ANTH 425: Medical Anthropology

Meets: MWF, 10:30-11:20  
Instructor: Dr. Eirik Sæthre  
Email: saethre@hawaii.edu  
Office: Saunders 306  
Office Phone: 956-3995  
Office Hours: MW, 1:30-3:00

Course Content
Medical anthropology is the most rapidly expanding interest area within the broader field of anthropology. Situated at the margins of the clinical and social sciences, medical anthropology considers the cultural and social aspects of the body, health, sickness and healing. Medical anthropology is a comparative endeavor and is based on fieldwork in a wide range of social contexts—from pre-industrial New Guinea to post-industrial Japan.

This course aims to introduce students to some of the most important contemporary issues in medical anthropology. We will review topics such as biomedicine, indigenous health, HIV/AIDS, pharmaceuticals, the organ trade, global health inequalities, pluralistic medical systems, and gender. Through these examples, this course will illustrate the diversity of theoretical perspectives in medical anthropology, including interpretive approaches, critical theory, and phenomenology.

Course Objectives
- This course will explore the historical and theoretical development of medical anthropology.
- Students will review the variety of ways in which humans interpret, diagnose, and treat illness.
- Students will gain an understanding of the political economy of health care.
- This course will examine illness discourse a marker of gender, class, identity, morality and personhood.

Student Learning Outcomes
At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to:
- Use appropriate research tools to formulate a scholarly argument within the context of medical anthropology.
- Examine the ways in which ideas regarding the health, illness, treatment and efficacy are socially and culturally constructed.
- Understand importance of medicine as a focus of power, identity, and economy.
- Recognize the value of anthropological understandings of medical systems.

Required Text:
All other readings for this course are posted as pdf documents on Laulima.
Grading and Student Evaluation

Reading Responses (60 points)
Students will complete three reading response papers (each worth 20 points). Each paper must be four pages in length and succinctly summarize the main points of one reading as well as your responses to these ideas. Papers will be collected at the start of class on Mondays. Students must turn in their written response to an article BEFORE it is discussed in class. Only one paper can be submitted per week. Reading responses can ONLY be submitted for the following weeks: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, and 14. Papers summarizing readings from other weeks will not be accepted.

Research Paper (100 points)
Students will choose one of a topic relevant to medical anthropology and write a research paper that is between 10-12 pages long and cites at least 12 academic sources. Papers can incorporate a fieldwork component but are not required to do so. Students must submit a one paragraph abstract of their project subject as well as a bibliography of at least six sources that they will be using on Friday October 16. Rough drafts must be posted on Laulima on Friday November 6. Week 12 will be spent in small groups formally critiquing rough drafts. Final drafts are due Friday December 4 at the beginning of class.

Class Presentation (40 points)
During weeks nine and ten, students will be divided into small groups. Each group will be responsible for presenting one chapter of the ethnography to the class. If a student fails to give his or her class presentation for whatever reason, the grade must be made up by submitting an extended research paper (see above) that is 18-20 pages long and cites at least 20 academic sources.

Final Exam (100 points)
The final exam will be given in class and consist of essay questions.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300-290</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>289-280</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279-270</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269-260</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>259-250</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249-240</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239-230</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229-220</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219-210</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209-200</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199-190</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189-180</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>179-0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Style and Formatting Guidelines
All student assignments for this course must follow the standards outlined in the document ‘Guidelines for Papers and Grading’, which will be handed out in class and available on Laulima. Any paper not conforming to all of these guidelines will be penalized 20% of the total possible points.

Late Papers
Unless otherwise stated, papers are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments (including rough drafts and abstracts) will lose ten percent for every day that elapses.
On the sixth day, the student will receive a zero. Furthermore, papers that are turned in late will not receive comments from the instructor. Excuses of any kind for late papers will not be accepted.

All assignments must be completed. Any student missing an assignment will fail the class.

**Other**
- Be on time for class and turn off cell phones.
- All course handouts, readings, and assignments can be found on Laulima.
- Students are responsible for all course content, whether or not they are in class.
- If you miss class, you must get lecture notes from another student. I do not let students copy my notes.
- You are responsible for knowing about, and avoiding, academic dishonesty.
- For more information about writing resources on campus and online, go to http://www.mwp.hawaii.edu/writer_help.htm.
Class Schedule

Week 1 – Anthropology and Medicine

Week 2 – Theoretical Perspectives

Week 3 – Medicine and Race

Week 4 – Biomedicine

Week 5 – Explanatory Models

Week 6 – Medical Pluralism

Week 7 – Critical Medical Anthropology

Week 8 – Emerging Infectious Diseases: Tuberculosis

ABSTRACTS DUE

Week 9 – The Social Lives of Medicines
10/19 Chapters 1 and 2.
10/21 Chapters 3 and 4.
10/23 Chapters 5 and 6.

Week 10 – The Social Lives of Medicines
10/26 Chapters 7 and 8.
10/28 Chapters 9 and 10.
10/30 Chapters 11 and 12.

Week 11 – The Organ Trade


ROUGH DRAFTS DUE

**Week 12 – Critique Week**
On Monday, students will meet in their groups to provide feedback to each member. Suggested changes should be thought about and incorporated into rough drafts by Friday. Friday’s class will be devoted to evaluating the effectiveness of these changes.

**Week 13 – AIDS and Conspiracy**


**Week 14 – Food, Meaning and Indigeneity**


**Week 15 – Phenomenology and the Body**


FINAL DRAFT DUE

Week 16 – Transsexualism
