

Sociology of Health and Illness (Elective)

Credit Value: 20

Course Organiser: Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley

Course Instructor(s): Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley and invited lecturers

Time: Semester 2 Weeks 1-11
Wednesday 14:00-15:50

Short course description: This course introduces sociological perspectives on health, illness and the practice of public health. Key themes include the social patterning health and illness, risk, surveillance and health, lay and expert knowledge, constructions of health and illness, the media and health, and new technologies and health.

Course prerequisites: None

Aim: To introduce students to the main theoretical perspectives in the sociology of health and illness, and their application in public health research.

Learning objectives: Students will develop an understanding of different sociological perspectives and be able to evaluate the strengths and weakness of different theories.

They will learn to examine key concepts and approaches in public health from a critical sociological perspective, developing their awareness of issues regarding the production and distribution of power and knowledge.

They learn to link individual experiences of health and illness with social forces, group dynamics, and the social construction of normality.

Teaching methods: Seminars will be structured around key themes, and will examine key research papers. All students are required to do pre-seminar reading and make one presentation to the class, which will be assessed.

Assessment: Seminar presentation (20%) and an assignment of 2,500 words (80%).