In reality, if medicine is the science of the healthy as well as of the ill human being (which is what it ought to be), what other science is better suited to propose laws as the basis of the social structure, in order to make effective those which are inherent in man himself? Once medicine is established as anthropology, and once the interests of the privileged no longer determine the course of public events, the physiologist and the practitioner will be counted among the elder statesmen who support the social structure. Medicine is a social science in its very bone and marrow….

Rudolph Virchow, *Die Einheitsbestrebungen*, 1849

I should perhaps briefly state the reasons that have progressively led me—a microbiologist not trained in medicine—to explore some of the biological and social implications of man’s response to his total environment. My concern with such problems emerged from an increasing awareness of the fact that the prevalence and severity of microbial diseases are conditioned more by the ways of life of the persons afflicted than by the virulence and other properties of the etiological agents. Hence the need to learn more of man and of his societies in order to try to make sense of the patterns of his diseases.

René Dubos, *Man Adapting*, 1965

### Course Description and Objectives

Medical anthropology is a broad and vibrant discipline that draws on the four traditional subfields of anthropology—cultural, biological, linguistic, and archaeology—to examine the biocultural basis of health and to understand the cultural dimensions of illness experience and treatment. This seminar examines the major theoretical frameworks and key areas of empirical research in contemporary medical anthropology. We will focus on three broad topics: (1) the biocultural basis of health; (2) critical and interpretive analysis of sickness, health, and healing; and (3) applications of anthropology in medicine, nursing, and public health.

### Teaching Philosophy

The aims of graduate school are fundamentally different from those of undergraduate education. Undergraduate education is concerned primarily with instilling the essential knowledge in a field and—at its best—with preparing students for a lifetime of learning. Graduate education is about turning students into professional researchers and teachers. These different aims correspond to distinct responsibilities for both teachers and learners at the graduate and undergraduate levels. As aspiring professionals, you are responsible for taking initiative to master the key ideas and literature in the field and for seeking out the resources you
need. My role is to facilitate your learning and professional development as independent scholars by introducing you to pertinent literature, by challenging you to evaluate and synthesize the material, and by rewarding individual initiative. The course format, assignments, and evaluation of your performance are designed to meet these aims.

**Course Format**

In practice, my teaching philosophy means that you will be actively engaged in mastering the course material. The course will be conducted as a seminar. You will be required to complete assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss and analyze the issues the readings address. Each week, one or two students will be assigned to lead our discussion and synthesize the material.

**Course Materials**

📖 **Required Readings**


The books are available locally at the UF Bookstore. Additional required readings will be made available electronically on the course website (www.gravlee.org/medanthro).

🎉 **Supplementary Resources**


**Course Outline**

1. Introduction
2. Ecology, adaptation, and evolution
3. Culture, political economy, and health
4. Health transitions
5. Nutrition, poverty, and health
6. Infections and inequalities, I
7. Infections and inequalities, II
8. Social suffering and structural vulnerability
9. Embodiment and local biologies
10. Narrative, phenomenology, and illness
11. Anthropology of global biomedicines
12. Culture, discourse, and global health
13. No class — AAA meetings
14. Anthropology and public health, I
15. Anthropology and public health, II
16. Synthesis and integration

**Course Requirements and Grading**

Your final grade has three components: class participation (25 percent), seminar moderator (25 percent), and a research paper (40 percent). Final grades will be A (90-100), A- (87-89), B+ (84-86), B (80-83), B- (77-79), C+ (74-76), C (70-73), C- (67-69), D+ (64-66), D (60-63), D- (57-59), E (<57).

1. *Class participation* (25%). I expect you to attend each class meeting and to take an active part in discussions and activities. Active participation requires that you read all assigned readings, take notes on the readings, and prepare thoughtful questions and critical discussion points. I will evaluate your class participation on the quality of your contributions, not just on how often you speak in class. The purpose of evaluating your participation is to facilitate your grasp of the material by encouraging you to prepare for class and by promoting thoughtful analysis and discussion.
2. **Seminar moderator (25%).** Each week one or two students will be assigned to moderate the seminar. Your job is to stimulate and guide thoughtful discussion about the concepts and arguments relevant to the week’s reading. If you and another student are assigned to the same week, you are expected to meet ahead of the class time to coordinate your presentation of the material. The purpose of serving as seminar moderator is to enhance your skills in critical reading and interpretation, oral presentation, active listening, and synthesis and evaluation of arguments and ideas.

   a. **Discussion questions.** You (and your partner, if assigned) should develop 5–10 thought-provoking questions for seminar participants to address during class. You must distribute these questions by email to the course listserv at least 48 hours before we meet for class (i.e., by Sunday afternoon at 4:00). The questions should be designed to stimulate discussion and debate.

   b. **Discussion leader.** You (and your partner, if assigned) will be responsible for facilitating our discussion in class meetings. You should begin with a brief (≤10-minute) summary of the key ideas and debates from the week’s readings. You should have a flexible plan for guiding our discussion through the important elements of the week’s readings, using the questions you posted to the listserv. Be prepared to share your own insights about the readings.

3. **Research Paper (50%).** The research paper is an opportunity for you to develop expertise in an area of interest to you. The project may be (1) a review paper or critical essay on a theme related to medical anthropology, (2) an analysis of secondary data, or (3) primary research. The paper should be approximately 6000 words in length and should be written in the form of a journal article. The paper is due in class on **December 8**. I encourage you to discuss your plans for the paper with me as soon as possible. To be successful, you should make steady progress on the paper throughout the semester (e.g., identify a topic by the third week of the semester, generate a working bibliography by the fourth week, and start writing the first draft by the sixth week). You should be prepared to make a brief (~10-minute) oral presentation about your project on the final day of class.

4. **Course web site.** You are responsible for all materials posted on the course web site (http://gravlee.org/medanthro), including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material.

**Policy on Late Assignments**

You are required to complete all assignments by the stated due dates. Late assignments will lose one half-letter grade for each day past the deadline. There are no make-up opportunities for any assignment, as you will have ample time to complete each requirement. I will not assign grades of “incomplete” except in the most unusual, extreme circumstances of incapacitating illness, death of family members, or other university-approved excuses. You must provide documentation of such circumstances from a medical doctor, funeral home, or other appropriate authority.
Academic Honor Code
Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else’s published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) or multiple submissions (submitting the same paper in different courses) will lead to the Department’s and the University’s procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the university’s Honor Code (available online at http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html).

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please make any requests by the second week of class.

UF Counseling Services
Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

• University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
• Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling
• Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
• Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

Syllabus Change Policy
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.
Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (Aug. 25)  Introduction and overview

•  Expectations—mine and yours
•  History and scope of the field
•  Medical anthropology and allied disciplines

miş Required reading

Hahn & Inhorn, Introduction (p. 1-31)

miş Further reading

Joralemon, *Exploring Medical Anthropology*


Week 2 (Sept. 1)  Ecology, adaptation, and evolution

•  Biocultural adaptation
•  Disease ecology
•  Evolutionary medicine

miş Required reading


Further reading


Week 3 (Sept. 8)  
**Culture, political economy, and health**

- Critical medical anthropology
- Critical biocultural approaches
- Thinking with the body
- Interpretive and meaning-centered approaches

**Required reading**


Week 4 (Sept. 15)  
**Health transitions**

- Health in prehistory
- Epidemiologic transitions
- Globalization and health

**Required reading**


**Further reading**


**Week 5 (Sept. 22)** Nutrition, poverty, and health

- Child health and nutrition
- Malnutrition and global health

**Required reading**

Howard and Millard, *Hunger and Shame*

**Further reading**


**Week 6 (Sept. 29)** Infections and inequalities, I

**Required reading**

**Further reading**

Wiley & Allen, Ch. 8-9 (p. 215-285)
Trostle, Ch. 5 (p. 96-121)

**Week 7 (Oct. 6)  Infections and inequalities, II**

📖 **Required reading**

Farmer, *Infections and Inequalities*, Ch. 5-10 (p. 127-282)

**Further reading**

Wiley & Allen, Ch. 10 (p. 286-323)
Trostle, Ch. 6 (p. 122-149)

**Week 8 (Oct. 13)  Social suffering and structural vulnerability**

- Labor, migration, and health
- Health consequences of social inequalities

📖 **Required reading**

Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*

**Further reading**


**Week 9 (Oct. 20)  Embodiment and local biologies**

- Embodiment across disciplines
- The *body* in embodiment
- Developmental origins of adult health

📖 **Required reading**


**Further reading**


---

**Week 10 (Oct. 27) Narrative, phenomenology, and illness**

**Required reading**

Mattingly, *Paradox of Hope*

**Further reading**


---

**Week 11 (Nov. 3) Anthropology of global biomedicines**

- Anthropology and cancer
- Biomedicine as a cultural system

**Required reading**

Livingston, *Improvising Medicine*
Further reading


Week 12 (Nov. 10)  Culture, discourse, and global health

- Biocommunicability
- Language ideologies
- Inequalities, epistemologies, and interventions

Required reading

Briggs and Mantini-Briggs, *Stories in the Time of Cholera*

Further reading


Week 13 (Nov. 17)  No class—AAA meetings

Week 14 (Nov. 24)  Anthropology and public health, I

- Anthropological framing of public health problems
- Anthropological design of public health interventions

Required reading

Hahn & Inhorn, Parts I-II, select six chapters


Further reading

Trostle, Ch. 6 (p. 122-149)


Week 15 (Dec. 1)  Anthropology and public health, II

- Anthropological evaluation of public health initiatives
- Anthropological critique of public health policy

Required reading

Hahn & Inhorn, Parts III-IV, select six chapters

Further reading
Trostle, Ch. 7-8 (p. 150-174)


**Week 16 (Dec. 8)  Synthesis and integration**

- Integrating methods and theory
- Evaluating theoretical approaches
- Presentation of student projects