**SOC 3290: Deviance**

**Overheads Lecture 29: Mental Disorder I:**

\* Today we introduce the topic of mental disorder. We will concentrate on the following:

(1) Myths about Mental Disorder

(2) Types of Mental Disorder;

(3) Social Factors in Mental Disorder;

\* Next class we will look at societal response to mental disorder & its theoretical explanations

\* Mental disorder is common, but its most extreme varieties are relatively rare (e.g. schizophrenia affects 1-2% of population)

\* A strong social stigma attaches to mental disorder: linked to myths

**(1) Popular Myths about Mental Disorder**:

\* **Myth**: most mentally disordered people are very weird & disturbed

\* **Myth**: mental illness is hopeless & incurable

\* **Myth**: there is a clear line between mental illness & health

**\* Myth**: the mentally disordered are prone to violence & crime

\* **Myth**: midwinter depression = a mental illness (S.A.D.)

**(2) Types of Mental Disorder**:

\* Psychiatry: 2 views: medical vs. psychoanalytic

\* *Traditional classification*: organic (injury) vs. functional disorders (psychological and social causation)

\* Functional disorders: psychosis, neurosis and personality disorder

\* Psychosis: losing touch with reality (e.g. Schizophrenia/ manic depression)

\* Neurosis: little distortion of reality/ but unhappy (e.g. anxiety, phobias, OCD, depression, psychosomatic illness)

\* Personality disorders: lack of concern for others (e.g. psychopaths)

\* Medically-oriented psychiatrists view traditional system as too broad/ambiguous

\* Prefer to use DSM-IV classification to diagnose symptoms of 300+ “mental disorders” (and efficiently collect payment)

\* DSM-IV classification criticized:

- merely descriptive/ not analytical

- arbitrary definitions (# of symptoms)

- focus on treating symptoms not cause (given drugs)

-overemphasizes medical/biological view of mental disorder

- defining mental disorders too broadly

**(2)** **Social Factors in Mental Disorder:**

\* Sociologists emphasize impact of social factors on mental disorder:

(1) Lower social class (social causation vs. social drift)

(2) Gender: women (depression/anxiety)

men (antisocial personality, paranoia, addictions)

(3) Race/ethnicity: overall level unclear/ specific disorders

notable among certain groups

(4) Urban environment

(5) Young age (esp. since 1980's): more social stresses with fewer

coping resources

\* Next class:

(1) Social responses to mental disorders

(2) Theories of mental disorder