Faculty of Medicine in Rijeka

Curriculum
2025/2026

For course

Medical Sociology

Study program:	**Medical Studies in English (R)** University integrated undergraduate and graduate study
Department:	**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in Medicine**
Course coordinator:	**izv. prof. dr. sc. Medved Marko**
Year of study:	**5**
ECTS:	**1**
Incentive ECTS:	**0 (0.00%)**
Foreign language:	**Possibility of teaching in a foreign language**

Course information:

The course Medical Sociology is a compulsory course in the fifth year of the University Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate Study of Medicine. It consists of 10 hours of lectures and 10 hours of seminars. The course carries 1 ECTS credits and is delivered by the Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, in the premises of the Faculty of Health Studies (code Z) and the Faculty of Medicine (code P), or through the Zoom aplication.

The course content is as follows:

LECTURE TOPICS:

1. Introduction to the Course

2. Theoretical Approaches in Medical Sociology

3. Medicine and Social Stratification Based on Neurodiversity

4. Medicine as Part of Culture and the Process of Socialization

5. Social Determinants of Health and Disease I

6. Social Determinants of Health and Disease II

7. Social Inequalities in Health and Disease

8. Models and the Social Experience of Health

9. Professionalization of the Medical Profession

10. Special Topics in Medical Sociology

SEMINAR TOPICS:

1. Public Policies and Health

2. Social Determinants of Health and Disease

3. Socially Excluded Groups, Social Capital and Health

4. Mental Health

5. Physician-Patient Relationship

Teaching: Classes are held in the form of lectures and seminars, with a total duration of 6 weeks. By completing all teaching activities and taking the final exam, the student acquires 1 ECTS credit.

Lectures (10 L) - classic (ex-department / online) lectures with the possibility of involving students and short videos; gathering theoretical knowledge and information based on examples

Seminars (10 S) - interactive teaching based on examples through the use of the method of conversation

List of assigned reading:

Power point presentations from lectures

List of optional reading:

1. Bird, C.E., Conrad, P., Fremont, A.M., Timmermans, S. (ed.). (2010). *Handbook of Medical Sociology. Sixt Edition*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. (Dostupno na: http://ndl.ethernet.edu.et/bitstream/123456789/22402/1/94.pdf.pdf).
2. Conrad, P. (2007). *Medicalization of Society – On the Transformation of Human Conditions into Treatable Diseases.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
3. Cockerham, W. (2022). *Medical Sociology*. Ninth Edition. Pratnice Hall.
4. Gabe, J.P.; Bury, M.; Elston, M.A. (2013). *Key Concepts in Medical Sociology*. SAGE Publications.
5. Haralambos, M., Holborn, M. (2013). *Sociology: themes and perspectives.* 8th edition. (selected chapters). Collins Educational.
6. Illich, I. (1975). *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health.* London: Calder & Boyars (Selected reading: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/hs/pubhealth/rosner/g8965/client_edit/readings/week_2/illich.pdf)
7. van Dijk, W., Faber, MJ., Tanke, MA., Jeurissen, PP., Westert, GP. (2016). Medicalisation and overdiagnosis: what society does to medicine. *Int J Health Policy Manag*; 5(11):619–622. doi:10.15171/ijhpm.2016.121

Curriculum:

Lectures list (with titles and explanation):

L1. Introduction to the Course

Objectives and expected outcome: understanding reasons and development of the concept and phenomena of social life, explain the development of sociology as a science, distinguish the subtypes of (special) sociology, history of medical sociology / society, evolution of social phenomena, origin and development of sociology, history of medical sociology

L2. Theoretical Approaches in Medical Sociology

Objectives and expected outcome: defining and differentiating the basic divisions of natural and social sciences, application of social theory in medical topics, recognizing research methods in the social sciences

L3. Medicine and Social Stratification Based on Neurodiversity

Objectives and expected outcome of the lecture: explain social stratification and the social debate surrounding neurodiversity; distinguish between different models of approaches to autism; analyze the scope of social influences in medicine regarding neurodiversity

L4. Medicine as Part of Culture and the Process of Socialization

Objectives and expected outcome of the lecture: explain the sociological concepts of culture and socialization; analyze the influence of culture on medicine and of medicine on culture; examine the role of medicine in the process of socialization

L5. Social Determinants of Health and Disease I: sex / gender, age, race, class

Objectives and expected outcome: to analyze social impacts on health and disease

L6. Social Determinants of Health and Disease II: social capital, education, environment and sustainability, energy, climate change

Objectives and expected outcome: to analyze social impacts on health and disease

L7. Social Inequalities in Health and Disease

Objectives and expected outcome: explain the causes and extent of social inequalities associated with health and illness experiences

L8. Models and Social Experience of Health

Objectives and expected outcome: to define and distinguish the dominant model of health (biomedical model) from other models, to analyze the model of health and disease, to analyze health from the position of social sciences

L9. Professionalization of Medical Profession

Objectives and expected outcome of the lecture: the main determinants of the professionalization of the profession of physician, relations with other health professions, position and responsibility in society

L10. Special Topics in Medical Sociology

Objectives and expected outcome: to explain and understand selected topics and concepts (aging, body, mental health, disability, gender, etc.) in a sociological perspective

Seminars list (with titles and explanation):

S1 - S2 Public policies and health

Objectives and expected outcome: to define the legislative and institutional framework of certain health and social issues; to promote public interest in legislative advocacy; to argue the need to enact, amend and supplement a certain law in the field of health policy or social policy affecting health; to write a quality policy letter to legislators; to analyze social systems related to the field of health and illness

S3 - S4 Social determinants of health and disease

Objectives and expected outcome: to explain the connection between social inequalities and health; to define social determinants of health; to analyze social causes and consequences of certain diseases

S5 - S6 Socially excluded groups, social capital and health

Objectives and expected outcome: to promote the rights of patients and socially excluded groups; to distinguish stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination; to explain the positive role of social capital mechanisms in health

S7 - S8 Mental health

Objectives and expected outcome: to explain the fundamental sociological concepts related to mental health and mental disorders; to identify and analyze the social determinants that affect the mental health of individuals and communities; to evaluate how stigma and social narratives shape the experiences of people with mental health difficulties

S9 - S10 Physician - patient relationship

Objectives and expected outcome: to list and describe the basic models of doctor – patient interaction; to analyze the doctor – patient relationship; to analyze the changing hierarchy within the doctor–patient relationship in contemporary times

Student obligations:

Attendance at classes (lectures and seminars) is mandatory, and records will be kept to ensure a minimum attendance of 70%. Attendance will not be graded; however, if a student misses more than 30% of the classes (7 hours, not days!), he or she will not be allowed to take the final exam.

The following activity is graded during classes:

a) *writing a policy letter*: students are expected to write a one-page policy letter on a topic that aligns with their interests and relates to issues they may encounter in their future professional work, such as the position of the profession, physicians, health professionals, patients, a specific disease, treatment procedures, regulation of healthcare, health insurance, or any social issues affecting health. Since students will write from the perspective of their future professional expertise, it is expected that the topic will be chosen from the field of health or from any other field (e.g., a social problem such as poverty or an environmental problem such as pollution) that has consequences for health.

During the seminar, students will be given instructions for creating assignments, criteria for evaluating assignments, and examples of well-executed assignments will be presented..

Exam (exam taking, description of the written/oral/practical part of the exam, point distribution, grading criteria):

ECTS credit grading system: Student assessment is carried out according to the current Regulations on Studies and Studyng of the University of Rijeka.

Student work will be evaluated and graded during classes and at the final exam. Students earn points by completing assigned tasks and taking the exam. Of the maximum 50 grade points that can be achieved during the course, the student must collect a minimum of 25 grade points to take the final exam. The exam threshold on the final exam cannot be less than 50% of the successfully passed test. The final grade is the sum of the percentages achieved during classes and in the final exam. Student assessment is performed using the ECTS scale (A, B, C, D and F) and the number system (1-5). Students who collect between 40 and 49.99 points are graded F (unsuccessful) and must re-enroll in the course.

During classes, the following is evaluated:

a) Student seminar task (up to 50 points)

ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION	NUMB ER OF POINT
DEADLINE (D)	Submission of the letter by the deadline for submission (24.4.2026.)	**5**
PAGE PROPISTIONS (PP)	Margins: 2,5 cm (both sides) = 1 point Line spacing: 1,0 line = 1 point Font Tipe: Times New Roman = 1 point Font size: 12 = 1 point	**4**
LETTER PROPOSITIONS (LP)	Correct addressing (relevant institution) = 1 point Correct titling (relevant person) = 1 point Presentation and inclusion of return address = 1 point Signature = 1 point	**4**
SCOPE OF THE LETTER (SL)	Letter length – letter up to 1 page long = 2 points	**2**
LETTER STYLE (LS)	Professionalism = 1 point Balancing = 1 point	**2**
TOPIC (T)	Specificity of the topic (one specific problem) = 4 points Actuality of the topic = 4 points	**8**
SELECTION OF RECIPIENT (SP)	Relevance of the recipient for the selected issue = 5 points	**5**
REASON FOR WRITING (RW)	Clarity of motivation for writing a letter = 5 points Advocacy for public interest = 4 points Connecting with experience = 4 points	**13**
SOURCES (S)	Reference to applicable laws, data and research = 4 points Accuracy of citing laws, data sources and research = 3 points	**7**
	TOTAL:	**50**

b) Final exam (up to 50 points)

The final test brings students a maximum of 50% of the grade, ie 50 points. There are no negative points on the test. All

questions from the test will be from the lectures and the handout materials. The test is designed in the form of short questions with the possibility of choosing the correct answer.

The exam will be organized through the Merlin platform at a time agreed with the students.

Other notes (related to the course) important for students:

Class attendance

Attendance at classes is determined by roll call at the beginning of the class. After the roll call, it is possible to participate in the class, but attendance will not be scored. The student is obliged to be present at least 70% of each form of teaching (lectures / seminars), a total of at minimum 7 hours of lectures + 7 hours of seminars. Any finding of concealment of someone's absence or misrepresentation and other similar violations of normal norms of conduct will be sanctioned. Except during consultations and by appointment, teachers are also available by official e-mail. Every communication via e-mail must be signed, we are not obliged to respond to unsigned mail.

Written works
Students submit a policy letter in writing by the deadline for submission. Students should keep copies of papers until the obligations on the course are fulfilled.

Delay and / or non-performance of tasks
All possible sanctions in terms of delays, non-fulfillment of obligations and the like, are explained in more detail in the description of specific activities.

Academic honesty
Students and teachers are expected to respect each other, decency, perform duties and behave responsibly, but also behave equally towards obligations. Both teachers and students should set an example by their behavior. It is of course possible to make omissions, but it is important to understand that this is an omission (and not a wrong intention!). Any form of coercion or discrimination is considered a serious violation of the university academin integrity norms. Documents available to students and teachers: Code of Ethics for Students of the Medical Faculty of the University of Rijeka, Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee for the Protection of Academic Integrity, Preservation of Dignity and Promoting the Reputation of the Medical Faculty of the University of Rijeka.

Contacting teachers
Probably the most secure form of communication is via official email. The course leader is responsible for general inquiries about the course. If there are specific inquiries about individual seminar assignments, students can contact the assistants directly. The course leader and assistants will acknowledge receipt of the message and respond to any student inquiries. If the student does not receive a response, please do not hesitate to contact us again (in case of failure to send mail). In accordance with the Decree on Personal Data Protection, course lecturers are obliged to respond exclusively to emails sent from the official address (xxx@uniri.hr)

Informing about the subject

All information about the course will be available to students during / until the end of the class, and published on Merlin. Any ignorance of the obligations is the sole responsibility of the student. Delays in fulfilling obligations are acceptable, but as a rule carry the loss of certain points (unless otherwise regulated).

Expected general competencies of students when enrolling in the course

No specific competencies are required to enroll in the course, although students are expected to have a basic background and skills in Internet browsing and computer use, and to use English.

COURSE HOURS 2025/2026

Medical Sociology

Lectures (Place and time or group)	**Seminars** (Place and time or group)
23.03.2026	

L1. Introduction to the Course:
• P01 (14:00 - 15:45) [477]
  ○ MSo
 	
L2. Theoretical Approaches in Medical Sociology:
• P01 (14:00 - 15:45) [477]
  ○ MSo	

dr. sc. Šimunković Gordana, prof. soc. ped. [477]	
25.03.2026	

L3. Medicine and Social Stratification Based on Neurodiversity:
• P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH (14:00 - 15:45) [1602]
  ○ MSo
 	
L4. Medicine as Part of Culture and the Process of Socialization:
• P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH (14:00 - 15:45) [1602]
  ○ MSo	

izv. prof. dr. sc. Horvat Saša [1602]	
26.03.2026	

L5. Social Determinants of Health and Disease I: sex / gender, age, race, class:
• P01 (13:00 - 15:45) [477]
  ○ MSo
 	
L6. Social Determinants of Health and Disease II: social capital, education, environment and sustainability, energy, climate change:
• P01 (13:00 - 15:45) [477]
  ○ MSo
 	
L7. Social Inequalities in Health and Disease:
• P01 (13:00 - 15:45) [477]
  ○ MSo	

dr. sc. Šimunković Gordana, prof. soc. ped. [477]	
27.03.2026	

L8. Models and Social Experience of Health:
• P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH (14:00 - 16:45) [477]
  ○ MSo
 	
L9. Professionalization of Medical Profession:
• P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH (14:00 - 16:45) [477]
  ○ MSo
 	
L10. Special Topics in Medical Sociology:
• P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH (14:00 - 16:45) [477]
  ○ MSo	

dr. sc. Šimunković Gordana, prof. soc. ped. [477]	
30.03.2026	

	S1 - S2 Public policies and health: • P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH (13:00 - 14:45) [477] ◦ MSo S3 - S4 Social determinants of health and disease: • P08 (15:00 - 16:45) [2739] ◦ MSo
Depope Ana [2739] · dr. sc. Šimunković Gordana, prof. soc. ped. [477]	
01.04.2026	
	S5 - S6 Socially excluded groups, social capital and health: • P01 (13:00 - 14:45) [2739] ◦ MSo
Depope Ana [2739]	
02.04.2026	
	S7 - S8 Mental health: • P01 (14:00 - 15:45) [477] ◦ MSo
dr. sc. Šimunković Gordana, prof. soc. ped. [477]	
20.04.2026	
	S9 - S10 Physician - patient relationship: • ONLINE (15:00 - 16:45) [477] ◦ MSo
dr. sc. Šimunković Gordana, prof. soc. ped. [477]	

List of lectures, seminars and practicals:

LECTURES (TOPIC)	Number of hours	Location
L1. Introduction to the Course	1	P01
L2. Theoretical Approaches in Medical Sociology	1	P01
L3. Medicine and Social Stratification Based on Neurodiversity	1	P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH
L4. Medicine as Part of Culture and the Process of Socialization	1	P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH
L5. Social Determinants of Health and Disease I: sex / gender, age, race, class	1	P01
L6. Social Determinants of Health and Disease II: social capital, education, environment and sustainability, energy, climate change	1	P01
L7. Social Inequalities in Health and Disease	1	P01
L8. Models and Social Experience of Health	1	P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH
L9. Professionalization of Medical Profession	1	P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH
L10. Special Topics in Medical Sociology	1	P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH

SEMINARS (TOPIC)	Number of hours	Location
S1 - S2 Public policies and health	2	P09 - TEACHING IN ENGLISH

S3 - S4 Social determinants of health and disease	2	P08
S5 - S6 Socially excluded groups, social capital and health	2	P01
S7 - S8 Mental health	2	P01
S9 - S10 Physician - patient relationship	2	ONLINE

EXAM DATES (final exam):

1.	21.05.2026.
2.	11.06.2026.
3.	09.07.2026.