

ANTH 236-01 MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

"Medicine is a social science, and politics is nothing more than medicine in larger scale"
– Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902)

Fall 2008
HIRC 8
TTh 10-11:15am

Instructor: Sallie Han e-mail: hanss@oneonta.edu phone: 436-2715
Office hours: M 10-10:45am & 1-2:30pm, W 10-10:45am, Th 1:30-2:30pm

Credit: 3 s.h.
Prerequisites: ANTH 100 or ANTH 130. (LA, Z)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to issues in medical anthropology, explores the interaction of biology and culture in the production of health and illness. We will engage in comparative study and consider the diversity of ideas and practices that constitute health and illness across cultures and societies. The goal is to understand health and illness as products of cultural and social practice.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is a reading-intensive course. It will involve class discussions and lectures that are based on reading assignments and films/videos. The goal of this class will be to unsettle the question that health and illness are biological issues, and arrive instead at the understanding that they are cultural and social ideas and practices as well. To this end, we will discuss the following questions:

What is medical anthropology? In short, medical anthropology is the anthropological study of health and illness. However, this answer begs still more questions. As a field of study, medical anthropology draws upon the four subfields of anthropology – archaeology, biological or physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and linguistic anthropology – which in turn include various theoretical and practical frameworks. During the semester, we will consider both the shared assumptions and concerns, and the diverse approaches and perspectives that serve as the starting point for medical anthropology.

What is health? What is illness? Because there is no single answer to either question, we will explore the diversity of ideas and practices that constitute health, well being, illness, disease, and medicine. By looking comparatively at cross-cultural examples, we come to an appreciation of "health" and "illness" as not only determined by biology, but also as especially defined by culture and society. As a result, we will be able to understand medicine in the United States as itself a cultural and social system.

What are the causes of health and illness? Health and illness are not biological issues only. Thus, we need to consider the cultural and social institutions that cause or create health and illness – including structures of kinship, community, and the nation-state. A significant insight of medical anthropology is that health and illness are not only medical problems, but also political economic problems. Health and illness as much about inequalities surrounding gender, race, ethnicity, and class as they are about infections.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your final grades for the course will be based on total cumulative points, broken down **approximately** as follows:

CLASS PRESENTATION	15
ESSAY EXAMS (3 x 20 points each)	60
PROJECT PROPOSAL	5
PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT	15
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	20
ETHNOGRAPHY / POSTER PRESENTATION (FINAL)	25
PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSION	20
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TOTAL =	170

Your final grade will be based on meeting all of the following requirements. Failure to meet any one of the requirements can result in a failing grade. Please note in advance that there are no extra credit or make-up assignments.

- **CLASS PRESENTATION.** Each student will be responsible for a PowerPoint presentation on one of the assigned readings. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first week of classes.) ou will speak for about 5 to 7 minutes. You will be evaluated according to the following criteria: In your presentation, explain the central argument, highlight other key points of the article, describe the evidence and examples that the author employs, and offer two or three questions to generate class discussion. A PDF handout of your PowerPoint slides will be posted to Angel. (See below regarding Angel.)
- **ESSAY EXAMS.** You will be required to write three short essay exams responding to a selection of articles in the UAMA reader. These writing assignments are intended to enable both the instructor and the student to assess the student's grasp of the material in this class. They also are intended to provide opportunities for the student to reinforce his or her understanding of it. Each paper should be no fewer than 4 and no more than 6 pages in length. It should be double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman or other standard font. Instructions for the response papers will be discussed in detail in advance.
- **ETHNOGRAPHY / POSTER PRESENTATION (FINAL).** For your final project, you will prepare a poster presentation on health behavior in the United States. The posters will be presented during the final class meeting on **Tuesday, December 16, 8 to 10:30am.**

A list of suggested topics will be circulated, or you can develop your own topic. The poster presentation will be based on both fieldwork and reading. The fieldwork should involve participant-observation (e.g., in the dining halls, at the supermarket) and/or interview. In preparation for the poster presentation, you will submit the following, which will be graded. Please refer to the course schedule (below) for dates:

- A project proposal
- A preliminary bibliography listing a minimum of five (5) scholarly sources in anthropology (e.g., journal articles or books).
- A field observation report
- An annotated bibliography

- **PARTICIPATION IN CLASS DISCUSSION.** For each class, you will be assigned either + or – for your participation in class discussion. Lack of participation on a regular basis will affect your grade negatively.

COURSE PROCEDURES & POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance in class is required. Indeed, failure to attend class regularly can result in a failing grade for the class. If there are special circumstances to explain a pattern of absence, then it is the student's responsibility to report these to the instructor promptly, and to present official documentation. Also, please be reminded that absence does not exempt students from responsibility for all of the material covered in class, and that there are no extra credit or make-up assignments.

ANGEL

All students will be required to enroll in the Angel site for this class. Announcements, instructions for written assignments, presentation notes, and supplemental readings will be available on Angel. You also will submit written assignments on Angel.

E-MAIL

When you are e-mailing Dr. Han, please use only the following information in the subject line:

Your Last Name Anth 236

PARTICIPATION AND CONDUCT

This is a reading and discussion-intensive class. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss readings. Although it is not necessary for you to bring all of your books to class, **you are required to bring your reading assignment (textbook, reader, ethnography, or hard copy of PDF).**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and courteous of their classmates and their professor.

ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

Creating an environment for learning conducive to learning involves community effort. **If you wish to use a laptop during class, you must receive the instructor's permission.** Students are expected to refrain from using cellular phones, iPods, etc., during classes. Otherwise, you will be asked to leave the classroom.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In order to meet the requirements of this class, it is expected that all of your written work, including take-home writing assignments and in-class essay exams, will represent your own honest, individual, and original efforts to engage with the material in this class. Please be careful with your written work. Dishonesty of any kind (e.g., "copying" or "borrowing") will not be tolerated, and will result in a failing grade for the class.

You will be expected to cite your sources properly and include a list of references. You may prepare your citations in any standard style used in scholarly writing (e.g., MLA, APA), but please be sure to use it consistently and correctly. For example, the style guideline for American Anthropologist is available at www.aaanet.org.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Please note that special considerations such as extensions on deadlines will be permitted only with official documentation. If special circumstances arise that prevent the regular and timely completion of assignments, it is the student's responsibility to communicate them with the instructor. Please do so as soon as possible.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Merrill Singer and Hans Baer, *Introducing Medical Anthropology* (IMA)
 Peter J. Brown (ed.), *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology* (UAMA)
 Emily Martin, *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*

All material on this syllabus is subject to change.

DATE	READING / ASSIGNMENT DUE	TOPICS / CONCEPTS
Th 8-28	Introductions and requirements	
T 9-2	Singer and Baer, "Why Have a Medical Anthropology?" (IMA)	Medical anthropology; history, theoretical frameworks
Th 9-4	"What Medical Anthropologists Do" <i>Receive certification for human subjects research – On Angel, follow the link to www.citi.org</i>	Research methods
T 9-9	Singer and Baer, "What is Health? Experiencing Illness, Knowing Disease" (IMA) Film: Excerpts from "Rx for Survival"	Health, illness versus disease; the anthropology of the body
Th 9-11	Foster, "Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems" (UAMA #12) Harwood, "The Hot-Cold Theory of Disease: Implications for the Treatment of Puerto Rican Patients" (UAMA #27)	Etiology; ethnomedicine; humoral medical systems
T 9-16	Waxler, "Learning to Be a Leper: A Case Study in the Social Construction of Illness" (UAMA #16) Rubel, "The Epidemiology of a Folk Illness: <i>Susto</i> in Hispanic America" (UAMA #22)	The social construction of illness
Th 9-18	Kleinman, "Do Psychiatric Disorders Differ in Different Cultures?" (UAMA #21)	Culture-bound syndromes
T 9-23	No class – 1st essay exam due at 5pm	
Th 9-25	Martin, Introduction	Illness narratives; medicalization
T 9-30	Martin, Chapters 1 and 2	
Th 10-2	Martin, Chapter 3 and 4	
T 10-7	Martin, Chapters 5 and 6 Film: "Big Bucks, Big Pharma: Marketing Disease and Pushing Drugs"	
Th 10-9	No class – Yom Kippur	
T 10-14	Martin, Chapters 7 and 8	
Th 10-16	Martin, Chapter 9 and Conclusion	
T 10-21	No class – 2nd essay exam due at 5pm	
Th 10-23	Scheper-Hughes, "Culture, Scarcity, and Maternal Thinking: Maternal Detachment and Infant Survival in a Brazilian Shantytown" (UAMA #40) Film: "At Highest Risk"	Maternal/infant mortality
T 10-28	Clark, "Gender and Generation in Poor Women's Household Health Production Experiences" (UAMA #17)	Social production of health

Th 10-30	Library research workshop Project proposal due at the start of class <i>If you have not done so already, you must complete certification for human subjects research on www.citi.org</i>	
T 11-4	Dressler, "Ethnomedical Beliefs and Patient Adherence to a Treatment Regimen: A St. Lucian Example" (UAMA #25) "Health Beliefs and Compliance with Prescribed Medication for Hypertension among Black Women – New Orleans 1985-86" (UAMA #26)	
Th 11-6	Singer and Baer, "Ethnomedicine: The Worlds of Treatment and Healing" (IMA) Film: "Ancient Healing"	
T 11-11	Levi-Strauss, "The Sorcerer and His Magic" (UAMA #14) Hahn, "The Nocebo Phenomenon" (UAMA #15) Preliminary bibliography due at the start of class	Ritual
Th 11-13	Brown, "Dark Side of the Shaman" (UAMA #18) Melvin Konner, "Transcendental Medication" (UAMA #19) Film: "Balinese Trance Séance"	
T 11-18	Singer and Baer, "Plural Medical Systems in the Contemporary World: Complexity, Complementarity, and Conflict" (IMA) Finkler, "Sacred Healing and Biomedicine Compared" (UAMA #13) Film: "Spirit Doctors"	
Th 11-20	Farmer and Kleinman, "AIDS as Human Suffering" (UAMA #36) Film: "Odo Ya! Life with AIDS" Field observation report due at 5pm	
T 11-25 Th 11-27	No class - Thanksgiving	
T 12-2	Singer and Baer, "Health Disparity, Health Inequality" (IMA) Hahn, "The State of Federal Health Statistics on Racial and Ethnic Groups" (UAMA #28)	
Th 12-4	Farmer, "Social Inequalities and Emerging Infectious Diseases" (UAMA #11) Heggenhougen, "The Epidemiology of Functional Apartheid and Human Rights Abuses" (UAMA #45) Annotated bibliography due at the start of class	
T 12-9	Singer and Baer, "Health and the Environment: Toward a Healthier World" (IMA)	
Th 12-11	No class – 3rd essay exam due at 5pm	
T 12-16	Ethnography / Poster presentation at 8am	