

Hospital Ethnography: Theory, Method, and Ethics

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne Strong

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Class Time: W 9:35am-12:35pm

Turlington 2350

Office Hours: M 12-1:30pm & F 12-1:30pm or by appointment via

<https://calendly.com/adrienne-strong>

Office Location: 441 Grinter



Course Description: Hospital ethnography is a growing field in the social sciences, with roots in anthropology and sociology. For some time, researchers primarily conducted hospital ethnography in settings in high-income countries, largely neglecting how biomedicine is practiced and transformed in other environments and geographic areas. However, more recently, the area of hospital ethnography has been rapidly expanding to include transformative research in resource-poor settings, which has critical theoretical and practical contributions. This course will serve as a primer in the burgeoning area of hospital ethnography, covering its roots, as well as how it continues to evolve, through journal articles and monographs, both classic and brand new. We will also use the course texts to analyze how hospital ethnography enables insight into broader public policy issues related to topics such as governance, accountability, gender equity, and sectarian conflict. Course content will be updated to address current pressing issues, including COVID-19 and its effects on hospitals and healthcare workers globally.

Course Goals and Objectives

You will leave the course with a thorough knowledge of how hospital ethnography contributes to, is in dialogue with, and differs from the fields of medical anthropology, medical sociology, and science and technology studies (STS). The course will also cover the methodological, bureaucratic, and ethical challenges inherent in and unique to working in

hospital settings and other health facilities in a variety of geographic contexts. You will be prepared to write Institutional Review Board applications for anthropological research in medical settings, a useful tool for jobs in anthropology, public health, and other career fields. Students will be able to:

- Describe the scope of hospital ethnography, its theoretical and disciplinary background, and current trends in the field.
- Identify and analyze the unique challenges of working in hospital settings globally.
- Apply course content to the production of best practices for ethnographic research in the hospital setting.
- Develop IRB applications for proposed research projects using the best practices produced.

Course Texts

The books listed below are required and available through the campus bookstore and library. All journal articles can be found on the course Canvas site. Readings are subject to change as new material becomes available.

- Strong, Adrienne. 2020. *Documenting Death: Maternal Mortality and the Ethics of Care in Tanzania*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (available for free download)
- Smith-Oka, Vania. 2021. *Becoming Gods: Medical Training in Mexican Hospitals*. Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Street, Alice. 2014. *Biomedicine in an Unstable Place: Infrastructure and Personhood in a Papua New Guinean Hospital*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Solomon, Harris. 2022. *Lifelines: The Traffic of Trauma*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Books for grad students in addition to the below (will collectively pick 3, feel free to suggest others of interest or relevance for your work):

- Banerjee, Dwaipayan. 2020. *Enduring Cancer: Life, Death, and Diagnosis in Delhi*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kaufman, Sharon. 2015. *Ordinary Medicine: Extraordinary Treatments, Longer Lives, and Where to Draw the Line*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Kilroy-Marac, Katie. 2019. *An Impossible Inheritance: Postcolonial Psychiatry and the Work of Memory in a West African Clinic*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Mattingly, Cheryl. 2010. *The Paradox of Hope: Journeys through a Clinical Borderland*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Mulemi, Benson. 2010. *Coping with Cancer and Adversity: Hospital Ethnography in Kenya*. Leiden: African Studies Centre. (Ph.D. Dissertation) <http://dare.uva.nl/record/1/341279>
- Livingston, Julie. 2012. *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Pinto, Sarah. 2014. *Daughters of Parvati: Women and Madness in Contemporary India*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sufrin, Carolyn. 2017. *Jailcare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Zaman, Shahaduz. 2005. *Broken Limbs, Broken Lives: Ethnography of a hospital Ward in Bangladesh*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

Course Requirements

- Participation* (5% of final grade) **(ALL)**: Consistent informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation is expected and a crucial component of a seminar course. See the rubric below. **NOTE**: If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion, e.g., shyness, language barriers, etc., see me as soon as possible to discuss alternative modes of participation.

	High Quality	Average	Needs Improvement
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.			
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.			
Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.			

- Attendance* (5% of final grade) **(ALL)**: will be taken daily and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. You are allowed two “personal days” for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for “excused” will result in a two-point deduction from your final grade. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>
- Group Presentations (x2)* (25% of final grade total) **(ALL)**: At the beginning of the semester students will sign up for two presentation times throughout the semester. In small groups you will lead discussion on a reading or topic for the first half of the class. Presentations will be graded on their coverage of the topic, the thoughtfulness of the discussion questions prepared, and the methods used to present the material. I will provide a rubric at the start of the semester. Please work to make your presentation and discussion engaging through incorporating complementary information, media, and discussion questions as relevant.
- Weekly Response Paper* (15% of final grade) **(ALL)**: These papers serve as a way to reflect on the material read for that week. They are due at the start of class and should be approximately 500 words long. The paper should include any comments, questions, or criticisms you have related to the material, as well as any comments

you want to be sure to cover in the class discussion. These responses should be thoughtful and be your attempt to engage with the material in preparation for class. To be successful, you might want to take some notes while reading, in addition to reflecting on what elements of the assigned readings stuck with you the most after you finish.

- *Midterm Project Website Work* (25% of final grade) **(ALL)**: By the end of week 5 each student will have identified a topic to develop for a class website project on best practices and ethical guidelines in hospital ethnography. Students will then work on assigned sections in order to begin producing content for this website, which will be an on-going project to engage and guide students and scholars conducting research in clinical settings globally. The draft of the website content will be due in week 8 and all content will be revised and posted to the website by week 10. We will work on posting the content in class.
- *Completed IRB Application* **(Grad Students 20% final, Undergrads 10% final grade)**: Through the course of the semester, you will be responsible for preparing an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application for a planned or fictional research project to be carried out in a clinical setting. This will allow for the application of course content related to the methods and ethics of conducting hospital ethnography and is meant to allow you to think through these issues in an applied way. The learning objectives for this assignment are primarily related to thinking through issues presented in the course material such as access to conducting ethnographic research in clinical settings, informed consent, and related methodological and ethical challenges unique to these settings. This assignment goes hand in hand with the final paper which should fully explain the rationale of the proposed project and its scientific/theoretical merits. The graduate students will have a completed IRB application and the undergraduates will have an abridged IRB application with sections we will discuss in class. A template will be available through Canvas. The graduate student assignment is weighted more because they will complete a full IRB application through the UF myIRB website whereas the undergraduates complete an abridged version I provide them in a word doc. The weighting represents the difference in length and complexity for the grad student assignment compared to the undergrad version. Grad students will need to make myIRB accounts and complete any preliminary online trainings to have access to the system for this assignment. You will then add me as the PI so I have access to review your work.
- *Project Narrative to Accompany IRB Application* **(Grad students 5% final grade, Undergrads 15% final)**: This paper should serve to explain the project for which you prepared an IRB application with full discussion of the possible methodological and/or ethical challenges involved and how you have justified them. I will post specific grading rubrics and further assignment details on Canvas. Describe how your hospital ethnography project provides insights into broader societal issues. You must also indicate how the course readings have influenced your approach to

the project. The undergraduates will develop a longer narrative, 10-12 pages, describing a proposed hospital ethnography project. The graduate students will write not more than 5 pages as a supplement to their full IRB application, which will be similar to the required protocol that is often submitted alongside the application in the myIRB system.

Final Grade:

Attendance	5%
Participation	5%
Weekly Response Papers	15%
Group Presentations	25%
Website contribution	25%
IRB Proposal and narrative	25%

All assignments, exams and your participation grade will be calculated using a point system. The grading scale is as follows:

93-100% A	80-82% B-	68-69% D+
90-92% A-	78-79% C+	63-67% D
88-89% B+	73-77% C	60-62% D-
83-87% B	70-72% C-	

Course Policies and UF Resources

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester

Faculty can expect to receive a student's accommodation letter within the first 3 weeks of classes; however, if a student registers with the DRC later in the semester faculty are still obligated to facilitate accommodations. Neither faculty nor administrators may independently deny a request for accommodation that is approved by the Disability Resource Center. I realize life happens, things change, and adjustments are necessary. Please communicate with me early and often about your changing needs and how I can best support your learning.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from

GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Syllabus Statement

This syllabus is subject to change with previous warning as the semester progresses. Any changes will be related to adding current/recent publications in place of older ones or additional assignments to ensure students are completing the reading if this becomes a clear issue.

Weekly Schedule of Topics

All assigned readings are due the day of class and reading responses are due every week by 9:30am on the day of class

Week 1

Jan. 11th Introduction to hospital ethnography

Long, Debbie, Cynthia L. Hunter, and Sjaak van der Geest. 2008. When the field is a ward or a clinic: Hospital ethnography *Anthropology & Medicine* 15(2):71-78.

Finkler, Kaja, Cynthia Hunter, Rick Iedema. 2008. What is Going on?: Ethnography in Hospital Spaces. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37(2):246-250.

Van der Geest, Sjaak and Kaja Finkler. 2004. Hospital Ethnography: introduction. *Social Science & Medicine* 59:1995-2001.

Week 2

Jan. 18th

Where we've come from...: Medical Sociology

Zussman, Robert. 1993. Life in the Hospital: A Review. *The Milbank Quarterly* 71(1):167-185.

Turner, Bryan S. 1995. *Medical Power and Social Knowledge* 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Chapter 7: Professions, Knowledge, and Power

Chapter 8: Medical Bureaucracies: the hospital, the clinic and modern society

Chambliss, Daniel F. 1996. *Beyond Caring: Hospitals, Nurses, and the Social Organization of Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (selections to be announced)

Week 3

Jan. 25th

Where we've come from...: Science and Technology Studies

Street, Alice and Simon Coleman. 2012. Introduction: Real and Imagined Spaces. *Space and Culture* 15(1):4-17.

Latour, Bruno and Steve Woolgar. 1986. *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1.

Mol, Annemarie. 2002. *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*. Durham: Duke University Press. Preface and Chapter 2.

Week 4

Feb. 1st

Methods and ethics part 1

Zaman, Shahaduz. 2008. Native among the Natives: Physician Anthropologist Doing Hospital Ethnography at Home. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37(2):135-154.

Inhorn, Marcia C. 2004. Privacy, privatization, and the politics of patronage: ethnographic challenges to penetrating the secret world of Middle Eastern, hospital-based in vitro fertilization. *Social Science & Medicine* 59:2095-2108.

Van der Geest, Sjaak and Samuel Sarkodie. 1998. The fake patient: A research experiment in a Ghanaian hospital. *Social Science & Medicine* 47(9):1373-1381.

Week 5

Feb. 8th

Methods and ethics part 2

Wind, Gitte. 2008. Negotiated interactive observation: Doing fieldwork in hospital settings. *Anthropology & Medicine* 15(2):79-89.

Sufrin, Carolyn. 'Doctor, Why Didn't You Adopt My Baby?' Observant Participation, Care, and the Simultaneous Practice of Medicine and Anthropology." *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 39:614-33. doi:10.1007/s11013-015-9435-x.

Mulemi, Benson. 2010. Excerpts from his PhD thesis, "Coping with cancer and

adversity: Hospital ethnography in Kenya." Chapter 2: Ethnography Inside and Outside the Hospital.

Website topics due

Weeks 6 and 7

Feb. 15th Maternal Health

1st half of Strong, Adrienne. 2020. *Documenting Death: Maternal Mortality and the Ethics of Care in Tanzania*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Graduate student 1st meeting with Dr. Strong, book 1 discussion

Feb. 22th 2nd half of *Documenting Death*

Week 8 and 9

March 1st Medical Training

1st half of *Becoming Gods*

March 8th 2nd half of *Becoming Gods*

Draft of website content due

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 and 11

March 22nd Infrastructure and Institutions

1st half of Street, Alice. 2014. *Biomedicine in an Unstable Place: Infrastructure and Personhood in a Papua New Guinean Hospital*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Graduate students 2nd meeting with Dr. Strong, book 2 discussion

Revised website content due, class will work to post collectively

March 29th 2nd half of *Biomedicine in an Unstable Place*

Topics for final IRB application and project narrative due

Week 12 and 13

April 5th Movements of Medicine

1st half of *The Traffic of Trauma*

April 12th 2nd half of *The Traffic of Trauma*

Week 14

April 19th Hospitals and place

Macdonald, Alison. 2016. Delivering breast cancer care in urban India: hospital ethnography and voluntarism. *Health & Place* 39:226-232.

Varley, Emma. 2016. Abandonments, Solidarities, and Logics of Care: Hospitals as Sites of Sectarian Conflict in Gilgit-Baltistan. *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 40(2):159-180. (possible Skype discussion with the author)

Tanassi, Lucia. 2004. Compliance as strategy: the importance of personalized relations in obstetric practice. *Social Science & Medicine* 59:2053-2069.

Gerrits, Trudie. 2014. The ambiguity of patient-centered practices: the case of a Dutch fertility clinic. *Anthropology & Medicine* 21(2):125-135.

Sullivan, Noelle. 2012. Enacting Spaces of Inequality: Placing global/state governance within a Tanzanian hospital. *Space and Culture* 15(1):57-67.

Week 15

**April 26th Graduate students 3rd meeting with Dr. Strong, book 3 discussion
Discussions of IRB applications and project narrative**

*** IRB application and project narrative due at midnight on April 26th***