

**CORE 603.18**  
**Social Construction: Health Capacity and Disability**

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Fall 2011  
SC

**Course Dates:** September 12 – 15 (Block week)  
FCJ Center

**Location:** Web-based course

**Course Description**

Constructivist exploration of language, political structures, and sense of self to deepen the understanding of health capacity.

An inquiry into health capacity through completion of three labs/topics that enable group sharing and individual creativity. Each lab begins with a workshop and is continued online with working groups. Students are expected to think and work within each distinct domains of inquiry (personal, professional and political approach) and to produce a product that reflects the language, truth claims, epistemology and structures of each inquiry.

**Prerequisite**

NA

**Required Resources**

Marlett, N., (submitted) *Story Working, Narrative Works*.  
Kearney, R. (2002). *On Stories: Thinking in action*. New York: Routledge  
Loseke, D.R. (2003). *Thinking about social problems. An introduction to constructionist perspectives* (2nd ed.). New York: Aldine De Gruyter.  
Gergen, Kenneth J (1999). *An Invitation To Social Construction*. London: Sage Publications

Online articles and course materials.

**Suggested Textbook**

See above

To order texts:

- Shop online: [www.calgarybookstore.ca](http://www.calgarybookstore.ca) Click on →Shop on-line; Click on →Textbooks; Follow the directions.
- Order by Phone: (403)220-5937; Toll Free 1-877-220-5937
- In person: Go to the University of Calgary Bookstore, MacEwan Student Centre, Room 155, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 1N4



### **Course Goals**

The course goals are to:

- Work within support groups and on their own to master new analysis frameworks and use these analyses as the foundation for professional, consumer and creative reports and papers related to health capacity
- Experiment with a variety of perspectives and methods for building health capacity in marginalized populations
- Apply social problem theory to the understanding of social determinants of health and health capacity
- Deconstruct texts to identify dominant and challenging discourse related to the cause, cure and care of health and disabling conditions.
- Create coherent perspectives of personal reconstruction of self after health and disabling condition based on narrative analysis and theory of personal change
- Use social problem theory to create a strategy for health capacity

### **Learner Objectives**

Learners will achieve the following:

- Investigation social constructivist stance within health/disabling condition through three distinct paradigms: health/professional discourse, social problem theory and personal reconstruction of self.
- Narrative analysis of personal texts and autobiographies
- Script analysis as means of understanding personal reconstruction of self
- Theories related to personal change as they relate to health and disability
- Health literacy for specific health, income, condition specific populations
- Health discourse related to cause, detection, prevention and prognosis, cure and care of specific conditions.
- Dominant and challenging discourses of health as above
- Determinants of health as targets of health capacity
- Social problem theory as a means of understanding the political aspects of achieving health capacity
- Salutogenesis frameworks and health capacity
- Health capacity strategies

### **Academic Integrity**

The Department of Community Health Sciences expects **intellectual honesty** from its students. Course participants should be aware of University policies relating to Principles of Conduct, Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. These are found in the printed Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar, or online under Faculty Regulations in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar,

or at [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/how/How\\_LB.htm](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/how/How_LB.htm)



### **Cut Points For Grades**

This course adheres to the grading system outlined in the University of Calgary, Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar. Percentage/letter-grade conversions are standard for courses in the Department of Community Health Sciences.

Grade	Course %	Grade Point Value*	Graduate Description*
A+	97-100	4.0	Outstanding
A	90-96.5	4.0	Excellent
A-	85-89.5	3.7	Very good performance
B+	77-84.5	3.3	Good performance
B	72-76.5	3.0	Satisfactory performance
B-	68-71.5	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Grad Studies
C+	63-67.5	2.3	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements.
C	60-62.5	2.0	

### **Late Assignments:**

- Assignments are due on the specified date by 9 AM. Students who hand in assignments late will be penalized 5% per day for handing in late. Assignments that are handed in 14 calendar days or more after the due date will be refused and the students assigned a score of zero for the assignment.
- Students may hand in assignments late without penalty under the following circumstances:
  - The student has discussed the timelines with course instructor in advance of the due date and the course instructor has granted an extension
  - There is a valid health or family emergency such as is discussed under the University regulations for deferral of final examinations. Students may be required to provide the Course Coordinator with such documentation related to illness and/or emergency as is discussed and required in the University regulations pertaining to deferral of final examinations. This information can be found in the University Calendar.

### **Evaluation Plan**

All three assignments will be grounded in a condition or lived experience that is chosen by the groups of students. The condition chosen for study should provide an active scientific and professional literature, autobiographies by the people living the reality and some political controversies. The topic of attention should be relatively narrow e.g. adult autism, head injury among high-risk takers who are women, TBI in professionals.

Each project/assignment is researched within the group with a group analysis forming part of the mark. The resulting report is done either individually or as a group.



## COURSE TIMETABLE – FALL 2011

**Pre-Session:** Students will choose a group based on the condition they choose to work with and will have read the assigned autobiography and review with analysis formats.

### Session 1 – Sept 12

#### **Social Construction Lens for Health Capacity Building**

Health capacity among populations affected by chronic health, disabilities. Linkages between health capacity and social determinants of health.

- Constructivist approaches and how these influence practice and research
- One social construction in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies and application of it to your condition
- Clarification of individual projects/ papers.

### Session 2 – Sept. 13

#### **Personal Reconstruction of Self: Narrative and Social Construction. (Assignment 1)**

Workshop is on Narrative Analysis, covering discourse analysis from a narrative stance (language and language structures). It will also include plot and script analysis, a theoretical framework for personal meaning and the power of metaphor. Come prepared with your autobiography read.

Script analysis as a window to personal reconstruction of self. Investigation of various theoretical models that can provide insight into recovery from disability, health condition or catastrophe.

### Session 3 - Sept 14

#### **Health Literacy Report: Deconstructing Health Discourse**

Introduction to Health Discourse and detailed introduction to analysis as a means to deconstruct health issues.

Discussion of health and alliances with science, business, welfare, and how medical discourse is crafted to meet the needs of these related disciplines. The deconstruction process will be presented and students in the groups will choose their site of deconstruction: cause /diagnosis; cure/prognosis/prevention; care and support.

The afternoon session will introduce Health Literacy

### Session 4 – Sept 15

#### **Health Capacity: Social Problem Analysis**

During Session 4, students will begin a workshop on their social problems in their groups. The workshop begins with a general introduction to identifying a social problem (troublesome, prevalent, can and should be solved) as opposed to a personal problem. Once the social problem topic is defined we will investigate claims and claims makers and their authority as a deconstruction frame for analysis of social construction from a power perspective. The course will also introduce students to the work of Antonovsky (salutogenesis) and will look at how to integrate materials from the earlier sessions.

### Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Center <http://www.ucalgary.ca/drc> MC295, telephone 220-8237. Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is the student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Center and to request academic accommodation, if required.**