



FLORIDA  
ATLANTIC  
UNIVERSITY

## COURSE CHANGE REQUEST Undergraduate Programs

Department Sociology  
College Arts and Letters

UUPC Approval 12/4/23  
UFS Approval \_\_\_\_\_  
SCNS Submittal \_\_\_\_\_  
Confirmed \_\_\_\_\_  
Banner Posted \_\_\_\_\_  
Catalog \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Course Prefix and Number** SYO 3410

**Current Course Title**  
Sociology of Mental Health

*Syllabus must be attached for ANY changes to current course details. See Template. Please consult and list departments that may be affected by the changes; attach documentation.*

**Change title to:**

**Change prefix**

From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

**Change course number**

From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

**Change credits\***

From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

**Change grading**

From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

**Change WAC/Gordon Rule status\*\***

Add  Remove

**Change General Education Requirements\*\*\***

Add  Remove

\*See Definition of a Credit Hour.

\*\*WAC/Gordon Rule criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to this form. See WAC Guidelines.

\*\*\*GE criteria must be indicated in syllabus and approval attached to this form. See Intellectual Foundations Guidelines.

**Change description to:**

This course introduces students to the scientific study of mental health from an interdisciplinary perspective with an emphasis on the social, cultural, and political meanings of mental health. Students will examine contemporary and historical issues in the field of mental health including how to define and treat mental disorders, mental health stigma, the pharmaceutical industry, access to mental health services, social inequalities in mental health, and stress.

**Change prerequisites/minimum grades to:**

**Change corequisites to:**

**Change registration controls to:**

Please list existing and new pre/corequisites, specify AND or OR and include minimum passing grade (default is D-).

**Effective Term/Year for Changes:** Fall 2024

**Terminate course? Effective Term/Year for Termination:**

**Faculty Contact/Email/Phone** William McConnell/wmccconnell@fau.edu/561-297-3270

**Approved by**

Department Chair Ann Branaman

College Curriculum Chair E. D. Hoge

College Dean [Signature]

UUPC Chair Korey Sorge

Undergraduate Studies Dean Dan Meeroff

UFS President \_\_\_\_\_

Provost \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

11/6/23

11/15/23

11/14/23

12/4/23

12/4/23

Email this form and syllabus to [mjenning@fau.edu](mailto:mjenning@fau.edu) seven business days before the UUPC meeting.

# **SYO 3410: Sociology of Mental Health**

Section 001, 3 credits, CRN 15493

Florida Atlantic University, Fall 2024

***This is an In-Person Course with Live Lecture***

Classroom: General Classroom South Rm 110

***Wednesdays @4:00-6:50PM***

*This course counts toward the Sociology Major or Minor*

*Prerequisites: This course has no prerequisites*

**Instructor:** Dr. Will R. McConnell  
**Department:** Sociology  
**Office:** Culture & Society Building (CU-97) Rm 250  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Wednesday at 2:00PM-4:00 PM and by appointment  
**Phone:** (561) 297-3270 (Sociology main office)  
**Email:** [wmccconnell@fau.edu](mailto:wmccconnell@fau.edu)

## **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the scientific study of mental health from an interdisciplinary perspective with an emphasis on the social, cultural, and political meanings of mental health. Students will examine contemporary and historical issues in the field of mental health including how to define and treat mental disorders, mental health stigma, the pharmaceutical industry, access to mental health services, social inequalities in mental health, and stress.

## **About This Course**

What is mental health? What is the difference between people with mental problems and those we consider to be “normal”? Would expanded mental health services help to avoid mass shootings in the United States? In this course, we review the scientific study and treatment history of mental disorders, using an interdisciplinary perspective but a sociological focus. We will also discuss several current policy problems related to mental health, including funding for mental health services and the contested link between mental illness and violent crime. This 3000-level course relies on readings from classic and contemporary sociology, psychiatry, journalism, and in-class discussion of current events. We will also frequently refer to audio-visual resources such as podcasts and videos. By the end of this course, you will obtain the background information and analytical skills necessary to challenge common misconceptions about mental illness.

## **Learning Objectives**

1. To read, write, and think sociologically about mental health and mental disorders.
2. To understand mental health problems in their social, cultural, and institutional

contexts

3. To understand social inequalities in the experience of mental illnesses.
4. To understand how societies have attempted to treat or control mental illnesses.
5. To think critically about contemporary mental health debates, creating your own informed perspective, with the capability to support your arguments with evidence.

# Course Requirements

## Required texts

*This course has no required textbook (but there is still a lot of reading!)*

## Readings

All readings will be posted on Canvas (<https://canvas.fau.edu/>). Readings will be posted at least one week before their due date. Often, I will assign additional materials including news articles, videos, and podcasts that will be linked online. You are expected to review all assigned materials before the day they are listed in the syllabus. This will prepare you for class discussions and enable you to get the most out of class. Completion of readings and participation in discussions are important to your success in this class.

## Graded Requirements

### Attendance

Your success depends on attending class. I expect all students to be on time and stay for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken every class. You have an unlimited number of fully documented University-approved absences (as described below) with no penalty to your grade. In addition, I will allow up to three (3) “unexcused” absences, no questions asked. Each unexcused absence after the third will result in a 2% (20pt) penalty to your final grade. Whenever you are absent you are still responsible for understanding the assigned material and in-class discussion for that day. I will take attendance during class and count your current absences on Canvas. It is your responsibility to periodically check your attendance grade for accuracy.

*University statement on attendance: Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance. Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student’s responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed without any reduction in the student’s final course grade as a direct result of such absence.*

## Participation (10%)

This course will include daily in-class exercises, including written reflections, Q&A sessions, and live classroom polls. The only way to complete these assignments is to be present in class with an electronic device. Participation in exercises is your day-to-day chance to express your opinion and also demonstrate mastery of the assigned materials. Your participation in exercises will add up to approximately 10% (100 pts) of your final grade. When you are absent for an approved reason (including your 3 “unexcused” absences), you will be excused from completing participation exercises for that day. Sometimes, you will be asked to complete in-class exercises such as worksheets, group projects, and other written work related to the content on that day. More typically, I will assign in-class work via the required Top Hat app (see below).

### Top Hat

We will use the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones, tablets, laptops, or through text message. We will use the **FREE Basic version of Top Hat** for this class so **no purchase is necessary**.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) which outlines how you can register for an account and provides a brief overview to get you up and running.

An email invitation will be sent to you on the first day of class, or you can also register by visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/582468> (Our Course Join Code is **582468**). Do **not** pay for a subscription – sign up for free.

If you need assistance with Top Hat at any time, because they require specific user information to troubleshoot problems, please contact their Support Team directly by email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in-app support button, or call 1-888-663-5491.

## Canvas Discussion Posts (20% total)

This class includes a built-in group discussion component. Every week after class you will be required to contribute to an online discussion board on Canvas. The deadline to post is Friday at 11:59PM each week. The discussion board will be divided into groups of 8-10 students that stay the same throughout the semester. I will provide guidance about what I expect in these discussion posts - in general, they will ask you to answer questions, analyze the assigned readings, and respond to comments made by other students. You must complete 10 discussion posts during the semester. There are 13 discussion weeks – you can skip any three weeks, or complete an extra post(s) and I will drop the lowest grade(s). Each post is worth 20 points, for a total of 200 points (20%).

## **Quizzes (30% total)**

- **Quiz #1 scheduled during Week 04**
- **Quiz #2 scheduled during Week 11**

You will take two online “Quizzes” comprising 25% of your final grade (125pts each). Each Quiz will open after class on the specified day and be available on Canvas for approximately 48hrs; you will be able to start the quiz at any point during that window, but a two-hour timer will begin when the quiz is opened on Canvas. All quizzes will be completed remotely, so I currently expect them to be “open book”. That said, you will not have time to look up every answer - I will provide a study guide to enable you to adequately prepare in advance. You are expected to complete quizzes individually; any collusion among students will result in a failing grade. Use your own words - plagiarizing from the lecture slides or readings or relying on AI-generated writing will result in a zero. Quiz questions may consist of any combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay. Quiz questions will cover lectures, reading assignments, and in-class discussions and activities. The quizzes are not cumulative—each quiz only covers material from the most recent part of the course, except as otherwise indicated by me on the study guides.

## **Fact-Finding Assignment (15%)**

As preparation for writing your Policy Paper (see below), you will complete a Fact-Finding Assignment. In this assignment, I will ask that you conduct original research on a topic of your choosing related to mental health or mental health care. You will gather evidence from journalistic and scientific sources in order to develop an informed understanding of your chosen topic. I will provide examples and demonstrate how to find sources during class. The sources should each address the same topic, preferably from varied or conflicting perspectives. This writing assignment will be approximately 4-5 double-spaced pages in length and worth 150 pts (15% of your final grade). Detailed instructions will be provided in class. A properly cited set of references is an important part of this assignment.

## **Policy Paper (25% total)**

One objective of this course is to provide you with the background information and analytical skills necessary to challenge common misconceptions about mental illness. These skills will be put to the test in a final Policy Paper, due at the final exam period. This writing assignment will be approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages in length and worth 250 pts (25% of your final grade). The topic of the Policy Paper, in general, is up to you – you can choose any policy debate related to mental health. Some debates include funding for mental health services, over-medicalization, and the link between mental illness and violent crime. This paper will require significant engagement with course readings and also original research. You’ll work on this paper in stages throughout the semester. A Topic Proposal paper is due near the start of the semester (worth an additional 50 pts, 5% of final grade), and you will begin conducting original research for your paper in the Fact-Finding Assignment (see above). I will provide detailed instructions in class.

## Policy on Late and Make-up Work

**Canvas discussions:** Canvas discussion posts are due on Friday night each week. In general, late Canvas work will receive no credit. **Quizzes:** Each quiz must be completed on the specified date under a strict time limit. Quizzes cannot be submitted late; Canvas automatically submits whatever work has been completed at the deadline. Quizzes will be graded as-is after the deadline. I will not accept make-up work for missed Quizzes, unless the student provides documentation for a university-approved absence. Under some circumstances, students with a scheduling conflict can contact me about taking Quizzes at an alternative date/time, so long as they notify me at least one week in advance. **Writing assignments:** This course includes several writing assignments that will be submitted via Canvas. I will accept late written submissions within 48hrs of the deadline with a 20% penalty to the overall grade. Written work submitted more than 48hrs late will not be accepted. I will not accept make-up work for writing assignments, unless the student provides documentation for a University-approved absence, or they discussed the issue with me in advance.

## Grading Overview

Participation & In-class work	10%	(100 points)
Canvas Discussion Posts x10	20%	(200)
Quizzes x2	25%	(250)
Policy Paper		
Topic Proposal Paper	5%	(50)
Fact-Finding Paper	15%	(150)
Policy Paper	25%	(250)
<hr/>		
Total	100%	(1000)

## Final grade scale

	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Points</i>		<i>Percent</i>	<i>Points</i>
A	94-100	940-1000	C	73-76	730-769
A-	90-93	900-939	C-	70-72	700-729
B+	87-89	870-899	D+	67-69	670-699
B	83-86	830-869	D	63-66	630-669
B-	80-82	800-829	D-	60-62	600-629
C+	77-79	770-799	F	≤ 59	599 or less

## Course Policies

### Code of Academic Integrity Policy Statement

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are

associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see University Regulation 4.001.

## **Classroom Etiquette**

We will discuss a variety of sensitive social issues in this class. Each person comes to class with a unique background and perspective; I encourage students to draw on that perspective during class discussions. Please keep in mind that sharing opinions and experiences is a valuable but sometimes uncomfortable experience, and everyone must make a commitment to create an atmosphere of respect for each person's contribution. Please be respectful and open-minded when listening to viewpoints different from your own. If you disagree with something that someone says, then you should criticize the evidence or argument that supports a stance, rather than the speaker who holds that view. A lack of courtesy will not be tolerated, and disrespectful persons may be asked to leave.

## **Electronic devices policy**

**Laptops** will be permitted in class. It should also be noted that the potential for distraction while using a laptop in class is substantial, including for other students in your vicinity. Students who fail to use their laptops appropriately will be counted as absent for the day. Repeated violation of this policy risks having laptop privileges revoked for the semester. With few exceptions, **cell phones** and other small electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class. Text messaging is discouraged because it can be distracting and disrespectful. Students who fail to follow this policy will be counted as absent for the day. If you need to leave your cell phone on due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., childcare, family emergencies, etc.), please arrange this with me at the start of the semester.

## **Communication**

Email is the best way to get in contact with me outside of class time or office hours. Please email me directly at [wmconnell@fau.edu](mailto:wmconnell@fau.edu). Include "SYO 3410" in the subject line of all emails. I check my email regularly during working hours and on weekends. If I do not respond within 48hrs, please email me again. Please do not message me through the Canvas messaging system – I check this much less frequently. Scheduled office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus. These hours are meant to be a resource for you. If you cannot make scheduled office hours, please schedule an appointment by email.

## **Canvas**

All supplemental readings, assignments, grades, and other course materials will be posted on the course website on Canvas. You will also turn in the majority of your assignments through Canvas, including written assignments. Additionally, I will send course updates, announcements, etc., using the Canvas messaging system, linked to your fau.edu email account. It is your responsibility to regularly check both Canvas and your FAU email.

## **Disability Policy Statement**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at [www.fau.edu/sas/](http://www.fau.edu/sas/).

## **Counseling and Psychological Services Center (CAPS)**

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

## **Religious Accommodations Policy**

In accordance with regulations of the Florida Board of Governors and Florida law, students have the right to reasonable accommodations from the University in order to observe religious practices and beliefs with regard to admissions, registration, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations, and work assignments. The details of this policy, as it pertains to FAU, may be found in the University Catalog and University Regulation 2.007, Religious Observances.

## **Basic Needs Security**

Some college students experience difficulties affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, lack a safe and stable place to live, or experience challenges balancing school work with paid work, childcare and other family obligations. These challenges can create anxiety and may also affect performance in the classroom. Students experiencing challenges are urged to contact the Dean of Students for support (561-297-3542; <http://www.fau.edu/studentsindistress/>). Students experiencing challenges with food, housing, work, and/or family obligations are also encouraged to notify the professor ([wmccconnell@fau.edu](mailto:wmccconnell@fau.edu)) if they feel comfortable doing so. This will enable the professor to assist students in accessing support.

## **Tentative Course Schedule**

All readings should be completed before class on the day they are listed. Readings other than the textbook will be posted on Canvas or linked online. All audio/video assignments are available online and linked below. Films will be shown in class. (\*Note: this schedule is tentative and I reserve the right to make changes during the semester.)

## **Part 1. A Brief History of Psychiatry & Mental Disorder**

### **8/23 Week 1. What is Mental Health?**

(Optional) Carlat, *Unhinged*, Ch. 1 "The Trouble with Psychiatry" (16p)

### **8/30 Week 2. The "Bible of Psychiatry": History of the DSM**

Carlat, Ch. 3 "The Bible of Psychiatry" (27p)

(Video) "[DSM-5: An Overview from APA's New President](#)" (3m)

(Video) "[What DSM-5 Means for Diagnosing Mental Health Problems](#)" (8m)

### **9/6 Week 3. History of Mental Disorders and Mental Health Treatment**

Conrad & Schneider, "Medical Model of Madness" pages 38-54 & 60-62 ONLY (21p)

Read the two narratives about experiencing Schizophrenia: 1660's vs. 2010's (4p)

### **9/13 Week 4. Medicalization and the Pharmaceutical Industry**

Rose, *Our Psychiatric Future*, "Does Psychopharmacology Have a Future?" (17p)

(Video) "[The Corruption of Psychiatry and Medicine by Big Pharma](#)" (4m)

**\*QUIZ #1 opens on Canvas after class today**

## **Part 2. Social Theories of Mental Health**

### **9/20 Week 5. Total Institutions: Goffman's Critique of Asylums**

Goffman, *Asylums*, "The Moral Career of the Mental Patient" (23p)

*Review the instructions for the Policy Paper Topic Proposal assignment before class*

### **9/27 Week 6. Social Constructionism: What is "Normal"?**

Metzl, *Protest Psychosis*, "A Racialized Disease" (14p)

(News) "[African-Americans more likely to be misdiagnosed with Schizophrenia](#)" (2p)

(Podcast) *Backstory Podcast*, "[States of Mind](#)" (listen to Metzl section 0:00-13:45) (14m)

(Podcast) *Sawbones Podcast*, "[Hysteria](#)" (36m)

**\*Policy Paper Topic Proposal due this week**

### **10/4 Week 7. Labeling Theory: Is Mental Illness a "Myth"?**

Carlat, Ch. 7 "Frenzy of Diagnoses" (11p)

NYT, "[The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder](#)" (18p)

(Optional) Szasz, "[The Myth of Mental Illness](#)" (9p)

### **10/11 Week 8. Reformulated Constructionism: The Case of Race and Mental Health**

Brown, "Mental Health Problems and Racial Stratification" (10p)  
(Video) Williams, "Social and Behavioral Determinants of Toxic Stress" (19m)

### **10/18 Week 9. Social Causation Theory: Society is Stressing Me Out**

Eaton & Muntaner, "Socioeconomic Stratification and Mental Disorder" (26p)  
NYT, "Mental Health is Political" (6p)

### **10/25 Week 10. Mental Health Stigma & the Violence Myth**

Pescosolido, "The Public Stigma of Mental Illness" (21p)  
Pescosolido, "Evolving Public Views on the Likelihood of Violence..." (9p)

### **11/1 Week 11. Paper Workshop, Review Session, & Quiz #2**

*Review the instructions for the Fact-Finding Paper assignment before class*  
**\*QUIZ #2 opens on Canvas after class today**

## **Part 3. A Mental Health System in Crisis**

### **11/8 Week 12. Prisons: The New Asylums?**

*There are no readings to complete before class today*  
**\*Fact-Finding Paper assignment due this week**

### **11/15 Week 13. Funding Deficits and the Criminalization of Mental Health**

Tampa Bay Times, *Insane. Invisible. In Danger. "Part 1: Deep Cuts, Rising Violence."*  
Hiday & Ray, "Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System" (26p)  
Aversen, "Responding to a Mental Health Crisis without Badges or Guns" (10p)

### **11/22 Week 14. Thanksgiving Break**

*No readings this week – get started on your Policy Papers!*

### **11/29 Week 15. Fixing the System: Competing Perspectives**

Torrey "Future of Mental Health Care System: Fixing the System" (17p)  
NYT, "New York City to Involuntarily Remove Mentally Ill from Streets" (8p)  
NYT, "Does Therapy Really Work? Let's Unpack That" (5p)

**\*Policy Papers are due on Canvas by 4:00PM on 12/13\***  
*I must have your papers by this deadline – final grades are due to the Registrar on 12/18*