Spring 2016  

ANTH 467: Biomedicine and Culture  

Meets: 12:30-1:45 in Saunders 345  
Instructor: Dr. Eirik Sæthre  
Email: saethre@hawaii.edu  
Office: Saunders 306  
Office Phone: 956-3995  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 3:30-4:30

Course Description  
Often represented as ‘science’ that is devoid of cultural assumptions, Western (or allopathic) medicine is nevertheless a product of social processes. Examining the ‘culture of no culture’, this course will explore the ways in which technology, science, and medicine shape and are shaped by sociality, power, and economy.

Course Objectives  
• Students will gain an understanding of the social and cultural dimensions of biomedicine.  
• This course will explore local responses to, and interpretations of, biomedical ideas, technologies, and treatments.  
• Through an examination of ethnicity, technology, and gender, this course will illustrate the way in which medical ideas and discourse are employed to construct and reflect their social environment.

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.  
• Understand the ways in which the medical sciences are socially and culturally constructed.  
• Think critically about relations of power and meaning within biomedicine.  
• Recognize the value of anthropological understandings in clinical care settings.

Course Readings:  
All readings for this class are posted as pdf documents on Laulima.

Assignments  
Reverse Outline and Summary (15%) – Due on February 1 or 8 (Week 4 or 5)  
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. I will give written feedback on papers and during lectures I will review the important points of the articles and provide oral feedback. This exercise will improve reading comprehension and demonstrate techniques of writing.

Summary and Analysis (15%) – Due on February 22 or 29 (Week 7 and 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. I will give written feedback on papers and during lectures I will review the important points of the articles and provide oral feedback. This exercise will improve reading comprehension and demonstrate techniques of writing.

Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography (10%) – Due March 7 (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 six citations. At least three of these must be anthropological (from anthropology journals or written by anthropologists). Please bold the anthropological citations. I will give written feedback and during lectures I will review the key features of abstracts and provide oral feedback. This exercise will ensure that paper topics are thought out and that bibliographic references have been identified.

Research Paper (30%) – First Draft due April 13 (Week 13)
Final Draft due May 4 (Week 16)
Papers should focus on a topic relevant to the course and be anthropological (this is not a class in public health or epidemiology). Papers must be between ten to twelve 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. I will give written feedback and in addition students will be broken into small groups to critique one another’s rough drafts. I will also give oral feedback at this time.
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%) – Wednesday May 11 from 12:00-2:00 in Saunders 345
The final exam will consist of essay questions and will 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 – Introducing Biomedicine
1/11 Introduction to the class

Week 2 – Medical Knowledge and Social Knowledge
1/18 No class: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
• Chapter 2: The Normal Body
• Chapter 6: Colonial Disease and Biological Commensurability

Week 3 – Medical Knowledge and Social Knowledge
• Preface
• Chapter 4: The Old Age of the Clinic
• Chapter 6: Signs and Cases
• Chapter 7: Seeing and Knowing
• Conclusion
• Chapter 1: From Order to Disorder
• Chapter 6: The Creation of Order Out of Disorder

Week 4 – Medical Knowledge and Social Knowledge
Week 5 – Learning Medicine
  • Chapter 6: Knowledge: Writing, Sight and the Self
  • Chapter 7: Strange Meeting: The Dissecting Room

  • Chapter 4: Seeing Deeply and Seeing Through in the Basic Science Years
  • Chapter 5: The Word Made Flesh: Hospital Experience and the Clinical Crisis

Week 6 – Fieldtrip to JABSOM
2/15  No class: President’s Day
2/17  Fieldtrip to the Anatomy Lab at the John A. Burns School of Medicine

Week 7 – Pharmaceuticals


Week 8 – Clinical Trials

  • Chapter 1: Clinical Trials: Coming Soon to a Physician Near You 18

  • Chapter 1: Guinea-Pigging
  • Chapter 2: Market Recruitment, Identity, and Resistance among Professional Guinea Pigs
Week 9 – Clinical Trials / Technology

ABSTRACT AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week 10 – MRI
  •  Chapter 3: Seeing Is Believing
  •  Chapter 4: The Image Factory
  •  Chapter 5: The Political Economy of Magnetic Resonance Imaging

Spring Break 3/21 – 3/25

Week 11 – Biomedicine Elsewhere
  •  Chapter 1: Making a Place for Biomedicine
  •  Chapter 3: Public Building, Public Politics
  •  Chapter 4: Doctors without Diagnosis
  •  Chapter 6: Technologies of Detachment

Week 12 – Helping
  •  Chapter 2: The Passion in Policy
  •  Chapter 4: Learning the Arts of Helping

- Chapter 5: The Social Life of Health Facts
- Chapter 6: Manufacturing Optimism, Maintaining Health

**Week 13 – Film: Orgasm, Inc.**

4/11  Part I

4/13  Part II and Class Discussion

FIRST DRAFT DUE

**Week 14 – Critique Week**

4/18  Peer Review

4/20  Peer Review

**Week 15 – Risk, Genetic Screening, and Selective Abortion**


- Chapter 7: Heredity
- Chapter 8: The New Surgical Radicalism


- Chapter 1: How Methodology Bleeds into Daily Life
- Chapter 8: Culturing Chromosomes, or What’s in the Soup

**Week 16 – Risk, Genetic Screening, and Selective Abortion**


- Chapter 9: An Error in Cell Division, or The Power of Positive Diagnosis

5/4  Class Review

FINAL DRAFT DUE

**Week 17 – Final Exam**

Wednesday May 11 from 12:00-2:00 in Saunders 345