**Sociology (2014)**

**Sociological Imagination**

**Body, Bodies, and Embodiement**

1. Disease(s)

* Diseases and their social construction. Physical and mental diseases. Diseases and medicine. Iatrogenesis. Professionalization and Expertise.
* The clash of medical knowledge and lay “connaisseurs” – the use of new technologies. What to guarantee – life, health, survival? What is quality of life?
* Psychiatry vs. psychoanalysis – psychological intervention and chemical and pharmaceutical treatment. The laboratorial interest. The placebo effect.
* When a disease becomes a disease: a) social context and interaction systems; b) social attention and hitting an emotional chord; c) when a problem is widespread; d) when there is a definition and a concept. Labeling and its impact. Definition of stigma. The jester of the village. When to institutionalize?
* Long lasting diseases and new diseases. How new is the new? Why some diseases go away never to come back. When nostalgia was a Swiss disease. When homosexuality was a disease. DSM’s definitions and new fads – bipolar disorders, multiple syndromes.
* When hysteria was popular. Sex therapy or psychological disorder. What about shyness? Is medicalization just a buzzword? What about pathologization?
* Diffusion patterns and epidemics. How network sociologists solved the AIDS conundrum.
* Cancer and cancers. Research and costs. Breasts value more than prostates? Does Malaria matter? Rich and poor, men and women. Rare diseases.
* How much is a human body valued? Blood and Organs.
* When age is a disease. Prolonging youth to the limit or coping with death. The palliative treatments.
* Are there any diseases that are specific to some countries? The hikkikomori epidemics. What about suicides and suicide rates?
* Autism and its many varieties. The savant syndrome.
* Everyone is sick. Everyone is entitled to some rights associated with diseases. When diseases become identities granting rights. Groups that play the card of publicity. Why we spend so much on AIDS and so little in auto-imune diseases.
* Trust in doctors and the fear of malpractice.
* The genes and the culture: a renewed battle.
* From idiosyncratic behavior to pathological. From eccentricity to sickness. When a mental illness was witchcraft, demonic possession. Framing diseases.
* A long process – diagnosing, patterning, and treating.

2. Body Modification

* Scars and scarification. The Mensur and the character of duelists. Choose the best partner to marry your daughter. Piercings, tattoos and modern primitives. From habits of lower classes and exotic people to tribalizations.
* The giraffe women of Myanmar: functionality and aesthetics. When rings were a token of property.
* Hair and styling. Identity building through combs and ribbons.
* When sports and pornography impose their rules. Performance logic. Citius, altius, fortius. The shaved body. Away from animal memories? From a sign of masculinity to a symbol of animalism. Copying the porn stars and the athletes. Why women porn stars make more money than their male counterparts?
* From normalcy to fetishism. From hygiene to fear of diseases.
* Plastic and aesthetic surgery – correcting, shaping, changing, copying. From tummy tuck to rhinoplasty; from breast augmentation to hymenoplasty. The born again virgins. The beauty obsession and looking good. What type of surgeries will we have in 10 years?
* The industries of body modification. How much are they worth. Which countries are on top of the list? U.S, Brazil, South Korea as examples. Go to Bangkok for a nose job. Plastic surgery around the world. Skin color in Asia. Bollywood and Tamil actresses.
* Sports again – enhancing the body through drugs. The next stage – Oscar Pistorius on steroids or Usain Bolt on prosthetics? Naturalizing and denaturalizing the body.
* Fashion models and their measurements. Between risky behavior and the search for the “looks”. Anorexia and bulimia. What about the playmates? Did their bodies change? The dieting industry. The corset and the bra. Braless movements.
* Exercising your body. Looking perfect. The health club and the workout industries.
* Crossing the boundaries – sex change in Iran. Trans sexuality or transgender? Body Integrity Identity Disorder (BIID) and apotemnophilia/acrotomophilia.
* When the clothes are more than clothes: fashion and civilization. How the thresholds of violence and disgustful practices changed? The skirts and the handkerchief.
* Repressing smells and body odors. Spending in the cosmetic industry. Acquiring taste and defining the foul. Clean and dirty. The yuk factor. Children, adolescent, men and women.
* Hiding bodies and seeing bodies. What causes attraction and revulsion? What is acceptable and not. When the king of Frances’s wedding night was a public affair.
* Transforming the body through improper behavior. The addictions and their effects. Innocuous and severe addiction – alcohol, drugs, tobacco, coffee, sex and gambling. What about living on the edge and risking it all?
* The gymnastics movement and its association with health and vigor. From Greece to the Nordic countries. Why do so many of the best athletes die young? The body ideal – women throughout the ages.
* Things that please you in a body. The body as a canvas. Permanent vs. provisional.