Fall 2016

ANTH 425: Medical Anthropology

Meets: Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:15 in Saunders 345
Instructor: Prof. Eirik Saethre
Email: saethre@hawaii.edu
Office: Saunders 306
Office Phone: 956-3995
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 3:30-4:30

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. Through a wide range of ethnographic 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 main theoretical developments in medical anthropology.
• Students will gain an understanding of importance of medicine as a focus of social, economic, and embodied inquiry.
• Health, illness, and medical treatment will be analyzed as indicators and expressions of identity, gender, class, 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 anthropology in understanding medicine and medical behavior.
• Draw from academic readings and anthropological perspectives to develop and improve writing skills.

Course Readings:
All materials for this course are posted as pdf documents in the ‘Resources’ folder on Laulima.
Grading and Student Evaluation

Reverse Outline and Summary (15%) – Due on Monday Weeks 5 or 6
Choose ONE of the readings for the week. At the top of your paper, write the central claim of the article in two sentences or less. In no less than eight pages, make an outline of the article as follows:

1) Section Title
   a) Using complete sentences, summarize the main points of each section. Each point should have its own heading letter (a, b, c, and so on). In parenthesis, add the page and paragraph number.
   i) List the evidence that the author uses to support the claim. This includes data, ethnography, or citing the ideas and theories of others. Each piece of evidence should have its own heading letter (i, ii, iii, and so on).

Then using the same reading, write a text summary. In two pages, summarize the author’s overall argument and demonstrate how the author supports this argument using details to illustrate your assertion. Your paper should have a clear introduction and conclusion. For this exercise, you do not need to provide in text citations or a bibliography.

Summary and Analysis (15%) – Due on Monday Week 7 or 8
Choose one reading and write a two page text summary as outlined above. In an additional two pages, write an analysis of the week’s theme. Making reference to all other readings from the week, discuss the contributions that the author(s) makes in understanding the topic. For this exercise, you do not need to provide in text citations or a bibliography.

Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography (10%) – Due October 19 (Week 9)
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 at least 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 16 (Week 13)
Final Draft due December 7 (Week 16)
Papers should focus on a topic relevant to the course and be anthropological. Undergraduate student papers must be between ten to twelve pages long (not including the bibliography) and cite at least twelve academic sources. Graduate student papers must be between fourteen to sixteen pages long and cite at least twenty 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 groups to formally critique first drafts. Each student will be required to read the papers of other group members and provide written feedback.

Final Exam (20%) – TBA
The final exam will be held in our usual classroom. It will consist of essay questions and cover all material in the course, including readings and lectures.

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. Many students lose their work due to computer crashes and hard drive failures. As part of your Google@UH account, you can store your work online via Google Drive which provides a secure backup. Please make use of this service as I do not make exceptions for hardware malfunctions.

Classroom Policies
• Be on time. Turn off cell phones. No computers are allowed in class.
• 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.
• 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 – The Development of Medical Anthropology
8/22 Introduction to the class
- W. H. R. Rivers – Massage in Melanesia
- Rudolf Virchow – The charity physician
- Benjamin Paul – The role of beliefs and customs in sanitation programs
- Charles Leslie – Introduction to Asian medical systems

Week 2 – Biomedicine and Explanatory Models
- Chapter 2: Culture, health care systems, and clinical reality
- Chapter 3: Core clinical functions and explanatory models (you can skip pages 84-104)

Week 3 – Explanatory Models
9/5 No Class – Labor Day

Week 4 – Colonial Medicine and Continuing Categories of Race in Biomedicine

Week 5 – Indigeneity and Resistance
  • Chapter 1: Everyday illness
  • Chapter 2: Food, meaning, and economy
  • Chapter 4: Medical systems and illness experience
  • Chapter 5: Noncompliance

Week 6 – Biomedicine and Women’s Bodies

Week 7 – Critical Medical Anthropology
  • Chapter 1: Medical anthropology and its transformation

Week 8 – The Political Economy of MDRTB
- Chapter 1: The vitality of practice: on personal trajectories
- Chapter 2: Rethinking ‘emerging infectious diseases’

- Chapter 7: The consumption of the poor: tuberculosis in the late twentieth century
- Chapter 9: Immodest claims of causality: social scientists and the ‘new’ tuberculosis

Week 9 – Narratives and Conspiracies
- Chapter 1: Finding narrative in clinical practice
- Chapter 4: Therapeutic plots


Week 10 – Public Health, Epidemics, and Racial Profiling
- Introduction: Death in the delta
- Chapter 5: Turning chaos into control: initial responses by regional institutions

- Chapter 11: Local numbers and global power: the role of statistics
- Chapter 12: Sanitation and global citizenship

Week 11 – Bodies and Phenomenology
- Chapter 4: Belief and the Body

11/2  Jackson, M. 1996. Phenomenology, radical empiricism, and anthropological critique. In M. Jackson (Ed.) Things as they are: new directions in

Week 12 – Phenomenology and the Homeless
- Selected pages
- Selected pages

Week 13 – Suffering
- A zone of social abandonment & Brazil (Pp. 35-53)
- Part 2: Catarina and the alphabet
- Part 3: The medical archive

FIRST DRAFT DUE

Week 14 – Critique Week
11/21 Peer Review
11/23 Peer Review

Week 15 – Film
11/28 Bigger, Stronger, Faster – Part I
11/30 Bigger, Stronger, Faster – Part II

Week 16 – The Role of Medical Anthropology
12/7 Class Review
FINAL DRAFT DUE

Week 17 – Final Exam: TBA