

# Medical anthropology

(CHDV 23204, 43204; ANTH 24330, 40330; HIPS 27301)

Spring 2012

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Comparative Human Development

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## LOCATION AND TIME

Monday and Wednesday 1:30 – 2:50

## SUMMARY

This course introduces students to the central concepts and methods of medical anthropology. Drawing on a number of classic and contemporary texts, we will consider both the specificity of local medical cultures and the processes which increasingly link these systems of knowledge and practice. We will study the social and political economic shaping of illness and suffering and will examine medical and healing systems – including biomedicine – as social institutions and as sources of epistemological authority. Topics covered will include the problem of belief; local theories of disease causation and healing efficacy; the placebo effect and contextual healing; theories of embodiment; medicalization; structural violence; modernity and the distribution of risk; the meanings and effects of new medical technologies; and global health.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the following requirements and assignments:

- 1) **Attendance** of lectures and **participation** in discussions (15% of grade)  
Please make sure that you complete the required readings for the day.  
**Graduate students will be expected to also complete supplementary readings.**

- 2) A series of short (500 word) **reading responses**. Beginning week 2 of the course, students will write a response to the readings for each week and post it to the “Discussion Board” section of the Chalk website. The reading response can either take the form of comments or questions that arise from the readings for that week (either Monday or Wednesday), or a comment on a reading response posted by another student. If you choose to comment on another student’s response you should make clear reference to and engage with the text(s) being discussed as well. Students who would prefer not to share their responses with their classmates, can email them directly to me and to your TA. It is important that responses be posted (or emailed) 10 PM on the Tuesday *prior to* the Wednesday class session. (15% of grade)
- 3) A take-home **midterm exam**. (30% of grade) Midterm will be distributed at the end of class on Monday April 23, and will be due on Monday April 30 at 10:00am.
- 4) A 3,000 - 4,000 word **final paper**. All students have the following options for the final project:
  - A) An **illness narrative** based on either 1) an interview with a family member or friend who has experienced illness, 2) an interview with family member or friend who has witnessed or been a caregiver for a relative struggling with illness and undergoing treatment, or 3) a first-person account of mental illness as found in an autobiography or film/documentary.
  - B) A **research paper** addressing either a contemporary disease or the development and use of a new medical technology.
  - C) A **review** of a full-length ethnography—chosen from a list—which links the book to course readings.
  - D) An in-depth **proposal for a research project** which engages with some of the issues and literatures discussed in the class. The proposal would be appropriate for a BA or Master’s thesis project or a grant proposal.

Students should prepare a one paragraph abstract proposing their topic by May 7. The paper is due on June 6 – one week after the last day of class. (40% of grade)

## Schedule of course sessions and readings:

All texts will be available in the "Course Documents" folder on Chalk.

### March 26 – Introduction

#### Required:

Susan Domus, "What Happened to the Girls in Le Roy," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, March 7, 2012.

Ruth Benedict. 1934. "Anthropology and the Abnormal," pp. 262-283 of *An Anthropologist at Work; Writings of Ruth Benedict*, edited by M. Mead. New York: Avon Books.

Sharon Kaufman. 2005. "Appendix A: About the Research" and "Introduction," in ...*And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life*. New York: Scribner, pp. 327-332 and 1-20.

#### Supplementary:

Robert A. Hahn and Marcia C. Inhorn. 2009. "Introduction." In *Anthropology and Public Health: Bridging Differences in Culture and Society* (second edition). New York: Oxford University Press, pp.1-31.

Kleinman, Arthur and Adriana Petryna. 2002. "Health: Anthropological Aspects." *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. London: Elsevier Science Ltd, pp. 6495-6499.

### March 28 – History, rationality and belief

#### Required:

E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 1937. *Witchcraft, Magic and the Oracles among the Azande*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp.21-39, 63-83, 540-544.

Byron Good. 1994. "Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief." *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-24.

John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff. 1992 *Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body. Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Westview Press. pp. 215-234.

#### Supplementary:

Allan Young, 1976. "Some Implications of Medical Beliefs and Practice For Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, 78:5-24.

## **April 2 – Understanding illness: etiologies, models and narratives**

### Required:

Arthur Kleinman. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing & the Human Condition*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-55.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes. 1992. Nervoso. *In Beyond the body proper: Reading the anthropology of material life*. Lock, Margaret M and Judith Farquhar. Eds. Duke University Press, 2007. pp. 459-467

Charles Rosenberg, 2007. Chapter 2 “The Tyranny of Diagnosis: Specific Entities and Individual Experience” of *Our Present Complaint: American Medicine, Then and Now*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 13-37.

### Supplementary:

Laurence J. Kirmayer, 1992, The Body's Insistence on Meaning: Metaphor as Presentation and Representation in Illness Experience, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 6(4), pp. 323-46.

## **April 4 – Discussion**

## **April 9 – Therapeutic trajectories: medical pluralism, hybridity and movement**

### Required:

Judith Farquhar, ‘Eating Chinese Medicine’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9 (1994), 471-497

Stacey Langwick, ‘Devils, Parasites, and Fierce Needles: Healing and the Politics of Translation in Southern Tanzania’, *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 32 (2007), 88-117.

### Supplementary:

Natasha Dow Schüll, ‘Machines, Medication, Modulation: Circuits Of Dependency And Self-Care In Las Vegas’, *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 30 (2006), 223-247.

## April 11 – The epistemic cultures of biomedicine

### Required:

Ludwik Fleck, 1979. "How the Modern Concept of Syphilis Originated." In *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp.1-50.

Allan Young. 1993. "A description of how ideology shapes knowledge" in S. Lindenbaum & M. Lock, eds. *Knowledge, power, & practice*

Eugene Raikhel, 'Post-Soviet Placebos: Epistemology and Authority in Russian Treatments for Alcoholism', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 34 (2010), 132–168

### Supplementary:

Allan Young. 2000 History, Hystery and Psychiatric Styles of Reasoning. In *Living and Working with the New Medical Technologies: Intersections of Inquiry*. Margaret Lock, Allan Young, and Alberto Cambrosio, eds. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Löwy, Ilana and George Weisz. 2005. French Hormones: Progestins and Therapeutic Variation in France. *Social Science & Medicine* 60: 2609-2622.

## April 16 – Interpreting the body in medicine

### Required:

Shigehisa Kuriyama. 1987. Pulse Diagnosis in the Greek and Chinese Traditions. In *Beyond the body proper: Reading the anthropology of material life*. Lock, Margaret M and Judith Farquhar. Eds. Duke University Press, 2007. pp. 595-607.

Byron Good. 1994. "How Does Medicine Construct Its Objects?" In *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 65-87.

Emily Martin. 1991. "Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs*, Vol. 16, No. 3. (Spring, 1991), pp. 485-501.

### Supplementary:

Joseph Dumit, 2004, *Picturing Personhood: Brain Scans and Biomedical Identity*, Princeton University Press. Chapter 4.

## April 18 – Discussion

## April 23 – Healing, embodiment and the placebo effect

\* Midterm distributed at the end of class \*

### Required:

Claude Levi-Strauss. 1949 The Effectiveness of Symbols. *Structural Anthropology* 1:186-205.

Ted Kaptchuk. 2002 The Placebo Effect in Alternative Medicine: Can the Performance of a Healing Ritual Have Clinical Significance? *Ann Intern Med* 136: 817-825.

Blumhagen, D.W. 1979. The Doctor's White Coat: The Image of the Physician in Modern America. *Annals of Internal Medicine* 91(1):111-116.

Laurence Kirmayer. 2011. "Unpacking the placebo response: lessons from ethnographic studies of healing." Video of lecture available at:  
<http://mbr.synergiesprairies.ca/mbr/index.php/mbr/article/view/503/122> (Video, 75 min).

### Supplementary:

Thomas Csordas. 1993. Somatic Modes of Attention. *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (2): 135-156.

## April 25 – Institutional lives

### Required:

David Rosenhan, 1973. "On Being Sane in Insane Places," *Science*, 179, pp. 250-8.

Lorna Rhodes. 1990. "The Game of Hot Shit," in *Emptying Beds: The Work of an Emergency Psychiatric Unit*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 55-80.

Summerson Carr, "Anticipating and inhabiting institutional identities," *American Ethnologist* 36, no. 2 (2009): 317-336.

### Supplementary:

Paul Brodwin. 2011. Futility in the Practice of Community Psychiatry. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 25 (2): 189-208.

## April 30 – Structural violence and health care disparities

\* Midterm due at 10am \*

### Required:

Paul Farmer, "On Suffering and Structural Violence." *The Paul Farmer Reader*.

Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg. 2009. "Introduction" and "A Community of Addicted Bodies." *Righteous Dopefiend*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-23, 78-115.

Rouse, Carolyn. 2010. "Patient and Practitioner Noncompliance: Rationing, Resistance, and the Missing Conversation." *Anthropology and Medicine* 17(2): 187-200.

Supplementary:

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. "Colonial Wars and Mental Disorders." *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, pp. 249-316.

## May 2 – Discussion

## May 7 – Local biologies

\* Proposal for final paper due \*

Required:

Margaret Lock & Kaufert, P., 2001, Menopause, local biologies, and cultures of aging, *American Journal of Human Biology*, 13(4), pp. 494-504.

Warwick Anderon. "The possession of kuru: medical science and biocolonial exchange." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 2000; 42: 713-44.

Clarence Gravlee. 2009. How race becomes biology: embodiment of social inequality. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 139(1), 47-57.

## May 9 – Governing bodies and populations

Required:

Michel Foucault. 1980. "Body/Power," pp. 55-62; "The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 166-182 in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972/1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon.

Ong, Aihwa. 1988. "The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia." *American Ethnologist*, 15(1):28-42.

P. Sean Brotherton. 2005 Macroeconomic Change and the Biopolitics of Health in Cuba's Special Period. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 10 (2): 339-369.

Supplementary:

Susan Greenhalgh. 1994 Controlling Births And Bodies In Village China. *American Ethnologist* 21 (1): 3-30.

## May 14 – Making up patients

### Required:

Ian Hacking. 2007. 'Kinds of People: Moving Targets', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 151: 285-318.

Paul Rabinow. 1992. "Artificiality and Enlightenment: From Sociobiology to Biosociality," in Jonathan Crary, ed., *Zone 6: Incorporations*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Carlos Novas. 2006. The Political Economy of Hope: Patients' Organizations, Science and Biovalue. *BioSocieties* 1 (3).

Nikolas Rose, "Governing Conduct in the Age of the Brain." 2011. Video (90 min) of lecture available at: <http://somatosphere.net/2011/04/nikolas-rose-governing-conduct-in-age.html>

### Supplementary:

Adriana Petryna. 2004. "Biological citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Populations" *Osiris*, Vol. 19, pp. 250-26.

## May 16 – Discussion

## May 21 – Between global health and global biomedicine

### Required:

Sunder Rajan, Kaushik. 2005. "Subjects of Speculation: Emergent Life Sciences and Market Logics in the United States and India." *American Anthropologist* 107 (1):19-30.

Vinh-kim Nguyen. 2005 Antiretroviral Globalism, Biopolitics, and Therapeutic Citizenship. In *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. A. Ong and S. J. Collier, eds. Pp. 124–144. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Joao Biehl. "The Brazilian Response to AIDS and the Pharmaceuticalization of Global Health." In *Anthropology and Public Health: Bridging Differences in Culture and Society* (second edition) edited by Robert A. Hahn and Marcia Inhorn. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp.480–511.

## May 23 – Care

### Required:

Arthur Kleinman, 'Catastrophe and Caregiving: The Failure of Medicine as an Art', *The Lancet*, 371 (2008), 22–23

Annemarie Mol, *The Logic of Care: Health and the Problem of Patient Choice* (Taylor & Francis, 2008) Selections.

Janelle Taylor, 'On Recognition, Caring, and Dementia', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 22 (2008), 313–335

## May 30 – New medical technologies: remaking bodies, lives and kinship

### Required:

Marilyn Strathern, *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1992) Selections.

Margaret Lock, "Death in Technological Time: Locating the End of Meaningful Life," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, New Series, 10 (1996), 575–600

Leslie Sharp, 'Commodified Kin: Death, Mourning, and Competing Claims on the Bodies of Organ Donors in the United States', *American Anthropologist*, 103 (2001), 112-133

### Supplementary:

Marcia Inhorn. 2006. "Making Muslim Babies: IVF and Gamete Donation in Sunni versus Shi'a Islam." *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 30:427-450.

## June 6

\* Final paper due \*