

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

ANTH 236 MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Spring 2012

SCI1 314

236-01 (CRN 654)

TTh 11:30am-12:45pm

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Office hours: W 11-11:45am and 2-3:30pm, Th 10:30-11:15am and by appointment

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.

Credit: 3 s.h. Prerequisites: ANTH 100 or ANTH 130.

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 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.

How are health and illness constructed? Health and illness are not biological issues only. Thus, we need to consider the cultural and social practices, in particular the rituals involved in health and illness. We also will discuss the institutions that cause or create health and illness, such as 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

Regular attendance and participation in class is *required*. Your final grades for the course will be based on total cumulative points, broken down **approximately** as follows:

In-class exercises	30 points
2 essay exams x 25 points each	50 points
A preliminary project description	10 points
A preliminary bibliography	20 points
A comparative book essay	30 points
Annotations	40 points
A revised description of your topic with an outline of your poster presentation	10 points
Your poster presentation (with a final bibliography)	40 points
Participation	20 points
TOTAL	250 points

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.

IN-CLASS EXERCISES. A number of class meetings will be devoted to completing or discussing oral and written exercises that put into practice the concepts that you will be learning. Instructions will be discussed in class.

ESSAY EXAMS. You will be required to write two short essay exams responding to lectures, discussions, and readings for class. 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.

You must include proper citations for all sources in your written work. Please use in-text citations that include Author's Last Name, Year of Publication, and Page Number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. For example, when I include a direct quote in my text, it might read like this: "In the universe of cultures, there are different ways of conceptualizing time that contrast with the one familiar to us" (Martin 1992:197).

No bibliography is necessary for readings on the syllabus (UAMA and Martin), but you must include a list of works cited for additional sources. Points will be lost for failure to cite properly. Please see the style guide posted on Angel for guidance.

RESEARCH PROJECT / POSTER PRESENTATION. For your final, you will undertake a research project a topic in medicine, health, and illness, focusing on how *anthropologists* have examined it. You will give a poster presentation on your research project during the final class meeting on **Thursday, May 10 at 2pm**. The poster presentation will include both an oral summary and a visual display. In preparation for the poster presentation, you will submit a series of research assignments, which will be graded. Please refer to the course schedule (below) for dates, and to the handout with instructions.

PARTICIPATION. As noted above, regular attendance and participation in class is required. Your participation in class discussions will be noted, and points assigned to indicate your overall performance (e.g., excellent, good, fair, needs improvement, not acceptable).

COURSE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE

Although there are legitimate reasons for being absent from class (e.g., sickness), missing three or more classes, for whatever reasons, will lower one's course grade, and may result in failure.

It is the student's responsibility to inform the professor about the absence prior to or immediately after its occurrence. If you anticipate missing class because you are a student-athlete, you must identify yourself to the professor early in the course.

Remember also that students are responsible for all of the material covered in class. Make-ups for full credit will be permitted only for officially documented ("excused") absences, such as conferences or competitions. Make-ups for partial credit will be permitted for other absences.

STUDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH A DISABILITY

All individuals who are diagnosed with a disability are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As such, you may be entitled to certain accommodations within this class. If you are diagnosed with a disability, please make an appointment to meet with Student Disability Services (SDS), 209 Alumni Hall, ext. 2137. All students with the necessary supporting documentation will be provided appropriate accommodations as determined by the SDS Office. It is entirely your responsibility to contact SDS and concurrently supply me with your accommodation plan, which will inform me exactly what accommodations you are entitled to. You will only receive accommodations once you provide me with an SDS accommodation plan. Any previously recorded grades will not be changed.

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.

ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

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 every meeting of this class, you are required to bring your reading assignment.

Creating an environment for learning conducive to learning involves community effort. Individually, we will conduct ourselves in a manner that is respectful, considerate, and courteous of each other. Students are expected to arrive on time for class, and the professor is expected to end on time. Students are expected to refrain from conversation not directly relevant to the material at hand and from the use of cellular phones, iPods, etc., during classes. If you wish to use a laptop during class, you must receive the instructor's permission.

Please note the following passage from the Student Code of Conduct:

Instructors have a responsibility to maintain an effective learning situation in their classrooms and to deal promptly with any disruptions that interfere with the learning situation. The instructor is in charge of his/her classroom. If he/she feels that a student is interfering with the right of other students to profit from attendance in that classroom or if he/she feels that he/she is being unreasonably hindered in the presentation of subject matter, the instructor has every right to eject the offending student from the class and/or notify the Student Development Office of the student's behavior.

The Student Code of Conduct can be accessed at
<http://www.oneonta.edu/development/studevel.asp>.

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 may result in a failing grade for the assignment and / or 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.

ANGEL

All students will be expected to use the Angel site for this class. Announcements, instructions for written assignments, presentation notes, and readings will be available on Angel. You also will submit written assignments on Angel unless noted otherwise.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation from HIRC 6, ***please evacuate to Fine Arts Building so that College officials can account for you.*** Please review the College's Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Shelter-in-Place Procedures at the following web link: <http://www.oneonta.edu/security>. All students are also encouraged to register for NY Alert for immediate notification of campus emergencies on or near the campus.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Peter Brown and Ron Barrett, editors, *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology* (2nd edition) (UAMA)

Emily Martin, *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*

Please note that you are expected to bring your readings to class meetings.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	READING / ASSIGNMENT DUE
Th 1/26	Introductions
T 1/31	Brown et al., "Medical Anthropology: An Introduction to the Fields" (UAMA #1)
Th 2/2	Assignment: Medicine, Health, and Illness in the News. Browse news and / or other popular media sources on the Web <i>from the last 12 months</i> and bring to class one example of an issue concerning health, illness and / or medicine. Write a brief summary and analysis (no fewer than 125 words and no more than 150 words), focusing especially on why you think this issue is interesting, important, or even necessary to understand <i>and / or</i> what questions you have about the issue. <i>You must include information on the source of your media example, including url.</i> Note: Please bring a hard copy of the assignment, which will be used for an exercise and collected in class (10 points).
T 2/7	Biosocial approaches to health and illness Eaton et al., "Stone Agers in the Fast Lane: Chronic Degenerative Diseases in Evolutionary Perspective" (UAMA #2) Nesse, "How Is Darwinian Medicine Useful?" (UAMA #3)
Th 2/9	Goodman, "Why Genes Don't Count" (UAMA #5) Jablonski and Chaplin, "Skin Deep" (UAMA #6)
T 2/14	Armelagos, "Health and Disease in Prehistoric Populations in Transition" (UAMA #7) McKeown, "Determinants of Health" (UAMA #8) <i>1st essay exam to be discussed</i>
Th 2/16	Bogin, "The Tall and Short of It" (UAMA #4) Dettwyler, "The Biocultural Approach in Nutritional Anthropology: Case Studies of Malnutrition in Mali" (UAMA #44) Brown and Konner, "An Anthropological Perspective on Obesity" (UAMA #45)
T 2/21	No class - 1st essay exam due today at 5pm <i>Drawing upon lectures and discussion in class and your readings, respond to the following:</i> What does it mean to take a "biosocial" approach to the study of health, illness, medicine, and how do the readings above illustrate this approach? Be sure to discuss what biosocial perspective contributes in terms of both method and theory. Your paper must include an introduction, conclusion, and proper citations.
Th 2/23	Belief and healing Foster, "Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems" (UAMA #12) Konner, "Transcendental Medication" (UAMA #13)
T 2/28	Blumhagen, "The Doctor's White Coat" (UAMA #14) Levi-Strauss, "The Sorcerer and His Magic" (UAMA #15)
Th 3/1	Moerman, "Doctors and Patients: The Role of Clinicians in the Placebo Effect" (UAMA #16) Hahn, "The Nocebo Phenomenon" (UAMA #17) Preliminary description and bibliography due Monday 3/5 at 5pm
T 3/6	Johnson, "Anthropology and the World of Physicians" (UAMA #30) Kleinman and Benson, "Anthropology in the Clinic" (UAMA #33)
Th 3/8	Kleinman, "Do Psychiatric Disorders Differ in Different Cultures?" (UAMA #25) Rubel, "The Epidemiology of a Folk Illness: <i>Susto</i> in Hispanic America" (UAMA #26)
T 3/13	Bipolar Expeditions, Introduction

Th 3/15	No class - 2nd essay exam due today at 5pm <i>Drawing upon lectures and discussion in class and your readings, respond to the following: Why is "belief" an important and meaningful concept for medical anthropologists to consider in their examinations of health and illness? In your response, be sure to: explain how medical anthropologists define "belief" (e.g., in contrast to common-sense assumptions about belief and discuss at least two different readings and what they demonstrate about the significance of belief in health, illness, and medicine. Your paper must include an introduction, conclusion, and proper citations.</i>
	BREAK
T 3/27	What is health, what is illness? Bipolar Expeditions, Chapters 1 and 2
Th 3/29	Bipolar Expeditions, Chapter 3 and 4
T 4/3	Bipolar Expeditions, Chapter 5 and 6
Th 4/5	Bipolar Expeditions, Chapter 7 and 8
T 4/10	Bipolar Expeditions, Chapter 9 and Conclusion
Th 4/12	No class - Comparative book essay due today at 5pm
T 4/17	The structures of health and illness Singer, "Why Is It Easier to Get Drugs Than Drug Treatment in the United States?" (UAMA #11) Singer et al., "Why Does Juan Garcia Have a Drinking Problem?" (UAMA #35)
Th 4/19	Farmer, "Social Inequalities and Emerging Infectious Diseases" (UAMA #10)
T 4/24	Hunt, "Strategic Suffering: Illness Narratives as Social Empowerment among Mexican Cancer Patients" (UAMA #19)
Th 4/26	Liburd et al., "Understanding 'Masculinity' and the Challenges of Managing Type 2 Diabetes among African-American Men" (UAMA #36)
T 5/1	Scheper-Hughes, "Culture, Scarcity, and Maternal Thinking" (UAMA #43)
Th 5/3	No class - Annotations due today at 5pm
T 5/8	Conclusions Reading TBD Revised description of your topic with an outline of your poster presentation due at the start of class
Th 5/10	FINAL EXAM for 236-01 2-4:30pm

All material on this syllabus is subject to change.