

Anthropology 4200.001
Health, Healing, and Culture:
an Introduction to Medical Anthropology
Spring 2015
TR 11:00 – 12:20
BLB 140

Instructor: Doug Henry
Office Hours: Tues, Thurs 12:45 – 2:15pm (or by apt).
Office: Chilton Hall, 330M
Phone: 565-3836
Email: dhenry@unt.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Content

This course is an introduction to a vast subfield within anthropology – medical anthropology. Medical anthropologists study the relationships between culture, society, disease, health, and healing, both in the US and around the world. This includes disease etiology, the experience of suffering, “ethnomedical” beliefs, “sick role” behavior, the provision of health services, so called “biocultural” aspects of disease, structural violence, and the political economy of illness. *My general teaching philosophy about all this: this is not a course about facts; it’s exposure to new ideas and to new ways of thinking. My goal is to introduce you to how interesting, relevant, and important medical anthropology is, so you’ll want to learn more.*

Objectives – Your Development as Scholars

Overview: I want you to learn how to think critically about the material that you are studying, especially what you are reading. It is not holy writ; these are ideas that can be challenged but which must be challenged thoughtfully. Your feelings matter here, but your feelings must be backed up by your thoughts. It is OK to “not like” or “like” something, that’s the beginning of being interested in an idea. But you have to make yourself go a little bit deeper and explain to yourself (and occasionally to me); WHY you like or don’t like something by creating an intellectual framework for your ideas. How does what you are reading relate to something else you have been thinking about?

By the end of the course I expect that:

- 1)** Every one of **you will have participated in class** to the extent possible in a class this size. I want to hear a comment from every student at least once during class sessions and will try to find ways to make it possible for everyone to feel comfortable speaking in class. **I will make an effort to learn everyone’s name.**

- 2)** You will have become more comfortable with reading **journal articles** for class-based reading assignments. You will **learn how to read these actively**, asking questions and making connections to other sources of information, building on your existing knowledge.

- 3) You will have become **comfortable with regular writing** assignments. There will be a lot of writing in this class, and step by step assignments along the way to the ethnography or final exam.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I expect you to come to every class. Attendance will be randomly taken over the course of the semester, and then calculated as part of your participation grade. MORE IMPORTANTLY, your actual learning (what you're paying tuition for) depends on listening to, and participating in, class discussion.

CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

This is a big class but I would like us to be “seminar” in style (ie., incorporate discussion to the extent possible). In order for discussions to be most useful, I expect you to have completed the reading assignments BEFORE class.

I want you to ask questions and make comments, or email me questions (if that makes you more comfortable) which I will address at the next available class time. There is no such thing as a stupid question! (except to *NOT TO ASK one when you have it!*).

During classroom discussions, I want to get to know you, so I'll ask you to remember as much as possible to say your name (at least for the first month or so) before you start in on your comment. Also, I would like you to TALK TO EACH OTHER – not just to me. There will be more to say on this topic as the semester proceeds.

Cell phones, pagers, text messaging systems must have their ringers turned OFF during class. No exceptions, not even for me.

OTHER REQUIRED READING:

All articles in the syllabus are required. They will be available through the online Blackboard Learn site for this course: <https://learn.unt.edu>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) **30%. Weekly commentaries.** These are short (approximately 250 words) comments on two of the assigned readings for the week, due IN CLASS every Thursday as noted in the syllabus (one commentary can cover both readings). These must be typewritten and double-spaced.

*Don't **JUST** write summaries of the reading!* Commentaries should also be analytical. Some weeks I have a specific question I want you to cover. Other weeks- if I don't have something specific, you can approach it creatively. For example:

- a. You may “react” to the readings by writing about how you felt about them – did you agree or disagree with authors’ analysis? Explain why.
- b. Compare/ contrast the two readings you did with each other.
- c. Connect these two readings with previous ideas discussed in class or read about either in the course or on your own.
- d. Take some specific aspect of the articles that was of particular interest to you and explain why it was interesting to you.

2) 25% Mini-Medical Ethnography

This assignment involves you taking on the role of a student medical anthropologist and actually doing “fieldwork” and reporting on your experience. The main goal of this exercise is to enable you to connect your fieldwork experience with some of the key concepts in medical anthropology that we’ve talked about so far in this course. You’ll have to write observational “fieldnotes” in a notebook, and turn them in as an appendix for your paper. Fieldnotes include what you observe, your thoughts about what people told you, the environment, context- EVERYTHING. Your paper should be summary, analysis, and a documentation of the difficulties you experienced while carrying out this exercise – i.e. your “travails” experienced as a medical anthropologist. It helps to also be “reflexive:” Do you think your gender made a difference in how easy or how difficult it was for you to gather the data? Did you experience any discomfort when gathering the data? Did either you or your people under study become self-conscious? Did this assignment teach you anything about what it means to gather data as an anthropologist? I am absolutely fine with you guys doing this with other people from this class as part of your research population. Here are some possibilities for your ethnography project:

1. Engage in an informal conversation with someone who you know has been sick recently, preferably if and when they lived with other people in the house/ apartment. Elicit information on the medical decision-making process that was involved in the sick person’s search for therapy. Identify the patient’s therapy management group. Who all were involved in negotiating the identity of the illness? Who made the most critical treatment-related decisions? Based on the data you gather, spell out the ways in which the “micropolitics” of therapy management might have been at work in the case at hand.
2. Have a discussion with a sample of 4-5 friends about college students and how they control “sleep/ being alert.” How is the way your sample views sleep different now than it has been in the past? How do men vs. women consider sleep differently? What strategies exist to stay awake? What strategies exist to get to sleep? What considerations go into decisions about medication (including self-medication) or

therapies? Is there anything within the social context or environment that shapes your sample's sleep strategies, how they interpret sleep/ alert problems?

3. Watch a few "weight loss" TV commercials, describe them in brief, reflect on the hype surrounding such commercials, and the consequences you think these commercials have in terms of "behavioral change" among potential customers. Follow this up by going to a restaurant/ the Union, hang out there for a couple of hours, make some detailed observations about the kinds of foods people/ students/friends order/eat. Then talk to your friends, engage in an informal group discussion and/or simply "listen" to "body talk" (self-image, the gym, dieting, calories, weight watching, etc.) among your women and men friends. What differences do you see in the ways in which men and women respond to the hype surrounding weight?
4. Interview someone who has ever consulted an "alternative" health care practitioner (someone other than an MD, a nurse, an osteopath, etc.). Ask them about their regarding their Explanatory Model for what was going on, including the reasons for the consultation, reasons for the choice of practitioner, their concepts of sickness causation, and their expectations for a treatment or cure.

Other ideas: high school/ junior high sex ed programs, dancers' perceptions of their bodies, nudists' perceptions of their bodies, eating disorders, refugee/ immigrants and health, intimate partner violence, someone you know who's given birth, someone you know who's had an abortion, "pro-life/ pro-choice" activists campus, medical marijuana, people whose health has been impacted by fracking, homeless kids and drug use, etc.

3) 25%. Attendance and Participation

I'll pass around an attendance sheet randomly during the year. Participation is also important, so come to class with things to say!

4) 20%. Final (take home) exam

Plagiarism and Cheating. The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. Students suspected of any of these will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; if found guilty they can receive an automatic "F" in the course. In addition, I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT legal system, which may result in your dismissal from the university. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm>. For

information on the University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

DETAILED COURSE PLAN (DRAFT!):

Week 1. *MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY: an Overview with Key Concepts*

Tuesday, January 20

Introduction to course and each other

Thursday, January 22

Brown, Peter, Ronald Barrett, Mark Padilla, and Erin Finley (2010). *Medical Anthropology: an Introduction to the Fields*. In *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*, 2nd edition. Pp. 3-15. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Weekly commentary (see above: these should be 250 words): Which "approach" in Medical Anthropology do you either identify with the most, or find the most intriguing? Why? Normally these will be due Thursday of every week, but this week you can turn them in either in class Thursday or in my office mailbox by 5pm Friday.

Week 2. *Medical and Cultural Ecology*

Tuesday, January 27

McElroy, A. and P. Townsend (1996). *The Ecology of Health and Disease*. Chapter 1 in *Medical Anthropology in Ecological Perspective*. Pp. 1-29. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Thursday, January 29

Brown, Peter (1981). Cultural Adaptations to Endemic Malaria in Sardinia. *Medical Anthropology* 5 (3): 311-339.

Desowitz, Robert (1981). How the Wise Men Brought Malaria to Africa. Chapter 4 in *New Guinea Tapeworms and Jewish Grandmothers*. New York: W.W. Norton Press. Pp. 46-58.

Due Thursday, January 29: Weekly reading commentary (see syllabus)

Week 3. *"Ethnomedicine" and Illness Beliefs Cross-Culturally*

Tuesday, Feb 3

Foster, George (1988). Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems. In *Understanding and Applying Medical Anthropology*. Peter Brown, ed. Pp. 110-117.

Thursday, Feb 5

Youtube video! Chinese medicine and “The Mystery of Chi.” (57 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Vj1tgTqrPg>

Due February 5th: Weekly reading commentary #3

Week 4. *The “Sick Role,” Health Behavior, and Therapy Management*

Tuesday Feb 10

Janzen, John (1987) Therapy Management: Concept, Reality, Process. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1 (1): 68-84.. USE “AnthroSource” through the library to get pdf.

<http://www.anthrosource.net/Abstract.aspx?issn=0745-5194&volume=1&issue=1&doubleissueno=0&article=300288&suppno=0&jstor=False&cyear=1987>

Thursday Feb 12

Price, Laurie (2003). Illness Management, Social Alliance, and Cultural Identity in Quito, Ecuador. *In* *Medical Pluralism in the Andes*. Koss-Chioino Joan, Thomas Leatherman, and Christine Greenway, eds. Pp. 209 – 233. New York: Routledge

Press, Nancy, S. Reynolds, L. Pinsky, V. Murthy, M. Leo, and W. Burke (2005). “That’s like Chopping Off a Finger Because You’re Afraid it Might Get Broken.” *Disease, and Illness in Women’s Views of Prophylactic Mastectomy. Social Science and Medicine* 61 (5): 1106-1117. USE UNT Library e-journal http://ac.els-cdn.com/S027795360500047X/1-s2.0-S027795360500047X-main.pdf?_tid=6a122374-9f9d-11e4-90ad-00000aab0f27&acdnat=1421646096_79bdbbb22cedbeab9b5f415f98feb46

Due February 12: Weekly reading commentary #4

Week 5. *CASE STUDY – A MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGIST IN DOMINICA*

Tuesday, February 17

Marsha B. Quinlan (2004). *From the Bush: The Front Line of Health Care in a Caribbean Village*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. CHAPTER 1, 3, AND 4

Thursday, February 19

Marsha B. Quinlan (2004). *From the Bush: The Front Line of Health Care in a Caribbean Village*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. CHAPTERS 5, 6, AND 7

Due February 19: *This week, I want you to really pay attention to the Dominican ethnomedical system, and the WHY of people’s treatment seeking behaviors. In about a single spaced page, map out the kinds of sicknesses and problems that bother people. Not really a*

map, but a “mental template.” E.g.- what kinds of personalistic and naturalistic ailments exist, what kinds of sectors exist to treat them? How are these ailments related to “ethnophysiology,” and the idea of humors? This all doesn’t have to be written in an elegant style- a page of notes would be perfect.

Week 6. The Culture of “Biomedicine”

Tuesday, February 24

Kleinman, Arthur (1980). *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 71-118. Read pp. 104-118 carefully.

Thursday, February 26

Davenport, Beverly A. (2000). Witnessing and the Medical Gaze: How Medical Students Learn to See at a Free Clinic for the Homeless. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14(3):310-327. “AnthroSource” <http://www.anthrosource.net/Abstract.aspx?issn=0745-5194&volume=14&issue=3&doubleissueno=0&article=239602&suppno=0&jstor=False&year=2000>

Lyon-Callo, Vincent (2000). Medicalizing Homelessness: the Production of Self-Blame and Self-Governing within Homeless Shelters. *14 (3): 328-345*. Get this on “AnthroSource” <http://www.anthrosource.net/Abstract.aspx?issn=0745-5194&volume=14&issue=3&doubleissueno=0&article=239603&suppno=0&jstor=False&year=2000>

Due Thursday, February 26: Weekly Commentary #6. In 300 words, how does our medical system have a unique culture? Describe it. What are your personal experiences with it?

Week 7. Gender, Reproduction, and Health

Tuesday, March 3

Martin, Emily (1991). The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16 (3): 485-501. Available as an e-journal through the UNT Library!

Thursday, March 5

Bell, Kirsten (2005). Genital cutting and Western Discourses on sexuality. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 19 (2): 125-148. Available on **AnthroSource** through the UNT Library!

Kral, Michael (2013). “The Weight on Our Shoulders is too Much, and we are Falling”: Suicide among Inuit Male Youth in Nunavut, Canada. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 27 (1): 63-83. Available on **AnthroSource** through the UNT Library!

Due Thursday, March 5th: Weekly reading commentary #7

Week 8. *Public Health, Poverty, and Development*

Tuesday, March 10

Hamlin, Christopher (1995). Could You Starve to Death in England in 1839? the Chadwick-Farr Controversy and the Loss of the "Social" in Public Health. *American Journal of Public Health* 85(6): 856-866. Get as a UNT e-journal

<http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2087/docview/215107785/fulltextPDF/F4B5FB3C6510450BPQ/1?accountid=7113>

Thursday, March 12

Harper, Janice (2004). Breathless in Houston: A Political Ecology of Health Approach to Understanding Environmental Health Concerns. *Medical Anthropology* 23:295-326. Get as a UNT e-journal: <http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2150/doi/pdf/10.1080/01459740490513521>

Crooks, Deborah (2001). Poverty and Nutrition in Eastern Kentucky: The Political Economy of Childhood Growth. *In Building a New Biocultural Synthesis*. A.H. Goodman and T.L. Leatherman, eds. Pp. 339-355. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Due Thursday, March 12th Weekly reading commentary #8

March 16-22: SPRING BREAK

Week 9. *Case Study in Nutrition and International Health*

Tuesday, March 24

Dettwyler, Katherine (1994). *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. CHAPTER 1 AND 2

Thursday, March 26

Dettwyler, Katherine (1994). *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. CHAPTER 4, 7, AND 8

Due March 26th: Weekly reading commentary #9 I'm away at a conference, so class time Thursday will be used to work on your reading response for this week (i.e., we won't meet in the classroom). This week's reading response needs to be turned in (paper copies) to the course's Blackboard Learn webpage by 5:00pm Thursday!

Week 10. Political Economy and Health

Tuesday, March 31

Nichter, Mark, and Elizabeth Cartwright (1990). Saving the Children for the Tobacco Industry. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 5(3):236- 256.

Available through AnthroSource on the UNT Library website!

Thursday, April 2nd

Mini-ethnographies due! Come to class prepared to talk about them!!

Week 11. Structural Violence and Global Health

Tuesday, April 7

Farmer, Paul (1999). Infections and Inequalities: The Modern Plagues; updated edition with a new preface. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 4 “The Exotic and the Mundane,” pp. 94-126.

Thursday, April 9

Singer, Merrill, F. Valentin, H. Baer, and Z. Jia (1992). Why does Juan García have a drinking problem? The perspective of critical medical anthropology. *Medical Anthropology*. 14 (1): 77-108. Download as a UNT Library e-journal,

<http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2150/doi/pdf/10.1080/01459740.1992.9966067>

Nations, Marilyn K, and C. Monte (1996). “I’m not dog, no!” Cries of resistance against cholera control campaigns. *Social Science and Medicine* 43: 1007 – 1024. Download as a UNT Library’s e-journal,

<http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2079/science/article/pii/0277953696000834>

Due April 9: Weekly reading commentary #10

Week 12. Structural Violence II

Tuesday, April 8

Singer, Merrill, A. Herring, J. Littleton, and M. Rock (2011). Chapter 8: Syndemics in Global Health. *In A Companion to Medical Anthropology*. M. Singer and P. Erickson, eds. Pp. 159-180. San Francisco: Wiley Blackwell.

Thursday, April 10

Moniruizzaman, Monir (2012). “Living Cadavers” in Bangladesh: Bioviolence in the Human Organ Bazaar. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 26 (1): 69-91. Use the UNT Library’s

“AnthroSource:” <http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2056/doi/10.1111/j.1548-1387.2011.01197.x/pdf>

Lockhard, Chris (2008). The Life and Death of a Street Boy in East Africa. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 22 (1): 94-115. Use the UNT Library's "AnthroSource:" <http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2056/doi/10.1111/j.1548-1387.2008.00005.x/pdf>

Due April 10th Weekly reading commentary #11

Week 13. Culture and The Body

Tuesday, April 14

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1987). The Mindful Body: a prolegomenon to future work in medical anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1: 6-41. Use "AnthroSource" <http://www.anthrosource.net/Abstract.aspx?issn=0745-5194&volume=1&issue=1&doubleissueno=0&article=300286&suppno=0&jstor=False&cyear=1987>

Thursday, April 16

Sutton, Barbara (2007). Naked Protest: Memories of Bodies and Resistance at the World Social Forum. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 8 (3): 139-148. Available as an e-journal at the UNT Library- <http://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1390&context=jiws>

MacLeish, Kenneth (2012). Armor and Anesthesia: Exposure, Feeling and the Soldier's Body. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 26 (1): 49-68. Use the UNT Library's "AnthroSource:" <http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2056/doi/10.1111/j.1548-1387.2011.01196.x/pdf>

Due April 16: Weekly reading commentary #12

Week 14. EMBODIMENT and NARRATIVE

Tuesday, April 21

Henry, Doug (2006). Violence and the Body: Somatic Expressions of Trauma and Vulnerability during War. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20 (3):345-378. Use the UNT Library's AnthroSource: <http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2056/doi/10.1525/maq.2006.20.3.379/pdf>

Thursday, April 23

Low, Setha (1994). Embodied Metaphors: nerves as lived experience. *In Embodiment and Experience: The existential ground of culture and self.* T.J. Csordas, ed., pp. 139-162. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coker, Elizabeth (2004). "Traveling pains": embodied metaphors of suffering among Southern Sudanese refugees in Cairo. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 28(1): 15-39. Get

as e-journal in the UNT Library (I used “ProQuest”).

<http://libproxy.library.unt.edu:2071/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=555186ef-2b35-4924-a0ba-fcdb661b72d3%40sessionmgr110&hid=117>

Due Thursday, April 23: Weekly reading commentary #13

Week 15. *EMBODIMENT and NARRATIVE*

Tuesday, April 28

Wilce, James M., and Laurie J. Price (2003). Metaphors our bodyminds live by. *In* The Social and Cultural Lives of Immune Systems, James Wilce, ed., pp. 50-80. London: Routledge.

Thursday, April 30- Course Wrap-up and review – come to class with questions.

Take home final exam will be handed out this week! (probably Tuesday)

Thursday, May 7 – FINAL EXAM DUE IN MY BOX IN THE DEPARTMENT BY 5pm!