Anthropology 4200.001
Health, Healing, and Culture:
An Introduction to Medical Anthropology

Fall 2023
MW 3:30 – 4:50 P.M.

Instructor: Dr. Kelsey Lee
Room: WH 116
Office Hours: MW from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Office 124, Sycamore Hall
Email: Kelsey.lee@unt.edu
*Other readings are available through Canvas.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Content
This course is an introduction to a vast subfield within anthropology; namely, medical anthropology. Medical anthropologists analyze and assess the relationships among culture, society, disease, and healing, from global and national perspectives. Topics addressed include disease etiology, the experience of suffering, ethnomedical beliefs, “ethnomedicine” and folk healing, the biocultural aspects of disease, the relationship between health and socioeconomic and sociopolitical inequalities, and the political economy of illness. My goal in this course is to introduce you to a wide variety of the fascinating tenets of medical anthropology, and provoke ideas, conversations, and new ways of thinking about health and healing.

Objectives
The objective of the course is to facilitate your development as young scholars, and to inspire your curiosity regarding the broad subfield of medical anthropology. Most essentially, I want you to learn how to think critically about the material we will be covering in the classroom. My hope is that you will feel comfortable exercising yourselves intellectually; this is a classroom in which you will be able to challenge and play with the ideas presented, in a thoughtful, critical, and respectful manner.

By the end of the course, I expect that:

1) Each one of you will have vocally participated to the extent to which it is possible in a class of this size. However, I am thoroughly sympathetic to students who genuinely struggle to speak out in the classroom; therefore, I aim to facilitate a class setting in which everyone can feel comfortable, confident, and respected when they speak. I hope all students will join me in this endeavor and be kind to one other.

2) You will have become more comfortable with the process of reading peer-reviewed journal articles for class-based reading assignments. I emphasize the importance of active reading; in
other words, you will learn how to ask critical questions, make connections to other sources of information, and build upon your existing knowledge through reading these articles.

3) You will become comfortable with **regular writing assignments**. Writing is a critical skill in a university setting, and it will likely be essential in your career post-college. Your writing assignments will also aid you in terms of speaking and thinking critically and synthesizing the information you receive in this course.

**CLASSROOM COMMUNITY**

This is a relatively large class, but I would like to employ a more seminar-like style, meaning that I want to incorporate group discussion as much as possible. There will be a fair amount of lecturing on my part, but I also want my students to be engaged and participatory. In order for discussions to be most productive and interesting, it would behoove you to **complete the reading assignments before class**. These reading assignments are not intended to be busywork – they are meant to help you conceptualize the ideas presented in class and prepare you for participation in the classroom.

I expect my students to be **courteous to each other**. However, this does not mean you can’t respectfully disagree with other students in the classroom! In fact, I want you to feel comfortable voicing your opinion if you disagree with me as well. As long as you are thoughtful and your points are well-supported, there is nothing wrong with a healthy divergence of opinions in the classroom.

While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, or state law will not be tolerated.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY/LATE WORK**

I expect you to **attend class regularly**, and **late work is not routinely accepted**. If you believe you will have difficulty attending classes, turning in assignments, or generally making progress in the course, please contact me in advance and we can discuss any challenges you might be experiencing in this regard. As was previously mentioned, I do not regularly accept late assignments, but I do have an emergency policy that can apply for up to two of your response papers, allowing you a 48-hour extension. If you encounter circumstances that necessitate your need to utilize this policy, contact me ASAP and we can work it out together.

A **University-excused absence** for this course includes:

1. Legitimate **illness**, including concerns about mental health
2. Legitimate **personal or family emergency**
3. **Religious observance** (in which case students may be allowed to test or submit assignments early)
4. Other University-excused **academic or athletic event**
5. **Work-related absences** that have been discussed with the professor prior to the due date
SENSITIVE TOPICS

Given that we will be discussing culture, disease, and the body, we will inevitably touch on some sensitive subjects, like body image, the relationships among culture, ethnicity, and disease, poverty and illness, mental health, and gender and sexuality, among others. If you feel that any of these topics will be particularly difficult for you to engage with, you can absolutely talk to me about your concerns. I can’t avoid these tough topics in this course, but we can discuss strategies to make things easier for you in the classroom if you feel you are going to struggle during a particular discussion session.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

1) Reflection Papers (300 points total): THESE BEGIN WEEK 2. To prepare for every discussion, students will write brief reflection papers (2-3 pages) on the materials assigned. They will be submitted online prior to class on Wednesdays under the appropriate Module (i.e., under Week 2, etc.). Again, these assignments are not intended to be busywork; rather, they are designed to help you think about the readings as we discuss in the classroom. It will also help you on your exams, which are open note.

Your reflection papers should:

- Explain the major arguments of each author assigned.
- Identify a quote or passage from any one of the readings you personally find interesting and explain why.
- Find common themes between the readings for the week (and possibly connect them to earlier weeks if you so desire). This is a chance to theorize why we might be reading these pieces together.

Please structure your reflections like a short essay and avoid bullet points. Feel free to personally reflect on the topics, to make connections that you think are interesting with other course material, to connect course content with happenings in the world around us right now, etc. This doesn’t have to be a beautifully written document! It should just serve to help you organize your thoughts and demonstrate that you have done the work for the week.

2) Midterm Exam (200 points total): The Midterm Exam will consist of multiple choice and a couple short answer questions over material within the Canvas topics, textbook readings, and films. The test will be available online from Monday – Sunday of the test week (Week 7, October 2 – 8).

IMPORTANT: Once you begin a test, you will have 90 minutes to finish it. Do not begin a test unless you are SURE you can finish it! I highly recommend that you do not wait until the last minute, because the test will automatically end at 11:59 p.m. and you will earn the grade received for the answers you have completed up until that point. So be careful and make sure your Internet connection is stable!

3) Mini-Medical Ethnography (200 points total): This assignment involves the student taking on the role of medical anthropologist and actually doing “fieldwork.” 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 in the course. You will write observational “fieldnotes” in a notebook, and then submit them as an appendix in your paper. Your paper should be 6-9 pages, double spaced, with background/summary, methods, results, a discussion of the significance/relevance of what you found, and how it relates to what we’ve covered in the class. The last part can include any difficulties you experienced while carrying out this exercise or any reflections you might have regarding how your positioning relates to the assignment. For example, you might reflect on whether or not you found that your gender made a difference in how easy or difficult it was for you to gather the data.

This project is very open, but here are some potential ideas and possibilities:

- Engage in an informal conversation with someone who you know has been ill 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.

- Have a discussion with a sample of 3-5 friends about college students and how they control “sleep/ being alert.” Is there anything within the social context or environment that shapes your sample’s sleep strategies, how they interpret sleep/ alert problems?

- Go to a restaurant/the Union, hang out there for a couple of hours, and make some detailed observations about the kinds of foods people/ students/friends order/eat. Then speak with your friends, engage in an informal group discussion, and/or simply “listen” to “body talk” (self-image, the gym, dieting, calories, weight watching, etc.). Perhaps observe differences in “body talk” among different genders.

4) Attendance & Participation (100 points total).

5) Final exam (200 points total). Remember, these exams are open note. Don’t be caught off guard – come to each class session and take good notes!

Calculating your grade:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
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<td>800-899 points</td>
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<td>600-699 points</td>
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<td>0-599 points</td>
<td>F</td>
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CLASS TECHNOLOGY & COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Canvas: You will need to check Canvas regularly for class announcements, course updates, additional readings, and supplemental material.

Troubleshooting: If you run into technical issues with Canvas, be sure you have covered the Basics for Students New to Canvas and then either contact the Help Desk using the Help tab on the left-hand navigation panel and selecting “Technical Support” to link to the DSI support hub, calling 940-565-2324, or emailing helpdesk@unt.edu.

Communication Guidelines:

• Use your Canvas or UNT email account to contact me and to schedule appointments.
• Please allow 24 hours for a response. If you send an email and have not received a response after 24 hours, please resend your email.
• Set your Canvas notifications to receive course announcements. Check your UNT email frequently!

ACADEMIC HONESTY

For papers and assignments, cite your sources and do original work. This cannot be stressed enough. Students found plagiarizing their own or others’ material (including Canvas, the textbook, journal articles, online resources, etc.) will first be given the opportunity to explain themselves. If it is determined that the student unknowingly copied work without giving proper credit, that student will be given the opportunity to re-write their assignment. All make-up work deadlines apply. If it is determined that the student knowingly copied work without giving proper credit, that student will be given a “0” (F) for that assignment and their previous/future work may be subject to additional scrutiny.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

This syllabus may be subject to change if the need arises. Any updates to due dates or other schedule changes will be announced in class, posted as an Announcement on Canvas, and changed in the latest online version of the class syllabus.
Week 1 (August 21 – August 27)

Medical Anthropology: An Overview with Key Concepts

Required reading for Wednesday (no reading assignment due this week):


Week 2 (August 28 – September 3)

The Environment, Cultural Ecology, and Health

Required reading:


Choose one for your reflection paper/class discussion:


Week 3 (September 4 – September 10)

Ethnomedicine and Illness Beliefs

Required reading:

Week 4 (September 11 – September 17)

**Ethnomedicine II: Therapy, Behavior, and Treatment**

**Required reading:**


**Choose one for your reflection paper/class discussion:**


Week 5 (September 18 – September 24)

**Culture, Nutrition, Health, and Food Security**

**Required reading:**


Week 6 (September 25 – October 1)

**The Culture of Biomedicine**

**Required reading:**


**Choose one for your reflection paper/class discussion:**


**Week 7 (October 2 – October 8)**

**Governmentality and Cross-Cultural Mental Health**

**Required reading:**


**MIDTERM DUE FOR COMPLETION BY SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 11:59 P.M.**

**Week 8 (October 9 – October 15)**

**Gender, Health, and the Local Biologies of Life I**

**Required reading:**


**Choose one for your reflection paper/class discussion:**


Week 9 (October 16 – October 22)

*Gender, Health, and the Local Biologies of Life II*

**Required reading:**


Week 10 (October 23 – October 29)

*Public Health and Inequality*

**Required reading:**


**MINI-ETHNOGRAPHIES DUE ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25 BY 11:59 P.M.! NO REFLECTION PAPER DUE THIS WEEK.**

Week 11 (October 30 – November 5)

*Structural Violence and Health I*

**Required reading:**


*Choose one for your reflection paper/class discussion:*


**Week 12 (November 6 – November 12)**

*Structural Violence and Health II*

**Required reading:**


**Week 13 (November 13 – November 19)**

*Review Session*

November 20-26 is Thanksgiving Break – NO CLASS

**Week 14 (November 27 – December 3)**

*Culture and the Body I*

**Required reading:**


**Week 15 (December 4 – December 10)**

*Culture and the Body II: Embodiment*

**Required reading:**


**FINAL EXAM DUE FOR COMPLETION BY DECEMBER 15**
Appendix 1: UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

ADA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.
Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student’s records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University’s policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT’s Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect (https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [April 5-April 22, 2022] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or
sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

1. Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
2. Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002).

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student’s permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.
If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student’s written permission.
Appendix 2: Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- **Student Health and Wellness Center** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center))
- **Counseling and Testing Services** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services))
- **UNT Care Team** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care))
- **UNT Psychiatric Services** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry))
- **Individual Counseling** ([https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling))

*Chosen Names*

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- **UNT Records**
- **UNT ID Card**
- **UNT Email Address**
- **Legal Name**

*UNT euIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don’t assume someone’s name, we should also ask and not assume someone’s pronouns.

You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- What are pronouns and why are they important?
How do I use pronouns?
How do I share my pronouns?
How do I ask for another person’s pronouns?
How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- Financial Aid (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- Student Legal Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- Multicultural Center (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- Pride Alliance (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
- UNT Food Pantry (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)
  Academic Support Services
- Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- UNT Libraries (https://library.unt.edu/)
- Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)