Hermeneutics and Communications

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Professor

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Assignment #3 – Essay on a case study

1. Write a 5-page paper on a specific event or phenomenon (e.g., a historical event, a cultural practice, a legal decision), and interpret it from a hermeneutic perspective. This would involve understanding the event within its context and recognizing the role of your prejudices in shaping your interpretation.

The student should direct developmental readings from Assignment #2 on the hermeneutic issue for this assignment.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

In the United States of America, 97% of its land mass is rural, with about 20% of the U.S. population residing in rural areas, about 66 million people living in rural areas of agricultural use (corps and pastureland), forests, deserts, shrubland, and wetlands. There are approximately 19 people per square mile in rural America compared to approximately 2,397 people per square mile in urban areas in America. One of the common things among people living in urban and rural areas is the need for healthcare. However, there is a gap between the two areas in access to healthcare, rural areas tend to have less availability to healthcare facilities.

This paper examines the context of health and healthcare in rural America. Although the country's rural areas contain slightly less than 20 percent of the population, 59 percent of Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas were located in rural areas. (Hirsch, 2019, p. 14)

North America has been a story of vast natural resources, conquest, exploitation, slave labor, racism, genocide, wars, crime, greed, capitalism at its finest and its worst, ingenuity, economic and political superpower. This historical context has shaped America’s people, their thoughts, language, beliefs, opportunities, and ways of life. America’s natural resources . However,e foundational to its people in urban and rural areas, where production and harvesting may be in rural areas, but the manufacturing and packing is done in urban areas. In the rural areas, there has been a historical and cultural tie to land-based economics, however, the continuation of globalization and neoliberalism has shifted this land-based economy out of rural America. This shift has increased poverty and unemployment. Compounding this, the issue of geographic isolation,lack of technological infostructure impartiality, and lack of highly educated workforce has hindered the options for economic development. (Sherman, 2021) The economic connection between rural and urban areas is strong. Still, the difference in the people who live in these two areas is numerous, from economic opportunities to culture, and one of those differences is in the accessibility of healthcare.

The United States of America has a unique healthcare system, where it is vast and complex, it is largely privatized where for profit companies or non-profit organizations own medical facilities and pay their employees, doctors, nurses, dentists, and mental health providers. Within these healthcare systems, is a financial market of investments, returns and incentives. Up until recent history the healthcare system was largely based on a fee-for-service payment system, where if one was sick, they went into a healthcare facility and paid money (out of pocket or by way of insurance) for the care they received whether or not they got better. From the healthcare facility standpoint, they make more money the sicker people were, and the more people were sick. The U.S. healthcare system started to change and is still going through a population health and value-based payment methodology, where healthcare facilities may still get a fee-for-service payment although smaller and are getting paid by how healthy the population they serve and improvements in their patient’s health. This shift in healthcare has drastically shifted how healthcare systems think about health, it includes not only procedures, medication, and check-ups, but also about social and economic factors of patients. Another large component of the U.S. healthcare system is health insurance, which is largely private based for profit companies. Since the healthcare is so expensive in the U.S., health insurance plays such a vital role in people’s ability to afford and access healthcare. Many Americans have health insurance through their place of work. Large companies are able to leverage the cost of insurance plans for their employees and families. The U.S. healthcare system is a financial market from medical research, hospitals, clinics, pharmaceuticals, insurance, and healthcare employees.

Looking into healthcare environment in rural American we find many differences than that of the healthcare environment in urban America. Urban America is where the healthcare financial market could make large returns based on the population size and already existing infrastructure, from population center locations to researcher labs, universities, and medical specializations, to a population base that may pay out of pocket for top surgeons and doctors. Rural areas do not have this financial incentive for healthcare investments as urban areas do. This is not to say that all urban areas have healthcare investments, poorer urban areas probably have the access issues as rural areas do. Some rural areas may have a tourism economy and we may find that there are finely equipped healthcare facilities, mainly catering to the wealth of the tourist or part-time residents.

Rural America's population and economic composite differ from urban areas. Due to the shift in population from rural to urban areas, the median age in much of non-metro America is higher than the median age in the Metro areas. (Hirsch, 2019, p.12) Over the past several decades there have been multiple shifts in rural America population. One being the population shift out of rural areas, mainly by the younger generation moving out to urban areas for higher paying careers. Another is population growth in former rural areas, which shift those areas to non-rural areas and leaves fewer people in the remaining rural areas. In addition to the aging population of those who own land and work in rural areas. This has caused the rural population to have a higher average of an older population. Which in turn produces economic healthcare challenges of an older population where healthcare access becomes more of an issue where healthcare needs become more in need. The aging population in rural America is a distinct population due to the unique social, economic, cultural, and health-related characteristics. They have higher rates of mental health, chronic diseases, and generally worse health outcomes than non-rural aged populations. (Cohen, 2023)

Another aspect of rural America, since it is based on a natural resource economy, it takes human labor to work the land and resources, these laborers may be local residents or immigrants or migrants to work the land and yield its resources. Therefore, there is a diverse population not only culturally but also economically and thus s diverse healthcare needs. “Population health and aging trends are driven by multilevel and multidimensional factors, including place-level population composition and local economic, service, social, natural, and policy environments. “Rural areas are more demographically and economically diverse than ever before, and we cannot assess problems, develop policies, or deliver adequate resources to rural areas without recognizing these fundamental differences and without a clearer understanding of the exposures shaping health and aging among different rural populations.” (Jensen, et al, 2020, p. 1331) Durning the past half century there has been a significant population shift in rural areas, which had a major impact on the business structure and goods and services. As a result has impacted the remaining population in rural areas. (Johnson, 2019)

Health insurance opportunities are different in rural areas, where there are not large companies to be employed to get cost effective health insurance, so people have to pay more for healthcare with a smaller income. Their income does not go as far, there is a lack of affordable good healthy foods “working poverty is much more prevalent among rural workers than urban workers”. (Mueller, et al, 2021, p.3) There is a high level of poverty and government assistance in rural areas. In addition to the high cost of groceries in those areas, where they may take SNAP benefits. Local producers with healthy fruits and vegetables and meat may not take SNAP benefits, so thus there is a cycle of not being able to access healthy foods and maintain a healthy lifestyle. I have often thought that those with a healthy lifestyle can afford a healthy one, which precludes many from rural areas. “When children experience food insecurity, it negatively effects their overall health status; food-insecure children generally experience 2–4 times as many health problems as do other children within the same income bracket (Cook et al. 2013) and are at higher risk of being hospitalized” (Gundersen & Ziliak 2015) (p. 367)

There are many factors that impact the health of people in rural America, just as there are many factors that affect the health of people in urban America, however the several healthcare dynamics are happening within rural America, from different eating habits to resistance to going into routine healthcare, to an aging population, to lack of health insurance, and to access to care. (Mueller, et al, 2021) With these dynamics it leads to barriers to obtaining a higher level of health and when people get sick or are struck with health issues there tends to be a longer recovery period and well as having health return to the prior status that may be needed to continue to work at the same level, which in turn hinders their ability to remain healthy. Rural America is vital to the American economy, in order to keep this part of the economy flowing America’s healthcare system needs to invest more in promoting and keeping rural America healthy.

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