

## **SC2211: Medical Sociology**

### **FASStrack 2025**

**Schedule: PM Session (2pm-6pm, Singapore Time)**

**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday**

#### **Course Description**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, why do some people wear masks in public, but others do not? Why are shoppers across the world hoarding toilet paper? Why are nations taking different strategies against this virus? How do you think about transferring ventilators from old and sicker patients to young and healthier patients, given ventilators are in shortage? If you think this is so wrong, how about prioritizing the use of ventilators by children? Why? Beyond this pandemic, have you asked since when baldness became a medical issue? How about infertility? Should Internet addiction be considered as a medical issue? Why was homosexuality first taken as a mental disorder but not now? How do we value a medical innovation if it only benefits people who can afford it? Now, a bottom-line question: how should we develop a better medical system for tomorrow?

This module is to prepare you to answer questions like the above. As a comprehensive introduction to medical sociology, this module aims to illustrate that medicine is also a social science. To display the validity of this argument, this module will lead you through an exciting journey, visiting various topics such as epidemiology, social determinants of diseases, experience of illness, social construction of health, medical professions, medical organizations, and healthcare systems.

People with no sociological background, if keen to the questions above, should not be worried about choosing this module, as the needed sociological knowledge to understand the content of this module will be sufficiently covered in teaching. To facilitate understanding, all significant themes are examined sociologically in constant contrast with biological and medical views, which you may be more familiar with. Concrete examples are always provided across countries and regions. At the end of this module, you will be able to apply the sociological perspectives to understand diseases, illness, and sickness, and to make sense of health professions and healthcare systems.

#### **Lecturer**

A/P Feng Qiushi ("Dr. Feng"), [socfq@nus.edu.sg](mailto:socfq@nus.edu.sg)

#### **Course Assessment (CA=100%)**

<b><i>Assessments</i></b>		<b><i>Deadlines</i></b>
Participation	10%	-
Individual Presentation	20%	Throughout the 2 weeks
Mid-term test	30%	15h July
Final Essay	40%	21th July
Total for CA:	100%	

- Participation (10%): You are required to attend all lectures.
- Individual presentation (20%): You are required to do an individual short presentation. The requirements for the presentation will be detailed in lectures.
- Mid-term test (30%): You will take a mid-term test, which contains a few essay questions.

- Final essay (40%): You will turn in a final essay of about 1,500 words on July 21st. The requirements will be detailed in lectures.

**Course Topic (You are required to attend all the lectures)**

<b>Week# / Lecture#</b>	<b>Theme and Required Readings</b>
<b>Week 1 / Lecture 1</b>	<b>Introduction: Medicine as Social Science</b> Engel, GL (1997) The Need for A New Medical Model Sinha, V (2017) Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) <b>Perspective, Model, and Theory in Medical Sociology</b> Textbook Ch 1 Medical Sociology Marmot, M (2010) Fair Society, Healthy Lives
<b>Week 1 / Lecture 2</b>	<b>Social Epidemiology</b> Textbook Ch 2 Epidemiology Yeung & Hu (2018) Family and Population Changes in Singapore <b>Social Causes of Disease</b> Textbook Ch 3 The Social Demography of Health: Social Class Textbook Ch 4 The Social Demography of Health: Gender, Age and Race
<b>Week 1 / Lecture 3</b>	<b>Experience of Illness</b> Textbook Ch 7 Illness Behavior Fioretti, C et al. (2016). Research Studies on Patients' Illness Experience
<b>Week 1 / Lecture 4</b>	<b>Social Construction of Health</b> Textbook Ch 8 The Sick Role Napier, AD et al. (2014) Culture and Health <b>Special Topics</b> Textbook Ch 13 Complementary and Alternative Medicine WHO (2013) WHO traditional medicine strategy: 2014-2023
<b>Week 2 / Lecture 5</b>	<b>Mid-term Test</b> <b>Physicians</b> Textbook Ch 10 Physicians Textbook Ch 11 The Physician in a Changing Society <b>Nurses</b> Textbook Ch 12 Nurses, Physical Assistants, Pharmacists and Midwives Lim. J (2010) Stress and Coping in Singaporean Nurses
<b>Week 2 / Lecture 6</b>	<b>Hospitals</b> Textbook Ch 14 Hospitals Ramesh, M. (2008) Autonomy and Control in Public Hospital Reforms <b>Student Presentations</b>
<b>Week 2 / Lecture 7</b>	<b>Healthcare Systems</b> Textbook Ch 15 Health Care Reform and Health Policy in the United States Goh, LG (2011) Integrated Eldercare Course in Singapore <b>Student Presentations</b>
<b>Week 2 / Lecture 8</b>	<b>Global Health</b> Textbook Ch 16 Global Health Care Textbook Ch 6 Health Behaviour and Lifestyle <b>Student Presentations</b>

**Textbook and Readings**

- Cockerham, William C. 2017. *Medical Sociology*. 14th edition.
- Other readings are either uploaded at LumiNUS or downloadable from NUS library