This is classified as a social science course and one concerned with social diversity in the United States. It uses the perspective of sociology to examine the relationship between the experiences of wellness and sickness, those professions and institutions that provide health care, and social policies that are related to health care access. Health and illness are intimately related to population patterns of inequality in income, race, ethnicity, gender, and community structure. Access to care and the quality of care also relate to institutional patterns that are not specifically individual like institutional racism and socioeconomic class. The structures of health professions and of institutions like hospitals have significant effects on how race, socioeconomic inequality, and gender differences connect to health outcomes. Current health policy debates, both in the U.S. and in the international arena, also will be a major focus of this course.

**SOCI 130 and the University and Departmental Curriculum.**

This course fulfills the College Core Curriculum’s Social Sciences requirement. The requirement encourages students: 1) to explore the complex interaction between individuals, social groups, social structures, history, and culture; and 2) to apply theoretical principles of social analysis to critically interpret society. In addition, this course fulfills the Diversity in the United States requirement. Courses in this area convey information and knowledge about the nature and experiences of different groups within U.S. Society. These courses also help students to develop critical analysis skills for understanding the consequences of those differences and thinking about social and ethical responsibilities related to difference. In addition, this course fulfills the social sciences requirement for engineering students.

The focus on in this course on diversity, inequality, social oppression, and also addresses a central goal of the Sociology curriculum for majors and non-majors. The course provides clear examples of how sociologists understand what society and culture are, and doing this is a departmental goal for serving non-majors. For majors, the course presents core concepts of the discipline of sociology related to the nature of institutions, concepts about how to perceive and understand social inequality, how institutional power and social control affect the lives of individuals, and how individuals construct a sense of self and of their personal identities.

This course is a required for admission to advanced courses in sociology related to medicine, health, and society.
By the end of the semester students will:

1. understand what it means to speak of diversity in the United States and they will understand how inequality is related to diversity in several institutions and areas of social policy.
2. understand what institutions are and the important role they play in shaping the nature of society and culture in America.
3. understand how experiences with institutions and with diversity shape and help to build a sense of self and of identity for individuals.
4. have experience working on a team and with speaking in public.

Students are encouraged to visit the Moodle site for the course, which provides a complete list of learning outcomes specific to the College Core Curriculum, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and Bucknell University at large.
Specific Course Information

There will be four short graded writing assignments in this course. There also is a library assignment that will be counted towards your participation grade. Together the four graded papers will count for 20% of your grade (5% each). Without permission in advance, papers may not be turned in after class time. Turn in a paper version of each assignment. Make sure you have an electronic copy since papers sometimes are lost.

There also will be five quizzes on the readings made available on Moodle. Each quiz will cover approximately six classes and must be completed before class on the days they are listed. These will be included in your class participation grade.

At the end of the term you will participate in a debate and, as a result of the research you do for that project, you must prepare a five-page research paper. Your performance in the debate will count for 10% and your paper will count 15% so that together the debates will make up 25% of your grade.

Although this will be a group debate project you ought to think of this work as a personal research paper. The debate is an oral report of your work. Often I grade the verbal performance in the debate more easily than I grade the final paper. You ought to think of them as separate pieces of work. Students often just hand in a written report that they have read during the debate. This is a mistake. In the debate your presentation ought to be relatively unscripted and related to the context and the interaction that is going on in the debate. The paper is more formal and it is a research paper that must include correct, formal academic citations (using American Psychological Association or APA format). It will be graded as such.

50% of your grade will be determined by two midterm exams. Each of these exams will cover readings, lectures, and other assignments during the time period covered by the exam—the second exam will not cover the entire course. Exams will be on line and they will be made up of a random selection of the quiz questions, a random selection of terms to be defined (from lists provided at the top of each day’s class notes that I place on Moodle), three short essay questions (chosen from a list of five alternatives that I will not give you in advance) and one long essay question (chosen from among two alternatives). Each of these sections will be set up as a separate test on Moodle with the total of your score on the four subtests making up your exam grade. I will make a pool of 60 quiz questions, 60 terms to be defined, and five long essay questions available a week before each test. Only these materials will be used on the exams and Moodle will randomly select from these materials to provide you with the correct number of exam questions for you to work on.

Because there are four subsections, you can spread out the times when you take the exam and I will give you a four day period (the first one will be open Thursday morning to Sunday night and the second Monday to Thursday) to
complete the four subtests. **If you have learning disabilities or other problems that make it hard for you to take an on-line exam, let me know and we will work out special arrangements for you to take the tests.**

5% of your grade will reflect your participation in class. Participation is based on the subjective perception of the instructor. It includes the following: attendance; asking questions during debates; being an active and helpful member of your debate team; participating in class discussions, which includes being civil (showing up on time, not sleeping in class, not texting in class, not having your cell phone ring in class and so on), completing and getting high grades on reading quizzes, doing a consistent good job over the course of the semester, and doing a good job on the library assignment.

**Attendance is required unless you have permission of the instructor.** Religious holidays are excused if you inform the professor. If you miss one of the first two days of class or one of the last two days of class these will count for double absences (e.g., it will be as though you had missed two class sessions.) If you miss more than three days during the semester (or one session plus one of the double-counted days listed in the last sentence) your grade will be dropped. You will lose 1/3 of a letter grade (A goes to A-, A- to B+ and so on) for each infraction (if you miss one of the first two days and you miss four days of class your grade will drop by 2/3 of a letter grade).

**These grade reductions will be implemented after the rest of your participation grade has been computed.** Failing on any of these dimensions can cause your participation grade to drop one or two full grades.

Six of the last seven class periods (this depends on the number of debate teams—it could be five classes or seven classes) of the semester will be devoted to debates. The last day of the class will be devoted to course evaluation as required by the University.

Each student will work on one of six teams. On each team, two or three students will argue the pro position against two or three other students who argue the con position. Topics are controversial issue related to health ethics and policy. This project requires teamwork, library research, and effective public speaking. We start working on debate research early in the semester and part of your debate grade will be based on your active participation early in the term as well as during the final parts of the project.

In summary, the components of your grade are the following:

Four short papers 20%
Participation including six readings quizzes 5%
Debate 10%
Paper on debate topic 15%
Two midterm exams 50%

On September 27 we will have a class library session with a librarian whom you may consult about your debate topic over the course of the semester. Your other team members depend on your being responsible to others and on your doing your fair share of the work. In grading you, I pay attention to how much work individuals do and I am prepared to penalize those who do not do their share. Start early on your research and help your team members!

The main focus of writing instruction in this course is on how to offer arguments that defend a particular point of view, that are logically consistent, and that make good use of information. There are guidelines about how to do the short writing assignments on the course website and there also are specific suggestions for doing each of the assignments. I expect you to read these materials and to use them in preparing your responses. If your response does not show that you have read and understood this material on the web your grade is likely to suffer.

The debates will give you a chance to demonstrate orally as well as in print whether you can convince an audience of your point of view. Earlier assignments in the term are designed to help you formulate arguments as well as to get you started early on the research required for a successful debate performance.

Some readings for this course involve accessing scanned copies of articles that can be accessed via Moodle. If you cannot open assigned reading materials send an email to Prof. Milofsky) and you will be sent an email copy of the reading. You’ll need to do this a couple of days in advance of class since I will not usually be monitoring email at night. Exams, quizzes, details about writing assignments, and study materials for exams will be located on Moodle. The current (and updated) version of the course syllabus will be located in the top section of our Moodle site.

Three publications should be in the bookstore:


Bette A. Grey, *Death is Not an Option. A View from a Free Medical Clinic.* (Xlibris 2012).

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoRUrWcdkQ4
Course Schedule

The following is a detailed schedule of assignments for the semester. This schedule is likely to be changed as we go along. The correct and updated version of the syllabus will be maintained in the Course Information section of Moodle. The schedule will tell you the specific reading requirements you must do, the order in which they will occur, and what the writing assignment and examination schedule is. Reading assignments are to be completed on the date they are listed. Whenever possible, bring assigned readings to class. Also, pay attention to the other assignments listed in this syllabus. You are responsible for doing them if they are listed here.

1—Aug 28  
Introduction to the course. What is medical sociology?  

2—Aug 30  
Health  
**Read** Barr, “Introduction to the social roots of health disparities.” Ch. 1, pp. 1-13, and “What is ‘health’? How should We define it? How should we measure it?” Ch. 2, pp. 14-41.  
Debate survey distributed in class, due Monday.

3—Sep 2  
Obamacare.  
http://www.icpublicpolicy.org/IMG/pdf/p_90__s1_brandon.pdf  
Since we have a writing assignment on Obamacare, you may want to look at the web sites giving information on Obamacare listed on our class Moodle site.

Return debate surveys

4—Sep 4  
Getting people registered for insurance exchanges. Visit from insurance agent Joel Turrell  
**Read** On Moodle  T. Skocpol, “Flashpoint in Health Care Reform.” Dissent 59 (2): 95-101 (Spring 2012). (This is a book review of the book we will shortly be reading by Paul Starr.)

5—Sep 6  
Explaining Obamacare  
**Video** View the following You Tube video:  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoRUrWcdkQ4
**Writing** Paper#1: Write a “letter to the editor” (of some newspaper) or a letter to clients of a social service agency like the Community Action Agency of Selinsgrove. Your letter may encourage people to register or it may tell people not to register or it may take some other position (if you are neither for nor against). You must take a position, justify the position you take, and give information about the law and the upcoming deadlines.

In your letter, explain how citizens who lack health insurance can go about registering for the insurance exchanges mandated by the law. Tell how citizens can tell whether they need to do this. Tell how they can figure out what it will cost them. Tell what benefits will follow registering. Tell if there are penalties for not registering.

**Moodle** Reading Quiz #1 must be completed.


8—Sep 10 Required lecture: Sami Schalk, Indiana University: Blackness and Disability: From Slavery to a Not-so-Distant Future. 27th Annual Black Experiences Lecture. LC Forum, 7:00 PM. This talk replaces the class Milofsky must miss on November 20. **Read** on Moodle: Beatrice Wright, Ch. 1, "Circumscribing the Problem", pp 1-12 in *Physical Disability---A Psychological Approach* (NY: Harper and Row, 1960). Also read:

9—Sep 11
The sick role and sickness as deviance; discuss Tuesday lecture.

10—Sep 13
Historical background for universal health care.

11—Sep 16
The history of health reform efforts.

*Debate Team Assignments Will Be Given Out.*

12—Sep 18
Republican revolt.
**Read** Starr, “Getting to 1994.” Ch. 4, pp. 103-128 and “Comes the counterrevolution. 1995-2006.” Ch. 5, pp 129-158.

13—Sep 20
Health Care Quality and Access
*Writing* Paper #2: Access to Health Care. Write a 3-page paper in which you choose three sets of Powerpoint slides from the web site, *Kaiser Family Foundation Fast Facts* and tell how these slides give a picture of access to health care. Instructions for this assignment are on the handout titled “Analyzing Health Care Experiences” on Moodle.
**Moodle Reading Quiz #2 must be completed*

14—Sep 23
Consensus building and passing Obamacare.
**Read** Starr, “The rise of a reform consensus.” Ch. 6, pp. 161-193, and “Breaking through, 2009-2010.” Ch. 7, pp. 194-238.

15—Sep 25
The prospects for Obamacare.
**Read** The Affordable Care Act as Public Philosophy.” Ch. 8, pp. 239-266 and “Reform’s uncertain fate.” Ch. 9, pp 267-281.

16—Sep 27
Meet with reference librarian and debate teams.
Meet in Lower Level I Library Lab.
**Writing** Library Assignment must be completed before class and a hard copy must be handed in at the end of class (you will want to use the work you put into the assignment during class).

17—Sep 30
What defines disease?
**Read** on Moodle: M. Specter, “The Lyme wars. The Lyme-disease infection rate is growing. So is the battle over how to treat it.” And optional (the part we’ll talk about with content you’ll be responsible for [as in, there may be exam questions drawn from here] is in pp. 83-88; the rest of the article is difficult and off-point for our discussion.)

18—Oct 2
Applying the concept of disease to epilepsy.
**Writing** Paper #3. Be prepared to discuss your paper in class. Writing assignments are due in class and may not be handed in late. Write a three-page paper in which you take a definite pro or con position on the following proposition: Epilepsy is not disease. For some commentary, look at handout on Moodle called "Is Epilepsy a Disease?" Also consult the rubric handout given on Moodle called Writing a Short Paper Assignment. Remember that grading will be strictly guided by the rubric.

19—Oct 3
First Midterm Exam materials become available. The Exam covers material from Aug 28 to Oct 2.

20—Oct 4
The notion of “self”

**Moodle Reading Quiz #3 must be completed.**

21—Oct 7
The notion of role


23—Oct 10 **First Midterm becomes available on line, 12:00 AM. Study materials for the exam are removed from Moodle.**

24—Oct 11 Gender diversity Video: *Codes of Gender*: P96.S5 C64 2009 (we will only have time for to see the first half of this film, although if I can I’ll let it run through the noon hour for people who want to stay to see the end.) **Read** On Moodle J. Lorber, “Night to his day: The social construction of gender.” Pp. 13-36, Ch. 1, in J. Lorber, *Paradoxes of Gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) Oct 14 **First Midterm Exam Ends, 12:00 AM.**

Oct 14 Fall Break.

Oct 16 Midterm grades due, 12:00 PM

25—Oct 16 Authority, evidence based medicine, and quality control in medicine. **Read** On Moodle You are responsible for pp. 1-8 while the remainder of the paper provided is optional reading (it is the first chapter of the book and you may be interested) in A. S. Gerber and E. M. Patashnik *Unhealthy Politics: Professional Authority, Partisan Polarization, and the Battle over Evidence-Based Medicine*. Book prospectus for Princeton University Press. May 14, 2012


27—Oct 21 Empathic knowing; visit from Adele Spegman, Geisinger nurse researcher.

28—Oct 23 Social class as a problem in doctor/patient interaction


**Social Class, Race, and Health**

29—Oct 25 Socioeconomic status (SES) and health

**Read** On Moodle D.A. Barr, “The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Health, or, ‘They Call It Poor Health’ for a Reason.” Ch. 3, pp 42-72

30—Oct 28 Race, class, and health

**Film** “In Sickness and in Wealth.” (56 min.) RA448.4 .U53 2008. Part I of *Unnatural Causes. Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*


**Moodle** Reading Quiz #4 must be completed.

31—Oct 30 Social inequality and socioeconomic status (SES) as sociological concepts.

**Read** Barr, “Understanding How Low Social Status Leads to Poor Health.” Ch. 4, pp 73-104


*After film, debate teams meet will briefly in class.*
33—Nov 4  Race, ethnicity, and health.  
**Read** Barr, “Race, Ethnicity and Health.” Ch. 5, pp 105-133.

34—Nov 6  Race vs. social class  
**Read** Barr, “Race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and health. Which is more important in affecting health status?” Ch. 6, pp. 134-168.

35—Nov 8  Race and medical treatment  
**Read** Barr, “All things being equal, does race/ethnicity affect how physicians treat patients?” Ch. 7, pp. 169-199.

(Rural health week)  
36—Nov 11 Reasons for race disparities in care  
**Read** Barr, “Why does race/ethnicity affect the way physicians treat patients?” Ch. 8, pp. 200-227, and “When, if ever, is it appropriate to use a patient’s race/ethnicity to guide medical decisions?” Ch. 9, pp 228-246.

37—Nov 13 Saving lives vs. cost rationality.

**Writing** Paper #4. Write a 3-page paper, taking a definite position pro or con on the following proposition: In Belkin’s article “The High Cost of Living,” Armando Dimas should not have been sent from Madisonville Community Hospital via life flight to the Hermann Medical Center. The premise of my question is that since the physician had never seen a patient with his injury survive and he thought he would die, the transfer imposed a financial burden on Hermann Hospital and threatened care for other patients when there was little chance that patient Dimas would gain anything. Physicians must and in fact do make decisions frequently to terminate care. Consequently the decision to transport would not be a morally radical choice.

For some commentary, look In the Writing Assignments section of Moodle under Assignments. There is a commentary handout called "Expensive Care for an Illegal Alien." Also consult the rubric handout on writing short paper assignment. Remember that grading will be strictly guided by the rubric.

38—Nov 15  Debate #1
39—Nov 18  Debate #2
Nov 20  No class.
**Moodle** Reading Quiz #5 must be completed.

Nov 22  No class.

40—Nov 25  Debate #3

Nov 27  Thanksgiving Break

Nov 29  Thanksgiving Break

Nov 30  Final Exam study materials become available on Moodle, 12:00 AM.

41—Dec 2  Debate #4

42—Dec 4  Debate #5

43—Dec 6  Debate #6

Dec 7 (Sat.)  Second Midterm becomes available on line, 12:00 AM. Study materials for the exam are removed from Moodle.

44—Dec 9  Course evaluation.

Dec 10 (Tues.)  Second Midterm ends, 11:59 PM.

Dec 13 (Fri)  Debate papers are due by 5 PM.