either through socialization or personal predisposition.*

Terms: Deviance

- **Social Norms**
 - *A shared expectation of behavior that connotes what is socially desirable and acceptable. Not formal, though sometimes can be even more powerful than laws.*
- **Deviance**
 - *Behavior or personal attributes which deviate from norms.*
- **Social Control**
 - *The social processes - both formal and informal - by which behavior is regulated and deviance discouraged*

Terms: Ways to deal with deviance

- **Normalization**

- *Understanding of deviant behavior as "normal" and not of concern*

- **Medicalization**

- *The defining of deviant behavior as medical in origin and the treatment of the problem with medical effort. People become "sick" and are understood as patients to be treated.*

- **Criminalization**

- *The defining of deviant behavior as criminal and the handling of the problem by the criminal legal system. People become "bad" and are understood as criminals to be punished and detained.*

Terms: Language

- **Person-centered language**

- *Rather than referring to a person by the label of their mental illness, referring to them as a person with a problem. For example, instead of "schizophrenic," "person with schizophrenia"*

- **Slang**

- *Informal language, often derogatory, used to describe people by characteristics. For example, the terms, "crazy," "nuts," "wacko," and "schizo."*

- **Stigma**

- *A relation of devaluation of a person by another person or group. Stigma can be directed at individuals because of individual "character" issues, or by deformity of their body, or through membership in a devalued group.*
 - *An important distinction here is that stigma happens in relationships with other people, often called "normals."*

Terms: Getting better

- **Recovery**

- *"Regaining one's life" after having a mental health problem. Imprecise term increasingly favored by policy makers and "progressive" psychosocial treatment community.*

- **Rehabilitation**

- *Both a field of service to help people dealing with mental health problems and the process of regaining functions in life (social, work, family, roles). Term used by psychosocial treatment community to connote functional improvement.*

- **Remission**

- *The disappearance or abatement of signs or symptoms of an illness or disease. Favored by the medical community.*

- **Resilience**

- *The ability for people to cope with stressful or traumatic events and to "bounce back."*
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Next class - Wednesday

Read:

- Introduction, McLeod and Wright, pg xvii
- Medical Model of Madness: The Emergence of Mental Illness, Conrad and Schneider (**skim**), pg 3
- Mental Illness as Psychiatric Disorder, Bruce, pg 26
- What Is a Psychiatric Diagnosis?, Kleinman, pg 63
- Research in Mental Health: Social Etiology versus Social Consequences, Aneshensel, pg 161