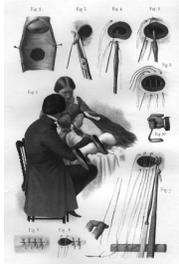


Medical Anthropology in Global Contexts

Professor: Risa Cromer



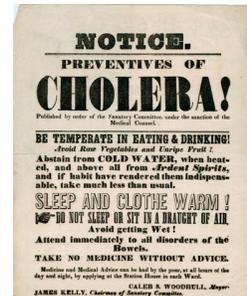
J. Marion Sims repairing a vesico-vaginal fistula with silver wire sutures in 1870.



Thousands killed and many homeless after devastating earthquake in Haiti, 2010



Hmong shaman calling back a soul



Public health notice to prevent spread of cholera

A. Course Description

Medical anthropology involves the study of health, illness and healing across the range of human societies and over the course of human experience. Though health and disease are sometimes thought to be purely biological or “natural” states of being, medical anthropologists examine the way in which cultural meanings, social forces, structural inequalities, historical processes, and bodily knowledges shape experiences with and approaches to health and healing.

In this survey course, we will explore the cultural and historical specificity of what appear to be biological givens, drawing from a variety of anthropological questions, theoretical approaches, and research techniques. We will develop new vocabularies and analytical tools to examine topics across four main Units that: 1) survey foundational approaches within medical anthropology, 2) examine critical perspectives on culture and medicine, 3) explore bodily objects and subjects, and 4) apply anthropology to global problems. Important to our studies will be understanding relationship between illness and inequalities based on race, class, gender, environment, place of origin, etc. We will also approach Western biomedicine as one of many culturally produced medical systems. Course materials draw primarily from anthropology, along with some materials from history, sociology and public health to complement our learning. In general, careful reading, clear writing, and thoughtful, respectful speaking are the most important skills that we will develop.

Course Objectives

More specifically, throughout the course we will aim to meet the following objectives:

1. To understand, use, and relate key concepts and theoretical vocabulary from medical anthropology to case studies within the course and beyond.
2. To cultivate and demonstrate in written, oral, group, and individual work improved critical reading and writing skills.
3. To develop an understanding of the diverse structures and power relations in which health, sickness, and healing are produced, as well as opportunities for resistance and activism.

B. Required Reading

The required books, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, will be available for purchase at the campus bookstore. Articles will be available for electronic download through eRes.

C. Course Expectations

Class Format

This survey course incorporates a mixture of pedagogical strategies, including lecture, group discussion and activities, student presentations, and film. Fundamental to our progress through the course is engaged reading, writing, and discussion. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and come to class prepared to participate in in-depth discussion of the course materials. In-class discussions will provide space not only for further clarifying the required course materials' meanings, but also for exploring their implications for students' own personal, political, and social contexts. Students and the instructor will collaborate to create an active and participatory learning environment. If you would like to further tailor the assignments to your own educational goals, or if there are specific accommodations you need to participate in the course, please feel free to contact me.

Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited and may result in failing grades, suspension, or expulsion. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating on exams or quizzes, as well as plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be notified by the instructor about actions to be taken. Please familiarize yourself with the Student Code of Conduct and visit these websites to familiarize yourself with plagiarism so that you can avoid doing it unwittingly:

<http://www11.georgetown.edu/programs/gervase/hc/plagiarism.html> or
<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>.

Standard Paper Format

All writing assignments (except for those completed in class) should be typed using standard format: 1x1.25 in margins, 12pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and edited for grammar and spelling mistakes. All writing assignments are due in hand at the beginning of class – late or emailed papers will not be accepted.

D. Course Requirements

Participation – 10%

Each of you is an important part of this class. We all bring into the classroom prior knowledge and areas for growth, and can learn a great deal from each other by showing up as fully prepared as we can. Participation is demonstrated when you come to class on time and prepared, ask pertinent questions, respond thoughtfully to classmates, and contribute to an inclusive learning environment. Class discussions should be collegial, accessible, non-hierarchical, and respectful of diversities of all kinds.

Discussion Leadership – 10%

A discussion sign-up sheet will be circulated for students to select a topic of their choice for leading discussion. Students will be assessed on the discussion preparation guide, facilitating a thoughtful lesson plan based on familiarity with the materials, and contributing positively to the conversational dynamics in the classroom.

Fieldnotes – 20%

Students will complete four 2-page assignments that apply course concepts to health, illness, and healing. Assignments are due the last week of each Unit.

Field assignment 1: Anthropology on the Wire: Health Media and News

Field assignment 2: Anthropology at Home: Medicine Cabinet

Field assignment 3: Anthropology on Screen: Critical Film Review

Field assignment 4: Anthropology in the World: Applications

Reading Responses – 12%

Students will post 1 page reading responses to on our course blog prior to the beginning of class during each week of the term. Responses will: summarize the main argument(s) in the reading, raise pertinent questions, and link readings to other ideas from the course. This assignment is designed to help you synthesize the reading material and serve as resources for the arguments you will develop in the course midterm and final.

Position Papers: Midterm and Final – 38%

Students will complete three 3-pg take home essays—one for the Midterm, two for the Final--in response to an open-ended prompt that requires the application of core concepts to ethnographic examples examined so far. These essays should develop an interpretation of your own based on themes and issues from the entire course. Like your reading responses, these are not summaries but *your own views, analyses, and arguments*. Grading rubrics will be distributed in the first week of the course to clarify the grading process and qualities of A-F work.

E. Grading Distribution

Thus, your final grade will be determined by the following:

Participation	10%
Reading Responses	12%
Fieldnotes	20%
Midterm	13%
Final	25%

F. Reading Tips

Keep the following questions in mind as you read and take notes to help you formulate your thoughts for each reading:

- What is the main message or argument the author is trying to convey? Does her/his evidence support it?
- How do the texts relate to each other and to themes we've encountered in class?
- What concepts seem significant, and why?
- What questions are you left with after reading the piece?
- Were there parts of the reading that you found intriguing, troubling, insightful, or informative? Why?
- Do you dis/agree with any points the author made and why?
- Have you had similar experiences to those discussed in the text?

G. Course Schedule

Unit I – Introduction to Medical Anthropology in Global Contexts

Week 1: Thinking Historically, Socially, Systemically about Health

Baer, Hans A., Merrill Singer, and Ida Susser

2003 Introduction. *In* Medical anthropology and the world system. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Farmer, Paul

2005 On Suffering and Violence. *In* Pathologies of power: health, human rights, and the new war on the poor: with a new preface by the author. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Turner, Victor

1967 A Ndembu Doctor in Practice. *In* The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week 2: Medical Anthropology and the Global

Fassin, Didier

2012 That Obscure Object of Global Health. *In* Medical anthropology at the intersections: histories, activisms, and futures. Eds. Inhorn, Marcia, and Emily A. Wentzell. Durham: Duke University Press. Pgs. 95-115.

Cohen, Lawrence

2012 Making Peasants Protestant and Other Projects: Medical Anthropology and its Global Condition. *In* Medical anthropology at the intersections: histories, activisms, and futures. Eds. Inhorn, Marcia, and Emily A. Wentzell. Durham: Duke University Press. Pgs. 65-94.

UNIT II– Culture, Medicine, Healing – Questioning Core Concepts

Week 3: Understanding Biomedicine

Fadiman, Anne

1997 The spirit catches you and you fall down: a Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Ch 1-7.

Singer, Merrill, and Hans A. Baer

2012 Medical Pluralism in the Contemporary World. *In* Introducing medical anthropology : a discipline in action. Lanham, Md.: AltaMira Press.

Week 4: Troubling Culture

Fadiman, Anne

1997 The spirit catches you and you fall down: a Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Ch 8-13

Taylor, Janelle S.

2003 The Story Catches You and You Fall Down: Tragedy, Ethnography, and “Cultural Competence.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 17(2):159-181.

Film: Split Horn

Week 5: Healers

Fadiman, Anne

1997 The spirit catches you and you fall down : a Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Ch 14-19.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude

1963 The Sorcerer and His Magic. *In* Structural anthropology. New York: Basic Books.

Brown, Patricia Lee

2009 A Doctor for Disease, a Shaman for the Soul. *In* New York Times. New York. Sept 19.

Fox, Margalit

2012 Life Went on Around Her, Redefining Care. *In* New York Times. New York. Sept 14.

UNIT III – Body Objects, Embodied Subjects: Foundations and Futures

Week 6: Wholes and Parts

Skloot, Rebecca

2009 The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks. New York: Crown Publishers. Part 1

Rabinow, Paul

1996 Severing the Ties: Fragmentation and Dignity in Late Modernity. *In* Essays on the Anthropology of Reason. P. Rabinow, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sharp, Lesley Alexandra

2000 The Commodification of the Body and Its Parts. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29:287-328.

Week 7: Gendered and Racialized Bodies

Skloot, Rebecca

2009 The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks. New York: Crown Publishers. Part 2.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff

1992 Medicine, Colonialism and the Black Body. *In* *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*. Pg. 215-234. Boulder: Westview Press.

Kapsalis, Terri

1997 Mastering the Female Pelvis: Race and the Tools of Reproduction. *In* *Public privates: performing gynecology from both ends of the speculum*. Pg. 31-59. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 8: Genetic Bodies, Immortal Cells: Kin in your Genes?

Skloot, Rebecca

2009 The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks. New York: Crown Publishers. Part 3

Sharp, Lesley Alexandra

2001 Commodified Kin: Death, Mourning and Competing Claims on the Bodies of Organ Donors in the United States. *American Anthropologist* 103(1):112-133.

Everett, Margaret

2007 The 'I' in the gene: Divided property, fragmented personhood, and the making of a genetic privacy law. *American Ethnologist* 34(2):375-386.

UNIT IV – Medical Anthropology at the Intersections

Week 9: Epidemics

Briggs, Charles L., and Clara Mantini-Briggs

2003 Stories in the time of cholera: racial profiling during a medical nightmare. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction and Ch 9

Horgan, John

2014 Ebola “Fear Mongering” Critiqued by Medical Anthropologist. *Scientific American*, September 3, blog entry.

Lydersen, Kari

2014 Ebola Teams Need Better Cultural Understanding, Anthropologists Say. *Discover Magazine*, Dec 9, blog entry.

<http://www.ebola-anthropology.net/>

Week 10: Culture and Madness

Luhrmann, Tanya M.

2000 Of two minds: the growing disorder in American psychiatry. New York: Knopf. Introduction and Ch 1.

Kleinman, Arthur

2009 Global mental health: A failure of humanity. *Lancet* 374(9690): 603-604.

Kleinman, Arthur

2012 Medical Anthropology and Mental Health: Five Questions for the Next Fifty Years. *In Medical anthropology at the intersections : histories, activisms, and futures.* Eds. Inhorn, Marcia, and Emily A. Wentzell. Durham: Duke University Press. Pgs. 116-128.

Week 11: Environment, Exposure, Citizenship

Farmer, Paul

2005 A Plague on All Our Houses? *In Pathologies of power: health, human rights, and the new war on the poor.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Petryna, Adriana

2002 Life exposed: biological citizens after Chernobyl. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch 1, 4, 5.

Epstein, Helen

2003 Ghetto Miasma: Enough to Make You Sick? *In New York Times.* New York. Oct 12

Film: In Sickness and In Wealth, Place Matters

Week 12: Activisms: Applying Medical Anthropology to Global Matters

Singer, Merrill

2012 Medical Anthropology and Public Policy: Using Research to Change the World from What it is to What We Believe it Should Be. *In* Medical anthropology at the intersections: histories, activisms, and futures. Eds. Inhorn, Marcia Claire, and Emily A. Wentzell. Durham: Duke University Press. Pgs. 183-205.

Parker, Richard

2012 Critical Intersections and Engagements: Gender, Sexuality, Health, and Rights in Medical Anthropology. *In* Medical anthropology at the intersections: histories, activisms, and futures. Eds. Inhorn, Marcia Claire, and Emily A. Wentzell. Durham: Duke University Press. Pgs. 206-238.