COURSE DESCRIPTION
Medical anthropology considers the cultural and social aspects of the body, health, sickness, and healing in cross-cultural perspective. This course introduces some of the innovative research being conducted in the rapidly growing field of medical anthropology. We begin with an overview of diverse theoretical approaches to studying health and well-being, exploring the various ways in which “culture” has been used in discourses on health. After building this foundation, the remainder of the course examines topics such as medicalization, authoritative knowledge, and belief; global inequities, local desires, and modern plagues; the organ trade; and the phenomenology of disability, death, and medical school. Through these examples, the course illustrates the diversity of theoretical perspectives in medical anthropology, including interpretive approaches, critical theory, and phenomenology. The texts for this course consist of ethnographies, scholarly articles, and two popular works of non-fiction: one assigned in medical schools throughout the U.S., and another written about the experience of medical school.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES & SKILLS
At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the ways in which ideas regarding health, illness, and treatment are socially constructed
- Analyze biomedicine as a cultural system and the nature of its spread around the globe
- Recognize the value of anthropology in understanding medicine and healing
- Break down complex academic journal articles into thesis, main points, and supporting evidence
- Conduct and present independent research on current popular health topics
- Successfully apply the arguments presented in academic articles to non-anthropological writing

EVALUATION

- **Active Reading Exercises (10% each)** 20%
  In two “reverse outlines,” students will break down and summarize the major points and conclusions of two academic journal articles. The first assignment will include a final summary paragraph. The second reverse outline assignment will include a paragraph at the end in which the student relates the conclusion to any major theme in the course. These assignments are due at the beginning of class. I am available to assist you during office hours.

- **Group Projects and Presentations on Current Issues 30%**
  All presentations must explicitly relate the information to course materials. Topics include:
  - Recent developments in the status of public health in post-earthquake Nepal – Sep 24
  - Report on the various health challenges in post-earthquake Nepal (e.g. women’s health, cholera outbreak, lack of shelter or infrastructure and its impact on some aspect of health, challenges to funding reaching those in need, etc).
  - Interviews with humanitarian workers or global health workers – Oct 6
  Define what it means to be a humanitarian worker or global health worker. Interview several individuals about their work, the challenges they face, how they arrived at this point in their careers, and other questions of your own.
“Think Before You Pink” – Oct 15
What do people mean when they say that breast cancer has become commodified? Fundraising for diseases like breast cancer are beneficial, right? Explain some of the arguments – by activists and by academics – for why one should “think before you pink.” Use the websites for Breast Cancer Action and Think Before You Pink as starting points.

Medical tourism – Oct 27
Organs are not the only things travelling around the globe. Report on several types of medical tourism or transnational health-seeking behaviors that have developed in recent years (e.g. flying to less developed countries for less expensive surgery, using surrogates in India, etc.)

The controversy over “Bodies… The Exhibition” – Nov 12
Investigate the controversy over the Bodies exhibit. Where did the bodies come from? Is consent necessary to display them? Analyze the meaning of the controversy in light of course materials.

Interviews with doctors or medical students – Nov 17
Interview several individuals about medical school and the changes they noticed in themselves as they became doctors. Consider questions such as: Is desensitization necessary in order to be a good doctor? How are doctors different from other individuals? And many more of your own design.

Women, HIV, & Social Risk – Dec 8
How is protecting women from HIV transmission both a social and medical problem? What are the major issues at stake? Describe anthropological studies on barriers to condom use and the development of vaginal microbicides.

- **Class Participation 20%**
  Participation is defined as contributing regularly to class discussions with relevant and insightful comments. Students will be given time to engage substantively in class on issues raised in the readings and materials presented by classmates. Preparation for this part of the course involves coming to class with at least two points or comments that you would like to make about the assigned readings for that day along with a copy of the readings. This portion of the grade will include debates (each person participates in one debate), group discussion exercises, and, if necessary, unannounced reading quizzes in class.

  *Please note that this course is discussion-based – this means you will not be able to take the passive role of an audience member. You will take an active part in your own learning. This is not a lecture-based course where students can simply sit back and listen.*

- **Final Exam 30%**
  The final exam will be an opportunity to synthesize and reflect upon the concepts and debates raised and discussed in class.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**
Fadiman, Anne

Lock, Margaret

Montross, Christine

Murphy, Robert

An assortment of articles on e-reserve available through Laulima or the library website
PART I. INTERROGATIONS OF CULTURE AND HEALTH
How is the relationship between “culture” and health characterized? In what ways do scholars disagree?

Introductions
Tue, Aug 25

Introduction to Medical Anthropology
Thu, Aug 27
- Hahn, “Three Theories of Sickness and Healing”

Tue, Sep 1
- Kleinman, “Culture, health care systems, and clinical reality” (you may skip 61-70)
- Kleinman, “Core clinical functions and explanatory models” (you may skip 84-102)

Culture as Impediment to Health
Thu, Sep 3
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Chapters 1-6

Tue, Sep 8
- Film Clip: “Place Matters” from Unnatural Causes
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Chapters 7-13

Thu, Sep 10
- The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Chapters 14-19

Tue, Sep 15
- Taylor, “The Story Catches You and You Fall Down: Tragedy, Ethnography, and ‘Cultural Competence’”
- For further reading (optional): Chiu, “Medical, Racist, and Colonial Constructions of Power in Anne Fadiman’s The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down”

Culture as Distraction from the Political Economy of Disease
Thu, Sep 17
- Farmer, “Culture, Poverty, and HIV Transmission”
- Film clip: “In Sickness and in Wealth,” from Unnatural Causes
★ FIRST REVERSE OUTLINE DUE on Farmer

Tue, Sep 22
- Drobac, et al, “Building and Effective Rural Health Delivery Model in Haiti and Rwanda”

Thu, Sep 24
- Farmer, two chapters on Haiti earthquake To Be Announced
- Podcast: In Search of the Red Cross’ $500 Million in Haiti Relief
★ Group presentation: The Status of Public Health in post-earthquake Nepal

Tue, Sep 29
- Scheper-Hughes, “Nervoso: Medicine, Sickness, and Human Needs”
Thu, Oct 1
- Singer, “Beyond the Ivory Tower”

**Global Health and Humanitarianism**

Tue, Oct 6
- Foster, “Medical Anthropology and International Health Planning”
- Janes & Corbett, “Anthropology and Global Health”
- Group Presentation: Interviews with Humanitarian or Global Health Workers

Thu, Oct 8
- Fassin, “Culturalism as Ideology”
- For further reading (optional): Fassin, “Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life”
- SECOND REVERSE OUTLINE DUE on Fassin

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**PART II. TECHNOLOGIES AND MEDICALIZATION**

How have new medical technologies transformed global and local societies? How have they caused societies to redefine some of the most fundamental concepts, values, and practices in life? How have local knowledge and practices shaped global flows?

**Medicalization and Biomedicalization**

Tue, Oct 13
- Conrad, “Medicalization: Context, Characteristics, and Changes”
- Clarke, et al., “Biomedicalization: A Theoretical and Substantive Introduction” STOP at page 32

Thu, Oct 15
- Fishman, “The Making of Viagra”
- Fosket, “Breast Cancer Risk as Disease”
- Group Presentation: Think Before You Pink

Tue, Oct 20
- Berry, “Kaqchikel Midwives, Home Births, and Emergency Obstetric Referrals in Guatemala”
- Brunson, “Confronting Maternal Mortality, Controlling Birth in Nepal”
- Film: *The Business of Being Born*
- For further reading (optional): Kaufert & O’Neil, “Analysis of a Dialogue on Risks in Childbirth”

**Reinventing Death**

Thu, Oct 22
- *Twice Dead*, Pages 1-56, and Pages 69-77

**Circulation of Body Parts**

Tue, Oct 27
- *Twice Dead*, Chapters 3, 5
- Group Presentation: Medical Tourism

Thu, Oct 29
- *Twice Dead*, Chapters 8, 11
- Film: *Dirty Pretty Things*
PART III. PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES
What are the strengths and limitations to science and biomedicine as a way of knowing the body and achieving health? What does a phenomenological approach to well-being look like, and how would it be employed in research? Can health and the body be disentangled from the social?

Phenomenological Approaches to Well-Being
Tue, Nov 10
- Csordas, “The Body’s Career in Anthropology”
- Jackson, “Phenomenology, Radical Empiricism, and Anthropological Critique”

Naming & Knowing the Body
Thu, Nov 12
- *Body of Work*, Preface, Chapters 1-5
- For further reading (optional): Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles”
- ★ Group Presentation: The Controversy over “Bodies… the Exhibition”

Learning to Be a Doctor
Tue, Nov 17
- *Body of Work*, Chapters 6-8
- Good & DelVecchio Good, “‘Learning Medicine’: the Constructing of Medical Knowledge at Harvard Medical School”
- For further reading (optional): Davis-Floyd, “Obstetric Training as a Rite of Passage”
- ★ Group Presentation: Interviews with Doctors or Medical Students

Thu, Nov 19
- *Body of Work*, Chapters 9-Epilogue

Physical Disability & the Social Relations of Health
Tue, Nov 24
- *The Body Silent*, Chapters 1-2

Thu, Nov 26 – HOLIDAY. NO CLASS.

Tue, Dec 1
- *The Body Silent*, Chapters 3-5
- Film: *Murderball*

Thu, Dec 3
- *The Body Silent*, Chapter 6-9
Film: *Murderball*

HIV & Social Risk

Tue, Dec 8
- Smith, “Gender Inequality, Infidelity, and the Social Risks of Modern Marriage in Nigeria”
- Parikh, “Going Public: Modern Wives, Men’s Infidelity, and Marriage in East-Central Uganda”
- Group Presentation: Women, HIV, & Social Risk

Conclusions

Thu, Dec 10
- Singer and Erickson, “The Future of Medical Anthropology: Meeting Global Health Challenges”
- Inhorn, “Medical Anthropology at the Intersections”

Final Exam

**BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS**

- Davis-Floyd, Robbie E. 1987 Obstetric Training as a Rite of Passage. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(3):288-318.

Fishman, Jennifer R.

Fosket, Jennifer Ruth

Foster, George M.

Good, Byron J., and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good

Hahn, Robert A.

Inhorn, Marcia C.

Jackson, Michael

Janes, Craig R., and Kitty K. Corbett

Kaufert, Patricia, and John O’Neil

Martin, Emily

Parikh, Shanti

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

Singer, Merrill

Singer, Merrill, and Pamela I. Erickson

Smith, Daniel J.

Taylor, Janelle S.