ANTH 425: Medical Anthropology

Meets: MWF, 10:30-11:20
Instructor: Dr. Eirik Sæthre
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Office Hours: MWF, 11:30-12:30

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.

Required Text:

Additional Readings:
All other readings for this course are posted as pdf documents on Laulima.

Course Information

Mid-term Exam (25%)
The take home mid-term exam will consist of essay questions, which will be distributed on October 17 and due on October 20.

Reading Responses (25%)
Students must complete four reading response papers. Each paper should succinctly summarize the main points of one reading as well as the student’s responses to these ideas. Papers can be submitted any time between week three and week thirteen. Only one paper can be submitted per class session.
Project (35%)
Students will choose one of the topics that we explore during this course and research it in greater depth. Details will be provided in class.

Attendance and Participation (15%)
Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and any student arriving more than fifteen minutes late will be marked absent. Students are expected to remain in the room for the duration of the class. Students that attend every class and participate regularly in class discussion will receive a higher grade while absences and lack of participation will lower your grade. If you miss more than five classes you will automatically fail the course. There are no excused absences. Students are responsible for all course content, whether or not they are in class.

Graduate Students
Graduate students are required to submit a project that is longer and more comprehensive than those of undergraduates. Details will be provided in class.

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 these guidelines will be given a zero.

To pass the course, students must complete ALL exams, projects, and proposals.

Other
- Be on time for class.
- Cell phones must be turned off.
- All course information, handouts, and announcements can be found on Laulima.
- If you miss class you must get lecture notes and information from another student. I do not let students copy my notes.
- You are responsible for knowing about, and avoiding, academic dishonesty.
- Please make use of the Writing Workshop at Kuy415 (956-7619) where you can sign up for half-hour appointments with writing tutors.
Class Schedule

August 25, 27, 29

Week 1 – Anthropology and Medicine

September 3 and 5

Week 2 – Theoretical Perspectives

September 8, 10, 12

Week 3 – Biomedicine

September 15, 17, 19

Week 4 – Explanatory Models
Week 5 – Medical Pluralism

Week 6 – The Social Lives of Medicines

Week 7 – The Organ Trade

Week 8 – Critical Medical Anthropology

Week 9 – Emerging Infectious Diseases: Tuberculosis
October 27, 29, 31

Week 10 – Explaining AIDS in southern Africa

November 3, 5, 7

Week 11 – Indigenous Health

November 10, 12, 14

Week 12 – Gender and Health
November 17, 19, 21

**Week 13 – Embodiment, Experience, and Phenomenology**

November 24 and 26

**Week 14 – Fluent Bodies**
Chapters 1-3

December 1, 3, 5

**Week 15 – Fluent Bodies**
Chapters 4-Epilogue

December 8 and 10

**Week 16 – Projects**
There will be no class on Monday to give students an opportunity to finish completing their project research and bibliographies. Wednesday’s class will be devoted to a round table discussion, in which students will discuss their projects and seek help for any last minute problems they are encountering.