Semester: Spring 2020

Medicine and Health Care in East Asia

Section 1

Instructor/Title  Professor Genaro Castro-Vázquez
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[Course Outline / Description]

In this course students are invited to think about one of the more serious issues affecting contemporary East Asian societies: the provision of health care for an ageing population. Grounded in a sociological viewpoint, the first part of the module provides a general and succinct review of concepts and theories that have been used to explain medicine and health care-related issues in society. The second part of the course explores how the constructs of social class, gender, race and ethnicity can help understand the provision of health care in East Asia, where the economic and social impact of an ageing population is becoming increasingly apparent. The last part of the course draws on mental health-related issues to shed some critical light on how depression, dementia, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders affect East Asian societies and enlarge social inequality among ageing populations.

Section 2

[Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes]

"1. To demonstrate that medical knowledge is not disinterested, objective, scientific knowledge.
2. To show that medical knowledge is both shaped by and shapes the social structures within which it is embedded.
3. To introduce the principles of the sociology of health.
4. To examine the social and political climate that shapes the understanding of the causes of health and disease.
5. To review Marxist, Functionalist, Interactionist, Phenomenologist, Feminist and Foucauldian approaches to health.
6. To examine the impact of ethnicity, gender, social class, stigma, and age on health and illness."

Section 3

[Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials]

Lesson 1  Introduction  Syllabus reading
Lesson 2  Health and disease in Japan a personal view  Essay writing
Lesson 4  Concepts of health and medicine (2)  Submission of mindmap 1

Lesson 6  Medical power and knowledge (2)  Submission of mindmap 2

Lesson 7  Medical power and knowledge (3)  Eyre, R. (2018) The Children Act

Lesson 8  Medical power and knowledge (4)  Submission of mindmap 3


Lesson 10  Challenging medical dominance (1)  Submission of mindmap 4


Lesson 12  Sociological research on health matters (1b)  Submission of mindmap 5


Lesson 14  Sociological research on health matters (2b)  Submission of mindmap 6

Lesson 15  Quiz 1  Answering quiz

Lesson 16  Quiz 1 Review  Reviewing quiz


Lesson 18  Health, ethnicity and race (2)  Submission of mindmap 7


Lesson 20  Gender and health (2)  Submission of mindmap 8


Lesson 22  Mental health (1b)  Submission of mindmap 9
Lesson 24 Mental health (2b) Submission of mindmap 10
Lesson 26 Health, chronic illness and disability (1b) Submission of mindmap 11
Lesson 27 Health, chronic illness and disability (2a) Akune, T. (2014) Hana chan’s miso soup
Lesson 28 Health, chronic illness and disability (2b) Submission of mindmap 12
Lesson 29 Quiz 2 Answering quiz 2
Lesson 30 Quiz 2 Review Reviewing quiz 2

Textbooks/Reading Materials

Compulsory readings are available to download at the Blackboard

Section 4

[Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric]

Final Exam 20%
Quizzes or Midterm Exam 20%
Mindmaps 30%
Class Participation 30%

Students are required to write short essays for the final exam and quizzes, which will last for about 50 minutes
Students are expected to have read the assigned readings prior to lecture and should participate actively in class discussions. Based on the required readings, a mind-map MUST be produced. A total of 12 mindmaps MUST be handed in as indicated above.