



Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Family Sciences

**SOC 4070 Medical Sociology**

3 Units

*Spring 2025*

**Mondays 3-5:45PM**

**Rohr 112**

**Final Exam: 5/5 Monday 3-5:45 PM**

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<b>Office location and hours:</b>	Rohr (Sociology) Hall Room 106 Tuesdays and Thursdays 12-3pm, Wednesdays and Fridays 3-5pm Make an appointment so I can block the time for you.

**PLNU Mission**

**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**Welcome and Course Description**

Welcome! This course presents an overview of the sociology of medicine, or the sociology of health, illness, and healthcare. We will seek to understand health and medicine by exploring: the debate regarding calling the field “sociology of medicine” or by another name and why; the role of medicine as social control; what it means to be healthy or ill and who gets to define these terms; the distribution of health and illness in terms of race, class, and gender; the relationship between professional authority and patients; activism around health matters; political economy of health and healthcare; and mental health/mental illness. I hope that the course meets your diverse interests, whether in social work, social science, and/or in the natural sciences.

By the end of the course, the expectation is that students will: (1) have an understanding of the various definitions of health and illness; (2) be able to talk about how a person’s socio-demographic characteristics influence their health; (3) have insight into how patients and practitioners understand health and illness and their roles in the healthcare process.

Any background you bring to our class will enrich your individual as well as our collective experience and learning. Our diversity and interdisciplinarity will be strengths in this class!

## Program and Course Learning Outcomes

PLOs identify what students will know and be able to demonstrate in their chosen discipline upon graduation. Below are for those in Sociology.

1. You will be able to analyze society, social structures, and patterns of human thoughts and behavior.
2. You will be able to navigate a world of rich cultural diversity.
3. You will be able to conduct social research.
4. You will be prepared to serve Christianly and competently in diverse vocational or social setting.

CLOs are statements of what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do by the time they complete the course. These outcomes are assessed by your performance in quizzes/exams, short essays, Community Ministries reflections, and participation in class.

1. You will be able to define the following key terms: cognitive empathy, sociological imagination, cultural competency, socialization, Structural Functionalism, Conflict Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism—and how they impact and contribute to social change and social movements.
2. You will understand the reasons and methods of sociological research, as well as research ethics.
3. You will be able to understand the role of socialization agents, what they are, and how they impact individuals and groups at the micro and macro levels.
4. You will learn about the rich cultural diversity in society, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sex, sexuality, religion, ability, and disability.
5. You will understand the importance of practicing cognitive empathy, the sociological imagination, and cultural humility and competency in diverse vocational or social settings.

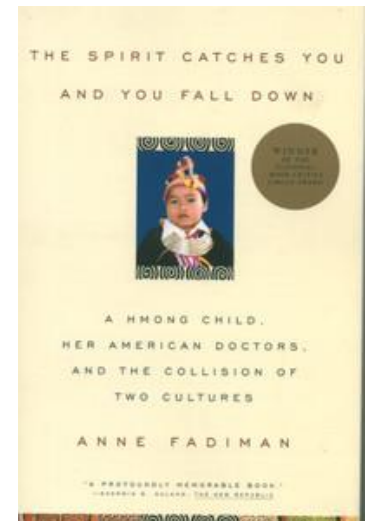
## Required Texts and Recommended Study Resources\*

All of our required readings are in Canvas, except for Anne Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches you and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* (2012).

All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without permission of the copyright owner.

Note:

1. Cite book author/editor, title, edition, publisher and date as you expect the students to cite books in their papers.
2. For web references, use URL.



## Course Credit Hour Information

In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3-unit class delivered over 15 weeks. It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their coursework. I hope that your learning continues beyond this class, so on top of the course learning outcomes listed above, please let me know of other spiritual, service-oriented, or career-oriented goals you may have that you hope to work toward, and we can have a conversation about how you hope this class can be helpful for you.

## Assignments and Assignment Values

ASSIGNMENT VALUES	
Attendance – one absence will result in the loss of a third of this percentage	15%
Participation and Discussion – one absence will result in the loss of a third of this percentage	15%
Weekly Response Papers	25%
Book Review	10%
Final Exam	10%
Class Facilitation	25%

**Attendance, Participation, and Discussion. (30%)** We only meet 14 times this semester so attendance, participation, and contributions to discussion during our scheduled class meetings are vital. Please come to class having read and prepared to engage. Each day of absence will result in a huge deduction (see above) because one class meeting is essentially three 55-minute classes. I hope you understand! Each student will be graded based on their thoughtful contribution. You may be asked to submit a self-assessment of your own discussion participation grade with an explanation.

Participation is key for building a collaborative learning community. A significant goal in this class is for students to foster respectful dialogue regarding topics in the field, which can be sources of conflict or contention in society. I encourage students to take accountability and responsibility for the impact of their statements. I hope that our class times and discussions nurture curiosity and openness to learning from and about each other, in addition the course topic. We come from diverse backgrounds that have shaped our various perspectives, and I pray that we can grow our understanding and compassion for each other. Let's learn to pause and reflect, instead of immediately or only reacting.

**Weekly Response Papers. (25%)** Reading Response Papers will prepare students for graded discussions during our class meetings. These short responses in Canvas are due no later than 11:59 PM on the Saturdays preceding our class meetings. Here are some guiding questions for your readings: What do each of the readings have to say about the topic/question? Briefly summarize their key points and evidence. What new concepts/ideas did you learn? When applicable, which other concepts/ideas from class can you connect to these later readings? Which statements made you pause, either in discovery and/or disagreement? What questions came up for you that you would like to bring to class to discuss with your peers?

**Book Review. (10%)** Students will submit a book review of Anne Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* (2012). This is a case study on which students can apply what they have read so far in the semester. The submission must be within 1,000-1,250 words. More details will be posted in Canvas several weeks before the deadline. These are not "summaries" but your own analysis and responses, so please do not use A.I. to generate your writing.

**Final Exam. (10%)** This will be held in Canvas during finals week, and it will be a series of short answers on key concepts and readings. You may use your notes, but not the PDFs of our readings.

**Class Facilitation. (25%)** Because we could not possibly cover everything in the field and because we come from diverse disciplines, the class facilitation in your assigned groups will allow for cross-pollination and an interdisciplinary experience of learning for everyone. Select a topic relevant to medical sociology that you and your group would like to present to your peers and me. It must be a topic not already covered during the semester. You may use one of our topics as a springboard, but it must not replicate my lecture materials. Your proposal will need to include PDFs of 1-2 articles that your peers and I will read, as well as an outline of your presentation/slideshow. Groups must facilitate class for 1 hour on the date assigned to them. This will be a combination of lectures, videos no longer than 10 minutes combined, discussion questions, and/or activities.

## Assessment and Grading

Grades will be based on the following:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D+ 67-69	F Less than 59
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 63-66	
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	D- 60-62	
*There is no rounding up.				

## Final Examination Policy

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Traditional Undergraduate Records: Final Exam Schedules](#) site. If you find yourself scheduled for three (3) or more final examinations on the same day, you are authorized to contact each professor to arrange a different time for one of those exams. However, unless you have three (3) or more exams on the same day, no requests for alternative final examinations will be granted.

## Content Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive various types of information. In *Medical Sociology*, all of the class content, including that which may be intellectually or emotionally challenging, has been intentionally curated to achieve the learning goals for this course. The decision to include such material is not taken lightly. These topics include death and dying, personal and structural violence, and discrimination. If you encounter a topic that is intellectually challenging for you, it can manifest in feelings of discomfort and upset. In response, I encourage you to come talk to me or your friends or family about it. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## Trigger Warning

I acknowledge that each of you comes to PLNU with your own unique life experiences. This contributes to the way you perceive several types of information. In *Medical Sociology*, we will cover a variety of topics, some of which you may find triggering. These topics include death and dying, personal and structural violence, and discrimination. Each time this topic appears in a reading or unit, it is marked on the syllabus. The experience of being triggered versus intellectually challenged are different. The main difference is that an individual must have experienced trauma to experience being triggered, whereas an intellectual challenge has nothing to do with trauma. If you are a trauma survivor and encounter a topic in this class that is triggering for you, you may feel overwhelmed or panicked and find it difficult to concentrate. In response, I encourage you to take the necessary steps for your emotional safety. This may include leaving class while the topic is discussed or talking to a therapist at the Counseling Center. Should you choose to sit out on discussion of a certain topic, know that you are still responsible for the material; but we can discuss if there are other methods for accessing that material, and for assessing your learning on that material. Class topics are discussed for the sole purpose of expanding your intellectual engagement, and I will support you throughout your learning in this course.

## Incompletes and Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

## Spiritual Care

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If you have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact your professor or the [Office of Spiritual Life and Formation](#).

### **State Authorization**

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on [State Authorization](#) to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

### **PLNU Copyright Policy**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

### **PLNU Recording Notification**

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel. Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

### **PLNU Academic Honesty Policy**

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when, in reality, they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy**

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

### **PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy**

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center ([EAC@pointloma.edu](mailto:EAC@pointloma.edu) or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

### **Language and Belonging**

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias).

### **Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination**

In support of a safe learning environment, if you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that accommodations and resources are available through the Title IX Office at [pointloma.edu/Title-IX](http://pointloma.edu/Title-IX). Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty and staff are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at [counselingservices@pointloma.edu](mailto:counselingservices@pointloma.edu) or find a list of campus pastors at [pointloma.edu/title-ix](http://pointloma.edu/title-ix).

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at [www.pointloma.edu/bias](http://www.pointloma.edu/bias)

### **PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy**

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

### **Use of Technology**

Any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowable) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

## Loma Writing Center

The Loma Writing Center exists to help all members of the PLNU community cultivate transferable writing skills to engage their academic, professional, personal, and spiritual communities. We work toward this goal by conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, supporting writing education across the PLNU community, and participating in ongoing writing center research.

Getting feedback from the Loma Writing Center while you're in the process of working on an assignment is a great way to improve the quality of your writing and develop as a writer. You are encouraged to talk with a trained writing consultant about getting started on an assignment, organizing your ideas, finding and citing sources, revising, editing for grammar and polishing final drafts, and more. For information about how to make in-person or online appointments, see [Loma Writing Center webpage](#) or visit the Loma Writer Center on the first floor of the Ryan Library, room 221.

- Appointment Calendar: <https://plnu.mywconline.com/>
- Website: <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/loma-writing-center>
- Email: [writingcenter@pointloma.edu](mailto:writingcenter@pointloma.edu)

## Assignments At-A-Glance

Please see the Course Schedule for assignments and due dates.

## Covenant and Community Guidelines.

Consider this syllabus not as a contract but as a **covenant** among all of us. Let us build an environment that helps us all feel loved, welcomed, and challenged-supported, a balance of understanding where we are coming from as well as extending our growth zones—hard but necessary. Toward this end, let's keep in mind the following: **RESPECT**. What does this look like? How do we embody it?

- **Use inclusive language.** Our words have power, so let us be considerate of what we say and write and how they may impact others. Speak up/out as needed with courage, grace, and humility.
- **Give your full attention to the faculty and to your peers.** Some theologians describe prayer as attention. As we seek to become our best selves to serve God's world, let us consider how we act and interact in class.
- **Be honest with your work.** Do original work and give appropriate credit to the ideas of others. This includes proper citation formats on papers/projects.
- **Say "I'm sorry for my mistake. Please teach me."** God created us to be interdependent beings—we cannot live alone and we grow to be "more perfect in God" when we learn from each other. Let us acknowledge when we hurt each other—even without the intent to—and be humble.