

Culture and Health

Department: Fudan International Summer Session 2026

Course Code							
Course Title	Culture and Health						
Credit	2	Experiment (including Computer) Credit		Practice Credit		Aesthetic Education Credit	
Credit Hours Per Week	9 credit hours per week. 36+3 tutorial hours in total (one credit hour is 45 minutes)	Education on The Hard- Working Spirit Credit Hours		Language of Instruction		Honors Course	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Course Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Core General Education Course <input type="checkbox"/> Specific General Education Course <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Course in General Discipline <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Others			2+X Major :			
				<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Core Course <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Advanced Course Non 2+X Major : <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Compulsory Course <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Elective Course			
Course Objectives	1) To inspire an appreciation of the significant and complex role played by culture in issues related to health and illnesses in China and around the globe. 2) To help students understand human health, disease and (un)wellbeing from the perspective that these realities are determined, influenced and shaped by the multifaceted and complex contexts in which we live our lives. 3) To provide students with basic conceptual tools to analyze structural issues as well as everyday encounters, such as the dynamics of the patient-doctor relationship, the power of the pharmaceutical industry, health inequalities, etc.						
Course Description	This course examines health and illness from a cultural perspective. Specifically, we will analyze the social meanings associated with health and illness, medical knowledge production, medical decision-making, and global health in cross-cultural contexts. The students will have a chance to delve into issues related to the social processes of framing illness, the medicalization of						

	life in China and elsewhere, the complexity and uncertainty surrounding medical decisions, and the cultural aspects of health practices across the globe.
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Course Requirements:

Prerequisites: None.

Teaching Methods:

Lecture and in-class discussion

Course Director's Academic Background:

Dr. Xiao MEI is Associate Professor at Department of Sociology, Fudan University. She received BA in sociology from Carleton University, Canada, MSc from LSE, and PhD from University of Cambridge, UK. Her research interest is in cultural sociology, medical sociology, and politics of everyday life. Her work appeared in *Social Science & Medicine*, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, *Chinese Journal of Sociology*, and other academic journals.

Instructor's Academic Background:

Members of Teaching Team

Name	Gender	Professional Title	Department	Responsibility
Xiao Mei	Female	Associate Professor	Sociology	Lecture & Discussion

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Social Meanings of Health and Illness

Theme #1: Social Constructions of Illness in China

Readings:

Kleinman, Arthur, 2020, "Chapter 1: The Meaning of Symptoms and Disorders" & "Chapter 6: Neurasthenia: Weakness and Exhaustion in the United States and China", In *The Illness Narratives*. New York: Basic Books.

Lee, S., 1999, Diagnosis Postponed: Shenjing Shuairuo and the Transformation of Psychiatry in Post-Mao China. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 23:349-380.

Theme #2: Stigma and Identity Associated with Illness

Readings:

- Jutel, Annemarie, 2009, "Sociology of Diagnosis: A Preliminary Review." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 31(2): 278-299.
- Brown, P.J. and Ron Barrett, 2016, *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.[Ablon, *Nature of Stigma*]
- Lock, Margaret, 1998, "Anomalous Ageing: Managing the Postmenopausal Body." *Body & Society* 4(1):35-61.[optional]

Theme #3: How Social Relationships and Public Discourses Shape Health and Illness

Readings:

- Reich, Jennifer A., 2016, *Calling the Shots: Why Parents Reject Vaccines*. New York: New York University Press.[Chapter 2: Parents as Experts]
- Ma, Zhiying, 2025, *Between Families and Institutions: Mental Health and Biopolitical Paternalism in Contemporary China*. Durham: Duke University Press.[Chapter 5]

Week 2: Production of Medical Knowledge

Theme #4: Medicalization and Illness Narrative

Readings:

- Conrad, Peter, 1992, "Medicalization and Social Control." *Annual Review of Sociology*,18: 209-232.
- Garro, Linda, and Cheryl Mattingly, 2000, "Narrative as Construct and Construction". In *Narrative and the Cultural Construction of Illness and Healing*. C. Mattingly and L. Garro, eds. Berkeley:University of California Press.

Theme #5: Mental Health in China

Readings:

- Huang, Hsuan-Ying, 2018, "Untamed Jianghu or Emerging Profession: Diagnosing the Psycho-Boom amid China's Mental Health Legislation." *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 42 (2): 371-400.
- Lin, Zhuyun & Zhiying Ma, 2023, "When Psychiatry Encounters Local Knowledge of Madness: Ethnographic Observations in a Chinese Psychiatric Hospital." *Social Science and Medicine - Mental Health* 4.

Theme #6: Politics of the "Big Pharma" and the Medical-Industrial Complex

Readings:

- Pryma, Jane. 2022. "Technologies of Expertise: Opioids and Pain Management's Credibility Crisis." *American Sociological Review* 87(1).
- Macy, Beth. 2018. *Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company That Addicted America*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.[optional]

Week 3: Medical Decision-making in Cross-Cultural Contexts

Theme #7: Politics of Doctor-Patient Relationship in China

Readings:

Timmermans, Stefan, 2020, "The Engaged Patient: Changes in Patient-Doctor Communication." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 61 (3): 259-73.

Zhou, Min et al., 2017, "Changing of China's Health Policy and Doctor-Patient relationship: 1949-2016." *Health Policy and Technology* 6(3):358-367.

Theme #8: Cross-cultural Medical Ethics

Readings:

Beauchamp, T. & J. Childress J. 2019, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 8th edition. New York: Oxford University Press. [Chapter 4-7]

Huxtable R., 2013, "For and Against the Four Principles of Biomedical Ethics." *Clinical Ethics* 8(2-3):39-43.

***Field trip to a medical institution in Shanghai**

Week 4: Health Inequalities & In-class Presentations

***Student Presentations on Interview Projects**

Theme #9: Hospice Care and Different Perceptions on Death

Readings:

Timmermans, S., 2005. "Death Brokering: Constructing Culturally Appropriate Deaths." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 27 (7): 993-1013.

Livne, R. 2014. "Economies of Dying: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care: The Moralization of Economic Scarcity in U.S. Hospice Care." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):888-911.

Theme #10: Health Inequalities in China and Across the Globe

Readings:

Fang, Pengqian et al., 2010, "Regional Inequality in Health and Its Determinants: Evidence from China." *Health Policy* 94(1):14-25.

Mantwill, S. & N. Diviani, 2019. "Health Literacy and Health Disparities: A Global Perspective." Pp. 139-152 in *International Handbook of Health Literacy*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

León-Montoya, G., Albar, M. J., & León-Larios, F. 2018. "Community Public Health Practicum in the Amazon Region of Peru: Student Experiences." *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community* 46(1):73 - 83.

The design of class discussion or exercise, practice, experience and so on:

There will be class discussion following each lecture. Students will be expected to conduct an interview on illness experiences and give presentations in class. There will be a field trip to a medical institution in

Shanghai.

If you need a TA, please indicate the assignment of assistant:

Help prepare course materials and class discussion; help grade quizzes, interview reports and other assignments.

Grading & Evaluation:

- 1) Attendance and participation in discussions (20%)
- 2) In-class surprise quizzes (3) on required readings (30%)
- 3) An in-depth interview about an illness experience: a written report and a 10-minute presentation (50%)

Usage of Textbook: Yes (complete textbook information form below) No

Textbook Information (No more than two textbooks) :

Title	Author	ISBN	Publishing Time	Publisher	Type I	Type II
					<input type="checkbox"/> Self-compiled Textbook (Published) <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mainland Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Other Textbook (Published)	<input type="checkbox"/> National Planning Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial and Ministerial Planning Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> School Level Planning Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Others
					<input type="checkbox"/> Self-compiled Textbook (Published) <input type="checkbox"/> Non-mainland Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Other Textbook (Published)	<input type="checkbox"/> National Planning Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial and Ministerial Planning Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> School Level Planning Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Others

Teaching Materials & References:

Readings are indicated in the course schedule.