Fall 2010

ANTH 425: Medical Anthropology

Meets: Monday and Wednesday 1:30-2:45 in BUSAD D105
Instructor: Dr. Eirik Sæthre
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Office: Saunders 306
Office Phone: 956-3995
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 12:00-1:00

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, and gender. Through these examples, this course will illustrate the diversity of theoretical perspectives in medical anthropology, including interpretive approaches, critical theory, and phenomenology.

Student Learning Objectives
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 anthropology in understanding medicine and medical behavior.

Readings:
All readings are posted as pdf documents on Laulima (in the Resources folder).

Grading and Student Evaluation

Reading Exercises (25%) – Due between Week 4 and Week 8
Students will complete three reading exercises between Week 4 and Week 8. 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.
Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography (10%) – Due October 27 (Week 10)
In 200-300 words, concisely summarize your forthcoming research paper. Your abstract should (1) give a brief background to the topic of your paper, (2) the anthropological approach you are going to use, and (3) the data that will be marshaled to support your conclusions. Do not ask questions, give answers. Students must also submit a preliminary bibliography containing six citations. At least three of these must be anthropological (from anthropology journals or written by anthropologists). Please bold the anthropological citations.

Research Paper (30%) – First Draft due November 17 (Week 13)
Final Draft due December 8 (Week 16)
Papers should focus on a medical topic and be anthropological (this is not a class in public health or epidemiology). Undergraduate papers must be between nine to eleven pages long and cite at least twelve academic sources. At least eight of these must be anthropological (from anthropology journals or written by anthropologists). Please bold the anthropological citations in your bibliography. Papers can incorporate a fieldwork component but are not required to do so.

Class Participation and Peer Review (10%)
Throughout the class, discussion is encouraged. Students that talk in class and answer questions will receive higher participation scores. In Week 14, students will be divided into five groups to formally critique rough drafts. Each student will be required to read the papers of other group members, write a reverse outline for each paper, and provide written feedback.

Final Exam (25%) – Monday December 13 from 2:15 to 4:14
The final exam will be given in class and consist of essay questions.

Grading Scale

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Style and Formatting Guidelines
All student assignments for this course must follow the standards outlined in the document ‘Guidelines for Papers’, which is available on Laulima. Any paper not conforming to ALL of these guidelines will be penalized.

Late Papers
Unless otherwise stated, papers are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments (including first drafts) will lose ten percent for every day that elapses and will not receive comments from the instructor. On the sixth day, the student will receive a zero.

Students must adequately complete all writing assignments to pass the course with a D grade or better. Students who do not complete all writing assignments will get a D- or an F and will not earn W Focus credit.
Class Schedule

Week 1 – Anthropology and Medicine
8/23  Introduction to the class

Week 2 – Explanatory Models

Week 3 – Not Knowing
9/6   Holiday – No class

Week 4 – Medicine, Race, and Culture: Australia and South Africa
Week 5 – Food, Indigeneity, and Medicine

Week 6 – Biomedicine

Week 7 – Critical Medical Anthropology / Bodies
Week 8 – Women’s Health

Week 9 – The Social Lives of Medicines

Week 10 – Emerging Infectious Diseases: Tuberculosis
ABSTRACTS DUE

Week 11 – The Organ Trade

Week 12 – HIV/AIDS, Conspiracy, Genocide, and Vampires

Week 13 – Narrative and Suffering

11/17  Movie: Bigger, Stronger, Faster Part I
FIRST DRAFT DUE

Week 14 – Critique Week
11/22  Movie: Bigger, Stronger, Faster Part II
11/27  Students will meet in groups to provide feedback on first drafts.

Week 15 – The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil

Week 16 – Phenomenology
FINAL DRAFT DUE