

ANTHROPOLOGY 6505: MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Spring 2014, Tuesday 4:10-6pm

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Office Hours:
Thursday 3:30-5:00pm, 1957 E Street NW, 501J
☞ or email me for an appointment at another time

Course Description:

Medical anthropology is the study of human health, illness and healing. In its broadest sense, it encompasses all four fields of anthropology (biological anthropology, archaeology, cultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology). In this course, we focus on the literature that examines the role of culture in health, illness and healing. Readings include selections of classic writings and the latest research as well as describing a wide range of cultural contexts.

Objectives:

In just one semester, we can examine only selected topics in this important and growing area of anthropology. Students will gain expertise in assessing arguments and evidence in the following areas as *learning objectives*:

- ◆ theoretical approaches and debates: critical, interpretive/subjective, applied/clinical, scientific/humanistic
- ◆ how medical anthropologists select and frame research issues; how they collect and analyze data; and how they present their findings
- ◆ how structural violence and social inequality cause and shape health problems and affect subjectivities
- ◆ the role of ethics in medical anthropology research and representation
- ◆ the relevance of medical anthropology to important global problems
- ◆ how medical anthropology offers a different view of health and health problems than biomedicine/public health

Additional *learning objectives* ensure that students will gain and practice analytical skills including:

- ◆ applying critical thinking to the reading and discussion of published texts
- ◆ improved library/Internet research through the use of RefWorks
- ◆ ability to discern a viable research topic that will draw on rich resources in the anthropological literature
- ◆ practice in writing a "literature review" that overviews and assesses a body of published work
- ◆ understanding of what are and what are not acceptable sources for the paper and how to cite them
- ◆ awareness of what constitutes excellent analytical social science writing

Readings:

Assigned books are on sale in the GW bookstore and on reserve for 2-hour use in Gelman Library.

Donald Joralemon, *Exploring Medical Anthropology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 3rd ed, 2009.

Arthur Kleinman, *Writing at the Margin*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Paul Farmer, *Infections and Inequalities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Ellen Gruenbaum, *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Angela Garcia, *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
Alyshia Gálvez, *Patient Citizens, Immigrant Mothers: Mexican Women, Public Prenatal Care, and the Birth-Weight Paradox*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2011.
Frederick Klaitz, *Death in a Church of Life.: Moral Passion during Botswana's Time of AIDS*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.

*Selected journal articles/chapters are available through Gelman or on the Web, or will be posted on Blackboard as a pdf.

Requirements and Assessments:

- 1) Class attendance, completion of all reading assignments, participation in class discussions and presentations on the readings; this class is not lecture-based but is discussion-based so you must be prepared to participate meaningfully in class about the readings: 20 percent of final grade. [Note: each student may miss one class with no penalty and no need to provide an excuse; a one-page (250 words) summary of the week's reading is, however, required as make-up work]
- 2) A take-home mid-term exam that asks you to demonstrate your understanding of the readings: 25 percent of final grade.
- 3) An abstract of your research paper (75-100 words) with at least five anthropology references: 5 percent of final grade. Guidelines for the abstract are provided at the end of this syllabus. You must submit your abstract in hard copy at the beginning by/before 4:10pm. A late submission will negatively affect your final grade by a fraction of a grade, from A to A- for example.
- 4) An "analytical literature review" term paper, based on secondary resources; submitted first as a solid draft for my review and comments, and then as a revised, polished paper: 50 percent of final grade. The paper should be between 15-18 pages long (a "page" equals 250 words, so total between 3800-4500 words). Guidelines are provided on the last page of the syllabus.
- 5) Brief presentation (7 minutes) to the class of your paper's objectives and findings. This presentation is required. All students must attend class on the day of the presentations, listen attentively, and ask questions of the presenters in a professional manner. If a student fails to present to the class and participate in the discussion, then his/her final grade will drop by an entire letter grade.
- 6) Improvement over the semester is important. I will therefore, tilt your final grade upward on the basis of improved participation and an excellent term paper.

CLASS POLICIES:

Attendance: attending all classes is a primary component leading to excellence in this course (see above).

Problems with deadlines: The only valid excuse for missing an exam or being late on other assignments is a personal medical or family emergency. Students must present an excuse **in writing from a professional** in order to be allowed to make up work and avoid penalties. Computer failure, travel plans, and work are not acceptable excuses.

Religious holidays: the University's Religious Holiday Calendar is posted on the GW Provost's website:
<https://provost.gwu.edu/sites/provost.gwu.edu/files/downloads/Relig%20Holiday%202013-2014.pdf>

If you intend to be absent from class because of religious observance, you must inform the professor of the date(s) **by email no later than Friday, January 25**.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Honesty and original work on all exams and assignments are absolutely essential. Unless an assignment is clearly defined by the professor as "group work," then the expectation is that a student works entirely on his/her own. This course follows the standards set forth in the GW Code of Academic Integrity: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

GW SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS:

Disability Support Services (DSS): Marvin Center 242, telephone 994-8250; <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss>
University Counselling Center (UCC), 202-994-5300; http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/Counseling_Services

EMERGENCIES AND EVACUATION PLANS: In case of an emergency situation, we will adhere to GW guidelines. For campus updates, call 994-5050. In terms of evacuating our classroom, we will discuss this matter in class.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Part I: The Scope of Cultural Medical Anthropology and Theoretical Overview

Week 1, January 14. Introduction to the Course

☞ Familiarize yourself with library/Internet resources, especially relevant journals (*Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, *Human Organization*), computer-based bibliographic resources available through Gelman Library such as ArticlesPlus, AnthropologyPlus, Ebscohost, others.

☞ Do reading for Week 2.

Week 2, January 21. The Scope of Medical Anthropology

Joralemon, *Exploring Medical Anthropology*

Skim one of the following literature review-based articles:

Faye Ginsberg and Rayna Rapp, Disability Worlds. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42:53-68, 2013.

or

J. Josh Snodgrass, Health of Indigenous Circumpolar Populations. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42: 69-87.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

Week 3, January 28. More on Theoretical Perspectives and Debates

Kleinman, *Writing at the Margin* [a reader's guide will be provided]

Kleinman, Four Social Theories for Global Health. *The Lancet* 375: 1518-1519, 2010.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

Week 4, February 4. Introducing Critical Medical Anthropology

Merrill Singer, The Coming of Age of Critical Medical Anthropology, *Social Science and Medicine* 28:1193-1203, 1989.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Three Propositions for a Critically Applied Medical Anthropology, *Social Science and Medicine* 30(2):189-197, 1990.

Michael Taussig, Nutrition, Development, and Foreign Aid: A Case Study of U.S.-Directed Health Care in a Colombian Plantation Zone, *International Journal of Health Services* 8(1):101-121, 1978.

M. C Ennis-McMillan, Suffering from Water: Social Origins of Bodily Distress in a Mexican Community. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 15(3):368-390, 2001.

Didier Fassin, A Case for Critical Ethnography: Rethinking the Early Years of the AIDs Epidemic. *Social Science and Medicine* 99:119-126, 2013.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

Part II: The Cultural Construction of Suffering: Critical Approaches

Week 5, February 11. Poverty and Affliction

Farmer, *Infections and Inequality* [a reader's guide will be provided]

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

Week 6, February 18. Gender, Power and Affliction

TAKE-HOME MID-TERM EXAM DISTRIBUTED

Gruenbaum, *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective*

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

◆ Discuss term paper topics

Week 7, February 25. Conflict, Violence, and (Mental) Health

The following articles are from *Social Science and Medicine* 70(1), January 2010:

Catherine Panter-Brick, Conflict, Violence and Health: Setting a new Interdisciplinary Agenda

Theresa Betancourt et al., Past Horror, Present Struggles: The Role of Stigma in the Association between War Experiences and Psychosocial Adjustment among Former Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone

Wietse Tol et al., Political Violence and Mental Health: A Multidisciplinary Review of the Literature on Nepal

Erica James, Ruptures, Rights, and Repair: The Political Economy of Trauma in Haiti

Rebecca Horn, Responses to Intimate Partner Violence in Kakuma Refugee Camp

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

◆ Discuss term paper topics

Week 8, March 4. What's New in the Medical Anthropology of Affliction

TAKE-HOME MID-TERM EXAM DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS; bring hard copy to class no later than 4:10pm.

Yeon Jun Yu, Subjectivity, Hygiene, and STI Prevention: A Normalization Paradox in the Cleanliness Practices of Female Sex Workers in Post-Socialist China. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 27:348-367, 2013.

Michael P. Anastario, Rachel Hallum-Montes, Elfryn Reyes, Russell Manzanero, and Helen Chun, Toward a Social Theory of Sexual Risk Behavior among Men in the Armed Services: Understanding the Military Occupational Habitus. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 37:737-755, 2013.

Trevor Hoppe. From Sickness to Badness: The Criminalization of HIV in Michigan. *Social Science and Medicine* 101:130-147, 2013.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the readings

[Note: these readings *do* need to be included in your mid-term essays]

SPRING BREAK March 10-March 14

Part III: Healing, Healers, and Healing Institutions

Week 9, March 18. Healing and Meaning

☞ ABSTRACT for term paper and list of 5-10 references: hard copy due in class by 4:10pm

Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Effectiveness of Symbols, in Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*. New York: Anchor Books, 1967. pp. 181-201. [pdf will be posted on Blackboard]

Frederick Klaits, *Death in a Church of Life: Moral Passion during Botswana's Time of AIDS*.

Michael Moerman, Anthropology and Symbolic Healing, *Current Anthropology* 20:59-80, 1979. [skim]

Adrian Guta, et al., Using Foucault to Recast the Telecare Debate. *The American Journal of Bioethics* 12(9):57-59.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

◆Discuss abstracts and progress with term paper research

Week 10, March 25. Inside Views of Health Care Institutions in the U.S.: Two Views

Angela Garcia, *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande*.

Brian Hilligoss, Selling Patients and Other Metaphors: A Discourse Analysis of the Interpretive Frames that Shape Emergency Department Admission Handoff. *Social Science and Medicine* 102: 119-128, 2014.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

Week 11, April 1. Health, Health Care and Ethnicity in a Globalizing World: Focus on Women's Reproductive Health

Alyshia Gálvez, *Patient Citizens, Immigrant Mothers: Mexican Women, Public Prenatal Care, and the Birth-Weight Paradox*

Jennifer M. Torres, Medicalizing to De-Medicalize: Lactation Consultants and the (De)Medicalization of Breastfeeding. *Social Science and Medicine* 100:159-166, 2014.

→Bring two discussion questions to class related to the reading

* Each student must post on Blackboard a pdf version of his/her favorite paper/chapter related to his/her lit review project by April 9 for discussion in class on Week 13

Part IV. Wrapping Up and Looking Ahead

Week 12, April 8: A Potpourri of Perspectives

☞ Draft version of term paper due no later than 4:10pm: bring hard copy to class

Craig Sinclair, et al., Discussing Dying in the Diaspora: Attitudes toward Advance Care Planning among First Generation Dutch and Italian Migrants in Australia. *Social Science and Medicine* 101:86-93, 2013.

Shirin Madon et al., Can Mobile Phones Help Control Neglected Tropical Disease? Experiences from Tanzania. *Social Science and Medicine* 102:103-110, 2014.

Seth Holmes, "Is It Worth Risking Your Life?": Ethnography, Risk, and Death on the U.S.- Mexican Border. *Social Science and Medicine* 99:153-161, 2013.

Stacy Leigh Pigg, On Sitting and Doing: Ethnography as Action in Global Health. *Social Science and Medicine* 99:127-134, 2013.

* Reminder: Each student must post on Blackboard a pdf version of his/her favorite paper/chapter related to his/her lit review project by April 9 for discussion in class on Week 13

Week 13, April 15, Discussion of Articles Selected by Students

Students receive back their draft papers with comments for revision.

Prepare to present, in 3-5 minutes, highlights from your selected reading; also, read and be prepared to discuss three of the readings posted on Blackboard Discussion Board by your classmates.

Week 14, April 22, Student Presentations

FINAL VERSION OF PAPER due by/before 4:10pm; bring hard copy to class and post electronic copy on BB through SafeAssign by 4:10pm for full credit

THE ABSTRACT

The abstract should be 75-100 words in length and double-spaced. It should provide the (working) title of the paper and your name at the top of the page. The body of the abstract should summarize the paper's goal (topic), how the research will be done (review of secondary sources), and what the value of the topic is, or what expected findings are, or something like that as the wrap-up. Please provide a word-count at the end of the abstract. You must also include three, and only three, key words/phrases that highlight the paper's contents (for example: subject matter, region, cultural group). Last, you must include a working list of at least five references that are anthropological.

THE PAPER

Paper Topic:

The general subject of your paper is on the role of culture as related to health, illness, or healing. A wide range of options exists. You might do research on a particular health problem (such as anorexia nervosa, maternal mortality, or HIV/AIDS). Or you may wish to explore a particular approach to healing, for example, botanical healing among the Maya. If you have no idea about a potential topic, start exploring the literature on medical anthropology (especially the major journals) immediately.

Guidelines for Writing the Term Paper:

- 1) This is an anthropology class, and therefore I want you to rely *mainly* on the writings of anthropologists for your paper. If you push me to provide a percentage of anthropology sources, I would say no less than 80 percent. More is better.
- 2) The content of the paper *must* reflect learning that you have gained in this class. Therefore, you should include references to readings assigned in class and/or mention of theoretical perspectives discussed. Even the "best" research paper will not get an "A" if it shows no evidence of being related to this course. In fact, a paper that is not integrated with class material will receive a failing grade.
- 3) Always use double-spacing and provide at least 1" margins around the text so that I will have room to make comments.
- 4) Pay attention to the length requirement for the paper of 15-18 pages (one "page" equals about 250 words). The page limit does not include the "References Cited" section. Please provide a word count for the body of your paper, for both the draft and with the final version.
- 5) References in the text and in the "References Cited" section must closely follow the "social science format" used in cultural anthropology journals (AAA style guide).
- 6) Always keep a copy of the most recent revision of your paper and, of course, the final version that you submit. The instructor is not responsible for lost papers.

7) Proofread the paper with care for spelling, punctuation, grammar and (most important) sense. Make any necessary final corrections on the copy that you hand in--clear, hand-written corrections of a moderate number will not lower your grade. During the semester, I will hand out my "Writing Tips" guide, and we will discuss good writing.

8) In order to avoid a possible crisis that will prevent you from handing in your writing assignments on time, you should prepare each one with time to spare. Very few excuses are acceptable for lateness (serious health problems or family emergencies); excuses must be documented in writing by a professional and a copy given to the professor. Problems with computers or work-related duties are never a valid excuse for lateness. Papers that are late (and that includes being handed in even five minutes after the beginning of class on the due date) are graded down one "third" of a letter grade for each day late (for example, an A paper that is one day late receives an A-). A day is a twenty-four hour period.

9) If you have writing problems, please make an appointment at the GW Writing Center in advance of the paper due date. They will help you with things like organization and even with line-by-line editing.

10) We will go over a detailed list of Writing Tips in class.

NOTE: This course is conducted in full accordance with the GW guidelines for Academic Integrity. I therefore expect all your written work to be based on your individual work and all sources properly cited; see www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html. And evidence of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero on the particular assignment.