

Anthropology 426: Culture, Health and Healing

Undergraduate Syllabus

Instructor Information

Instructor: Gilbert Quintero, Ph.D.

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Office hours: TWR 2:00-3:00pm

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the field of medical anthropology – the study of human health and disease from a cross-cultural, historical, archeological, and evolutionary perspective. Societies throughout the world recognize certain bodily and emotional conditions as undesirable and in need of change. Individual and societal definitions of disease and responses to illness are shaped by biological characteristics, social dynamics, cultural values, and collective expectations. In this course we will examine various theories, methods, and frameworks in order to explore how health, illness, and healing are conceptualized and experienced in different cultures. Topics will include: shamanism, medical ecology, cultural and political ecologies of disease, medical systems as cultural systems, global health, mental illness, and sociocultural definitions of health and illness.

After successfully completing this course the student should be able to:

1. Describe the interrelationships between human biological and sociocultural systems and diseases in several different sociocultural settings;
2. Compare core components of health systems, including etiology, diagnosis, help-seeking, treatment, evaluation of efficacy and effectiveness, and health care traditions and sectors in several different sociocultural settings;
3. Recognize major theoretical and methodological approaches to health in anthropology;
4. Identify several major contemporary issues in the anthropology of health and illness; and
5. Understand the contributions of applied anthropology in addressing health issues.

Course Requirements

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|----------------------|------|--|
| Attendance | 10 % | |
| Exams (best 3 of 4) | 60 % | (Dates: 9/26, 10/24, 12/3, 12/11) |
| Critical book review | 30 % | (Due in class on 12/5) |

Plus/minus grades will be assigned for this course at the instructor's discretion. Final cumulative grades will be based upon the point totals for each of the requirements outlined above.

Attendance

Students are responsible for attending class on time and on a regular basis. If a student does not attend class they generally will not receive attendance points. Students are allowed to miss one class due to an excused absence, at the discretion of the instructor, without penalty. Attendance will be taken approximately five times during the course of the semester.

Exams

A portion of each student's grade will be based upon the best scores from three out of four exams. This means that if you take the first three exams the last exam is optional if you are satisfied with the scores on the previous exams. Exams will consist of objective, multiple choice questions and will cover material from lectures and readings. Sample exams will be provided on Moodle. Therefore no formal reviews or study guides for these exams will be provided.

Critical book review

Students are required to write a single integrated critical review of two books, "Unimagined Community" (Thornton) and "AIDS and Accusation" (Farmer). Details regarding the structure and content of the review is available on the course Moodle site.

Policies

Electronic devices

Cell phones should be turned off and out of sight for the duration of class. Laptop users must sit in the first two rows of the classroom. No audio, video or photographic recording or capture of lectures is allowed without permission from the instructor.

Attendance

Please be on time for class and notify me if you intend to leave early. Irregular attendance will result in a lower grade. The instructor will not provide "catch-up" sessions. Please attend to all anticipated needs so that once class starts you do not have to leave and re-enter the classroom during lecture.

Lecture notes and materials

The instructor will not provide students with notes or other lecture materials (e.g., slides). If you miss class ask a fellow student for notes (and return the favor!).

Make-up exams

All students must take at least three out of the four exams. If an exam is missed, the student will receive no points. Because a student can miss one exam without penalty there will generally be no make-up exams. **The only exceptions to this are those situations that fall under University policy** which states that a make-up will be allowed in circumstances where a student can provide documentation that they are missing a scheduled exam because of their participation in a University sponsored activity, which includes field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletic events. Individuals missing a scheduled exam because of military service or mandatory public service (e.g., jury duty) may also petition for a make-up. Any student requiring a make-up must notify the instructor in writing (email) no less than a week before the scheduled exam and must provide official documentation regarding the reason for the absence in advance. If a make-up exam is approved it must be completed within one week of the original exam date.

Accommodations

University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to contact instructors during the first week of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in grading, classroom experiences, and outside assignments. Please notify the instructor via email. He will work with the student and the staff of the Disability Services for Students (DSS) to make accommodations. Please contact DSS (243.2373, Lommasson Center 154) for more information.

Email

Please conduct any class related email communications with me through your UM account.

Code of Conduct

All students are expected to act in accordance with the Student Conduct Code (available through the UM webpage).

Course Supplement

A web-based supplement for this class is available on Moodle: <http://umonline.umt.edu/>. Technical support is provided at: <http://umonline.umt.edu/studentssupport/default.php>.

Required Texts

- Farmer, Paul. *AIDS and Accusation Haiti and the Geography of Blame*, 2nd edition. University of California Press. ISBN: 0520248392. 2006.
- Thornton, Robert J. *Unimagined Community: Sex, Networks, and AIDS in Uganda and South Africa*. University of California Press. ISBN: 0520255534. 2008.
- Brown, P.J. and S. Closser. *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*. Third edition. Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-62958-291-7. 2016. Reading assignments from this volume are denoted by an asterisk (*) in the schedule below.
- Other assigned materials as detailed in class.

Course Schedule and Assignments

Week 1/Aug 26 – What is Medical Anthropology?

Required:

- Brown et al., *Medical Anthropology* (p. 11-24)*
- Helman, *Why Medical Anthropology Matters*
- Young & Rees, *Medical Anthropology Enters the 21st Century*

Recommended:

- Bhasin, *Medical Anthropology: A Review*

Week 2/Sep 2 – Defining Health; Disease and Human Evolution

Required:

- Crawford, *A Cultural Account of "Health"*
- d'Houtaud and Field, *The Image of Health*
- Izquierdo, *When "Health" is Not Enough*
- Eaton, Konner & Shostak, *Stone Agers in the Fast Lane* (p. 25-38)*
- Armelagos, *Health and Disease* (p. 85-98)*
- McKeown, *Determinants of Health* (p. 99-115)*

Recommended:

- Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events*
- Fabrega, *Earliest Phases in the Evolution of Sickness and Healing*

Week 3/Sep 9 – Theories of Etiology; Medical & Political Ecologies of Health

Required:

- Brown, *Cultural Adaptations* (p. 73-84)*
- Farmer, *Social Inequalities* (p. 116-126)*
- Scheper-Hughes, *Culture, Scarcity & Maternal Thinking* (p. 127-139)*
- Erickson, *What Causes Disease?*
- Foster, *Disease Etiologies* (p. 177-187)*

Recommended:

- Chiou, *Fundamentals* (p. 39-46)*
- Holmes, *Oaxacans* (p. 140-154)*
- Young, *Pica: A Biocultural Approach* (p. 58-72)*

Week 4/Sep 16 – Theories of Healing

Required:

- Blumhagen, *The Doctor's White Coat*
- Erickson, *Healing Lessons* (p. 188-196)*
- Konner, *Transcendental Medication*
- Finkler, *Sacred Healing and Biomedicine Compared*
- Frank, *Nonmedical Healing*
- Turner, *A Ndembu Doctor in Practice*

Recommended:

- Moerman, *Doctors and Patients* (p. 213-221)*
- Salhi, *Beyond the Doctor's White Coat* (p. 204-212)*
- Waldram, *Efficacy*

Week 5/Sep 23 – Symbolic Healing

Required:

- Gill, *Classification and Hierarchy*
- Reichard, *Theory of Curing*
- Wyman, *Navajo Ceremonial System*

Exam 1 (9/26)

Week 6/Sep 30 – Shamanism; Placebo & Nocebo

Required:

- Lèvi-Strauss, *The Sorcerer's Magic* (p. 197-203)*
- Hahn, *The Nocebo* (p. 222-227)*

- Moerman, *Cultural Variations in the Placebo Effect*

Recommended:

- Joralemon, *The Selling of the Shaman*
- Kleinman & Sung, *Why Do Indigenous Practitioners Successfully Heal?*

Week 7/Oct 7 – The Meanings of Illness: Disease Taxonomies & Semantic Illness Networks; Idioms of Distress; Explanatory Models

Required:

- Good, *The Heart of What's the Matter*
- Kleinman, *Culture, Illness & Care*
- Nichter, *Idioms of Distress*

Recommended:

- Chavez et al., *Beliefs Matter*
- CDC, *Health Beliefs (p. 350-352)**

Week 8/Oct 14 – Social Constructions of Illness; Stigma; Mind, Culture & Society

Required:

- Ablon, *Nature of Stigma (p. 363-371)**
- Hunt, *Strategic Suffering (p. 241-148)**
- Kleinman, *Do Psychiatric Disorders Differ? (p. 298-310)**
- Murphy, *The Damaged Self (p. 249-260)**
- Obeyesekere, *Depression, Buddhism, and the Work of Culture in Sri Lanka*
- Waxler, *Learning to be a Leper (p. 228-240)**

Recommended:

- Barrett and Brown, *Stigma (p. 377-381)**
- Becker, *Coping with Stigma (p.373-376)**
- Finley, *"I Came Back for This?" (p. 302-332)**
- Grinker, *What in the World is Autism? (p. 311-319)**
- Martin, *Medical Metaphors (p. 261-273)**

Week 9/Oct 21 – Culture Bound Syndromes

Required:

- Brewis, *Expanding Bodies (p. 400-407)**
- O'Connor and Van Esterik, *De-Medicalizing Anorexia (p. 394-399)**
- Rubel, *Epidemiology of a Folk Illness*
- Swartz, *Anorexia Nervosa as a Culture-Bound Syndrome*

Recommended:

- Ritenbaugh, *Obesity as a Culture-Bound Syndrome*

Exam 2 (10/24)

Week 10/Oct 28 – Medicalization, Pharmaceuticalization & Disease Mongering; Trend Theory

Required:

- Conrad, *Medicalization and Social Control*
- Williams et al., *Waking Up to Sleepiness*
- Woloshin & Schwartz, *Giving Legs to Restless Legs*
- Agar & Reisinger, *A Tale of Two Policies*

Recommended:

- Talbot, [Brain Gain](#) (link)

Week 11/Nov 4 – Pharmaceutical Use Dynamics; Race & Health

Required:

- Quintero, *Problematizing “Drugs”*
- Armelagos & Goodman, *Race, Racism and Anthropology*
- Goodman, *Disease and Dying While Black*, (p. 52-57)*
- Gravlee, *How Race Becomes Biology*
- Jablonski and Chaplin, *Skin Deep* (p. 47-51)*

Recommended:

- Hahn & Stroup, *Race and Ethnicity in Public Health Surveillance*
- Singer, *Does America* (p. 155-163)*

Week 12/Nov 11 – Global Health

Required:

- Gruenbaum, *Sociocultural Dynamics* (p. 418-427)*
- Mendenhall, *Syndemic Suffering* (p. 164-176)*
- Moniruzzaman, *Spare Parts* (p. 277-285)*
- Steinglass, *It Takes a Village* (p. 408-417)*
- Hadley et al., *What Happens?* (p. 382-393)*

Week 13/Nov 18 – Anthropology & Global Health

Required:

- Closser, *Polio Eradication* (p. 428-435)*

- Kalofonos, "All I Eat Is ARVs" (p. 436-446)*
- Singer & Erickson, *Global Health and the Anthropological Paradigm*
- Singer & Baer, *Applied Medical Anthropology* (p. 105-115)*

Recommended:

- Nichter & Cartwright, *Saving the Children*
- Singer & Erickson, *A Brighter or Bleaker Future?*

Week 14/Nov 25 – Global Health in the Anthropocene

11/28: Thanksgiving (No Class)

Required:

- McMichael, *Population Health in the Anthropocene*
- McMichael & Butler, *Promoting Global Population Health*
- Steffen et al., *The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives*

Week 15/Dec 2 – Wrap Up

Exam 3 (12/3)

Book reviews due (12/5)

Week 16/Exam 4 10:10am, Wednesday, December 11th

Reading assignments should be completed by the first class meeting of the week.

This syllabus provides a general plan for the course. Changes may be necessary and will be announced in class.