

ANT 4462: Culture & Medicine

MWF 11:45 am-12:35 pm

CSE Rm. E121

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-4:30 pm & by appointment

Course Overview

This course offers a broad examination of health and disease in a cross-cultural context. As part of this course, we explore the relationship of anthropology to the art and science of medicine through cross-cultural comparisons and specific ethnographic examples. Given the time constraints of this class, we are not able to examine everything related to medical anthropology. Instead we use literature, film, and discussion to examine the cultural construction and organization of diverse health systems, world economic development/political economy of health, and the role of the anthropologist in transformations of contemporary Western health systems.

By the end of the course you should be able to: 1) describe the scope of medical anthropology and give examples of the key theoretical and empirical areas; 2) Analyze the biocultural factors that shape the distribution of health; 3) Evaluate cultural influences and assumptions about healing practices; 4) Apply an anthropological perspective to public health problems both in the U.S. and internationally.

This course is also designed to develop your learning skills, including: 1) Analytical thinking and research abilities (including information acquisition and critical reading and writing skills); 2) Holistic learning skills and the ability to integrate ideas from many different perspectives.

Required Books

- 2009 Wiley, A. and J. Allen. Medical Anthropology: A Biocultural Approach. Oxford University Press, New York.
- 2009 Baer, H. and M. Singer. Global Warming and the Political Ecology of Health. Routledge, New York.
- 2009 Auyero, J. and D. A. Swistun. Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown.

Course Format

This course consists of lectures, class discussion and group activities. I'm an advocate for participatory and collaborative learning, so the class will involve a lot of discussion and small-group activities. Mondays and Wednesdays will be devoted to lecture/discussion. The purpose of lecture/discussion sessions will be to review the concepts associated with each topic and

discuss the material in the readings. Fridays will be devoted to in-class activities that help augment the material from lecture and discussion.

Course Requirements and Grading

Course grades are calculated based on the following:

1. *Participation (100 points)*

I expect students to attend class meetings and take an active part in discussions and class activities. Active participation includes attendance but also requires that you read all assigned readings and prepare thoughtful questions and discussion points in advance of class meetings. I will evaluate your participation based on the *quality* of your contributions and not simply on how often you speak in class. The purpose of evaluating your participation is to encourage you to prepare for class and to promote thoughtful analysis and discussion.

- Participation will be recorded for 12 weeks but the two weeks with the lowest scores will be dropped. Each week is worth 10 points that will be divided between attendance and class activities.

2. *Exam (25 points)*

Students will complete a take-home essay exam that covers the core concepts from the course. Students will be given a week to complete the exam. Due March 24.

3. *Research Poster Project (100 points)*

Students are required to present a research poster on a topic relating to medical anthropology as a final project for the class. The poster project is cumulative; several assignments will be used to assess the progress of research for the poster throughout the semester. Guidelines for the different stages of the poster project will be provided in class.

- **Poster proposal** outlining the topic of the research project is due Friday, **February 17th**; this proposal should describe the topic, including why the topic is important, and should identify some of the key questions or issues your project will explore. (25 points)
- **250-word abstract and annotated bibliography** with at least 10 carefully selected references from scholarly literature is due Friday, **March 17th**. (50 points)
- An electronic **copy of your final poster** is due Friday, April 7th. **Final poster presentations** will be held during regular class times April 10, 12, and 14. (25 points)

CLASS POLICIES

Grades

Grades are awarded on the basis of points received in the class and are not curved.

Final grades will be based on the following scale: A (94-100), A- (90-93.99), B+ (87-89.99), B (84-86.99), B- (80-83.99), C+ (77-79.99), C (74-76.99), C- (70-73.99), D+ (67-69.99), D (64-66.99), D- (60-63.99), E (<59.99).

Attendance & Participation

Students have to be in class to receive credit for group activities and discussion. Excused absences require documented proof of absence and non-emergency situations must be approved in advance.

Per UF policy, "... acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused."

Policy on Late Assignments

Students 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 (including weekends). 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 (i.e. alien abduction). You must provide documentation of such circumstances from an appropriate authority. Assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the day assigned unless otherwise specified.

Academic Honor Code

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code of the University of Florida. The Academic Honor Code is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the University community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and responsibility on the part of the University community. Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Code: www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific modifications. Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office and then provide documentation to the instructor. For more information about services available to University of Florida students:

Dean of Students Office Disability Resource Center
202 Peabody Hall or 0020 Reid Hall
Phone: (352) 392-1261 Phone: (352) 392-8570

University of Florida Counseling Services

Resources are available on-campus for students that feel like they are struggling in their personal or academic life.

- 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.

Course Schedule and Readings

This is a preliminary schedule of readings and may be subject to change with advance notice.
(W&A: Wiley and Allen; B&S: Baer and Singer)

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
Week 1 (Jan 4-6)	Introduction to Medical Anthropology	Syllabus W&A: Ch. 1
Week 2 (Jan 9-13)	Health and Disease	W&A: Ch. 2
Week 3 (Jan 16-20)	Environmental Health	B&S: Ch. 1-2 No class Jan. 16th
Week 4 (Jan 23-27)	Diet & Nutrition	W&A: Ch. 4 B&S: Ch. 3
Week 5 (Jan 30-Feb 3)	Growth & Development	W&A: Ch. 5
Week 6 (Feb 6-10)	Reproductive health	W&A: Ch 6
Week 7 (Feb 13-17)	Environmental contamination & health	B&S: Ch. 4 * Poster proposal Feb. 17
Week 8 (Feb 20-24)	Infectious disease	W&A: Ch 8 B&S: Ch. 5
Week 9 (Feb 27-Mar 3)	Ecosyndemics	B&S: Ch. 6
Week 10 (Mar 6-10)	SPRING BREAK	
Week 11 (Mar 13-17)	Globalization, Poverty & Disease	W&A: Ch. 9 *Abstract & annotated bib March 17
Week 12 (Mar 20-24)	Social inequality & health	W&A: Ch. 10 *Take home exam March 24
Week 13 (Mar 27-31)	<i>Flammable</i> ethnography (entire book)	
Week 14 (Apr 3-7)	Applying Medical Anthropology	W&A: Epilogue; B&S: Ch 8 *Poster submission April 7
Week 15 (Apr 10-14)	Student poster sessions all week	
Week 16 (Apr 17-19)	No class	