

ANTH 5336: Health in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Fall 2020

Professor: Dr. Neely Myers

Professor Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10-11 AM or by appointment

Course Time: Wednesdays, 2-450 PM



Photo: Hamatsa, a Kwakiutl Shaman, Vancouver Island, 1914

Professor: Dr. Neely Myers

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Office: Zoom only

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10 AM to 11 AM or by appointment

****Statement of Alliance****

I stand with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the fight against racialized injustice and inequality. As a socially conscious scholar, I condemn all acts of racism, xenophobia, and police brutality which have profound consequences for communities of color. I recognize that the field of Anthropology emerged from racist colonial origins and legacies, and though it was also the first discipline with practitioners who recognized the meaninglessness and insidious nature of the race concept (which we will learn about), I still must and will strive to do more to combat historical, systemic, and institutionalized oppression. Given this, I affirm a commitment to use my academic and applied efforts to examine critically and transform the

deeply entrenched institutional sources of race-based inequality. Through my work and within my department and university, I commit to examining the imbalances of power in society that lead to racialized violence; to promoting actively anti-racist practices; to elevating the voices of scholars and communities of color; and to conduct my work in more just and equitable ways.

Course Overview

Medical anthropology is a multi-faceted sub-field of socio-cultural anthropology, which examines causes, consequences, and experiences of health and disease in historical, cultural, political, and economic context and addresses key issues in local and global health. In this course, we will examine key approaches to the diverse field of medical anthropology, including biocultural and ecological, political economy and critical, and interpretive and phenomenological approaches. In addition to foundational theoretical frameworks, we will examine recent developments in the field. Central topics include: health care systems as cultural systems; illness experiences, beliefs and behaviors; global health disparities; and, medical pluralism. Students will also be introduced to research methodologies in medical anthropology. We will compare and contrast case examples from non-Western contexts and western contexts as a vehicle to gain critical perspectives on health and illness in the world.

Student Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Explain the history and rise to prominence of the field of medical anthropology, both within anthropology as a whole, and as a social scientific discipline engaged with public health, medicine, epidemiology and applied work.
- 2) Recognize and be able to discuss the major theoretical perspectives and approaches within medical anthropology and explain several of the major and most influential works from those perspectives.
- 3) Have a diverse set of specific cases upon which they can base an informed and critical discussion of medical anthropology, research methods, interdisciplinary goals and functions of the profession.

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the SMU Bookstore. I am also placing them on reserve at the library. Books with an * are on reserve as an e-book with unlimited electronic users this semester. Simply look them up at the library and check them out. We will read most of the text of the books listed here, which is why I suggest you make sure you have access to your own copy available for class and use but a digital version is fine. All readings that are not in these books are available on Canvas and are also marked with an * in the syllabus.

Efforts are being made by the academy to recognize the need to amplify and promote work by scholars who identify black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) in order to broaden the perspectives being offered in any given class. I have attempted to add diverse perspectives here, including perspective on colonialism and medicine. However, there are regrettably few BIPOC represented on this syllabus. If you have suggestions for readings that would work in future versions of this syllabus, please let me know. Hearing about everyday experience from a variety of perspective is an important part of learning to live responsibly and make decisions in a diverse world.

Briggs and Mantini-Briggs. 2016. *Tell me why my children died: rabies, indigenous knowledge, and communicative justice*. Duke University Press.* [unlimited e-book has been ordered]

Desjarlais, Robert. 1992. *Body and Emotion: The Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas*. University of Pennsylvania Press.*

Good, Byron, et al. 2010. *A Reader in Medical Anthropology: Theoretical Trajectories, Emergent Realities*. Wiley-Blackwell. (listed as **READER** in the syllabus, must be purchased)

Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition*. Perseus Books.(not available electronically, must be purchased)

Langwick, Stacey A. 2011. *Bodies, Politics and African Healing: The Matter of Maladies in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press.*

Livingston, Julie. 2012. *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic*. Duke University Press.

Marchant, Jo. 2016. *Cure: A Journey into the Since of Mind over Body*. Random House LLC. (only one copy of e-book available, must be purchased)

Myers, Neely. 2015. *Recovery's Edge: An Ethnography of Mental Health Care and Moral Agency*.* Vanderbilt University Press.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Covid-19 Attendance Statement: Students who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who have been notified through contact tracing of potential exposure and need to self-quarantine or isolate must follow the protocols laid out in [SMU's Contact Tracing Protocol](#). To ensure academic continuity, students in these situations will not be penalized and will be provided appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and testing.

To ensure these necessary accommodations, affected students must:

- Provide as much advance notification as possible to the instructor about a change in circumstances. Students must notify their instructor about a potential absence as well as plans for a return to class. For cases in which students test positive for COVID-19, they should fill out a [CCC form at this link](#).
- Communicate promptly with the instructor to establish, as necessary, alternative assignments and/or changes to deadlines and exams. Students are then responsible for meeting the expectations laid out in these alternative arrangements.
- Continue participation in class via Zoom, as health circumstances permit.
- Students facing multiple or extended COVID-19-related absences or illness can work with the Office of the Dean of Students to consider options such as fully remote learning or medical withdrawal.

This policy, aligned with the [SMU Honor Code](#) and the SMU [Pledge to Protect](#), relies on mutual trust and respect between students and faculty to ensure safety, academic integrity, and instructional continuity.

Caring Community Connections (CCC) program: This is a resource for anyone in the SMU community to refer students of concern to the Office of the Dean of Students. Faculty play a critical role in identifying students who are experiencing challenges, as you may be the first to notice a change in behavior such as class attendance or performance. The online referral form can be found at smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc. After a referral is submitted, students will be contacted to discuss the concern, strategize options, and be connected to appropriate resources. Additionally, should you have concerns about students and are unclear about what to do, please see the [CCC Reference Guide](#), or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 214-768-4564.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/SASP/DASS> to begin the process. Once approved and registered, students will submit a DASS Accommodation Letter to faculty through the electronic portal *DASS Link* and then communicate directly with each instructor to make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See policy [here](#).) **Please notify the TA in writing before September 4, 2020.**

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (See [2020-2021 SMU Undergraduate Catalog](#) under "Enrollment and Academic Records/Excused Absences.")

Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to embrace and uphold the [SMU Honor Code \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Violations of the Honor Code will be acted upon in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the [Mustang Student Handbook \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Students who do not will receive a 0 on the assignment in question. If a student is caught engaging in academic dishonesty on more than one occasion, further disciplinary actions will be sought.

Student Academic Success Programs: Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through Canvas. Students wishing support with subject-specific tutoring or success strategies should contact SASP, Loyd All Sports Center, Suite 202; 214-768-3648; <https://www.smu.edu/sasp>.

Statement for Pregnant and Parenting Students: Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students: Under Title IX students who are pregnant or parenting may request academic adjustments by contacting Elsie Johnson (elsiej@smu.edu) in the Office of the Dean of Students, or by calling 214-768-4564. Students seeking assistance must schedule an appointment with their professors as early as possible, present a letter from the Office of the

Dean of Students, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that academic adjustments are not retroactive and, when feasible, require advance notice to implement.

MY COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Please do your best to attend class. Given that the class is remote, I hope this will enable many more of you to attend in a steady way. Please plan to have your camera and sound on at any given point during the class. If you are absent, please review the Zoom recording for that day or any other materials. These will be uploaded on Canvas.

If you are absent or miss class, you have the following options, all of which affect your participation grade:

- 1) Submit a doctor's note for your absence. Receive a 2/2 for participation on those days. Talk to the professor about how to make up work missed.
- 2) No doctor's note needed up to two times IF you submit a make up review of the readings within two weeks of your absence. Receive a 2/2 for participation on those days. Please discuss this plan with Dr. Myers as soon as is possible after your absence.
- 3) If you have no doctor's note and #2 is no longer an option, you will receive a 0/2 for participation on the days you are absent. This will negatively impact your final grade.
- 4) If you miss more than six days of class and cannot provide a doctor's note and do not turn in a discussion post, I will attempt to reach out to you to understand the situation, but it is very likely that you will be asked to withdraw from the class.

Late Assignments

Please ask permission for an extension at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. I am always happy to work with you, but appreciate advance notice. If you do not ask in advance, please expect to lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every 12 hours that the assignment is late. (e.g., A to A-). Reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss a plan of action to get you back on track.

Statement on Communication

You may contact me via email or the Canvas inbox. I will respond to your question or email within 24 hours during the regular week (not Saturday and Sunday).

Assignments will be graded within 7-10 business days of the assignment due date. My grading timeline might be delayed, especially if I or my family become sick this semester. We will all need to be patient with each other.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Attendance (10%): This is a discussion-based seminar. Therefore, it is crucial that you not only attend but that you actively participate in the Zoom discussions. If you must be absent for some reason, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance and we can discuss whether or not it will be an excused absence. Late students will be marked late in Canvas.

Class Participation (10%) A participation grade will be recorded after each class based on your engagement with the class discussion and readings. You will receive a 0 (present but did not participate); 1 (present with partial participation); or 2 (present, actively listening, engaged in conversation). This can make a difference between you receiving an A and a B. One way to participate is the following: for each class, I ask that you look for popular examples of what you have read in the recent news to share with the class at the beginning of class. We will share using screen sharing in Zoom. Please limit your “sharing” item to 2-3 minutes at the most. Film clips, etc., should be limited to 2-3 minutes. Sharing will be an important part of your participation grade. If you don’t like talking, please come to my office hours so we can discuss alternative strategies.

Response Papers (30%): Due each week via Canvas by 9 AM the day of class, unless you are facilitating that week or you have a major assignment due (e.g., your project proposal). Responses should be one page, double-spaced--no more, no less-- and draw on at least one of the readings. You may incorporate the item you plan to use for Show and Tell, as well. Responses will be graded as follows: 0-no response; 1-does not incorporate a response to readings or is poorly written or organized; 2- incorporates a response to the readings, is written well and organized.

Final Research Paper (35%): Deadlines are listed on the syllabus. This is a major research paper where you use key concepts from the course to examine a health-related issue or body of literature pertinent to the course. You must submit a proposal to me (see syllabus for deadline) and obtain my approval. Graduate students: 20-25 pages. Undergraduates: 10-15 pages. Please use a standard citation and bibliographic format, 1-inch margins all around, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font. We will meet to discuss your topic in late October. You will also workshop your rough drafts with your peers. The draft should represent a substantial amount of the work to be done on the paper. The stronger your paper is at that point, the better the commentary of your peers will be, and the stronger it will be in the end.

The general principles for all honest writing can be summarized briefly.

Acknowledge indebtedness/use a citation:

1. Whenever you quote another person’s actual words.
2. Whenever you use another person’s idea, opinion, or theory, even if it is completely paraphrased in your own words.
3. Whenever you borrow facts, statistics, or other illustrative material - unless the information is common knowledge.

Plagiarism also encompasses the notions of citing quotations and materials from secondary sources that were not directly consulted in the preparation of the student’s work, and copying the organizational and argumentation structure of a work without acknowledging its author.

Facilitation (10%) You will sign up to facilitate the class discussion with a partner **two times** during the semester if you are an undergraduate and **three times** for graduate students. Your preparation for these presentations is absolutely crucial to the richness of our discussion for the day. You will want to prepare with your co-facilitators, likely by reading in advance and meeting

together to discuss your strategy. You will need to synthesize (but not summarize) key points you found across the readings, discuss points of connection and disconnection you found across the readings, and bring provocative questions to the table to stimulate discussion about the readings. Your main goal is to help foment discussion. Creativity is encouraged: feel free to prompt discussion with relevant information and questions via images, PowerPoint, film clips, etc. Please plan to facilitate for 60-75 minutes total as a team, and be prepared to be flexible if the timing shifts. For each week, I have provided some ideas for facilitators to help you get started, but you are by no means restricted to the provided prompt. We will sign up for dates on the first day of class. Also, note that there is a rubric on Canvas to help you plan your facilitation.

Final Presentation (5%) You will present your research paper at the end of the semester on the last day of class. Your presentation will include a brief PowerPoint and an overview of your argument and findings. Your presentation should be 8-10 minutes leaving 4-5 minutes for questions. We have to stick to time to make sure everyone has a chance to present during class time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

At the moment, I am planning to have up to one hour of “Show and Tell” (see participation) and around 75-90 minutes of discussion about films and readings. We will try to see what works best for everyone given the intensity of Zoom conversation. I am planning for a 2.5 hour class with two 10-15 minute breaks--one per hour.

Week 1: Wednesday, August 26. Course Overview and Introductions

- “Introduction” READER: p. 1-6
- Part I, “Introduction: Setting the Stage: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Medical Anthropology” READER: p. 9-14
- In-Class Film: *Second Opinion with T. R. Reid: Inside Ayurvedic Medicine* 2008 (53 minutes) https://fod-infobase-com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=40616

Week 2: Wednesday, September 2. Ethics and Methods for Medical Anthropologists

- Myers, *Recovery’s Edge*. Read pgs. 1-86. Focus your reading on the ethics of the fieldwork, not necessarily the characters of activities of recovery.
- American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics (3 pages): <http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/>
- **View-at-Home Film for Class: *Maasai Women (55 minutes)* (link forthcoming)**
- Bring 3 questions to class regarding ethical issues you may notice in Recovery’s Edge or Maasai Women
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Be prepared to facilitate the ethics discussion about Recovery’s Edge and Maasai Women using the American Anthropological Association Code of Ethics as a guide.

Week 3: Wednesday, September 9. Antecedents of Medical Anthropology: Colonialism and “Beliefs” in Health Care

- **View-at-Home Film for Class: *Witchcraft among the Azande***

<http://proxy.libraries.smu.edu/login?url=https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=104130&xtd=49236>

- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" CH. 2 READER
- Good, Byron, Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief, CH. 8 READER
- Paul, Benjamin "The Role of Beliefs and Customs in Sanitation Programs" CH. 6 READER
- Langwick, *Bodies, Politics and African Healing*, Part I, pgs. 39-84
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Be prepared to help us understand how Byron Good's views on belief are useful for thinking about the Azande (as described in Evans-Pritchard's article) and how this applies to public health models (as presented in Paul, Benjamin). What does Langwick add to the mix? The film is an illustration—actual film footage-- of what Evans-Pritchard is describing. How does your perspective of the film shift as you read Langwick, Good and Paul? This week's readings represent a historical progression of ideas in medical anthropology within shifting political contexts, so please be sure to take this into consideration.

Week 4: Wednesday, September 16. Centrality of Meaning: Explanatory Models, Illness Narratives and Stigmas

- "Part II: Illness and Narrative, Body and Experience: Introduction" READER: 79-84
- Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition*. Basic Books. Ch. 1, 2, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 *
- Mattingly and Garro, Chapters 4 and 7. Hunt, "Strategic Suffering" and Kirmayer, "Broken Narratives"*
- Langwick, Ch 6, "Alternative Materialities," p. 151-174*
- Mattingly, CH 3: Border Trouble, from *The Paradox of Hope**
- **View-at-Home Film for Class: The Bird Dancer (40 minutes)***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjTNDnFddQk>
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Use The Bird Dancer and examples from Mattingly, Hunt, Kirmayer, and Langwick, to help illuminate Kleinman's arguments about illness narratives including the power of narrative and the role of stigma in notions of health and health care.
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Week 5: Wednesday, September 23. Therapeutics, Embodiment and Phenomenology

- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy, and Margaret M. Lock. 1987. The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 1(1): 6-41(35 pages)*
- Sobo, Elisa J. and Martha O. Loustaunau 2010 "Therapeutic Modalities: A Cross-Cultural Perspective" *The Cultural Context of Health, Illness and Medicine* 2nd Edition. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. Ch. 4: pp. 73-110.*
- Robert Desjarlais, Body and Emotion: The Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas, Part I, 1-35, 63-89, 135-156
- **View-at-home film for class: Macumba (one hour)** (link forthcoming)
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Be sure to clearly illustrate and talk about the individual body, the social body, and the body politic from Scheper-Hughes and Lock. Also, consider some of the terminologies on offer in Sobo and Loustanau on therapeutic modalities. Then consider how these are or are not becoming evident in Desjarlais' work on embodiment. How does this ethnography bring some of these terms to life? How do we see some of these elements playing out in Macumba?

Week 6: Wednesday, September 30: Medical Pluralism, Part I

- Baer, et al, Biomedical Hegemony in the Context of Medical Pluralism*
- Robert Desjarlais, Body and Emotion: The Aesthetics of Illness and Healing in the Nepal Himalayas, Part II, p. 159-253
- Langwick, Chapters 7 and 8, p. 175-231
- No film this week—lots of reading!
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Compare and contrast the intersections of biomedicine and traditional medicine in Langwick's account and Desjarlais' account. How are they similar or different? What does this tell us about the future of medical pluralism?

Week 7: Wednesday, October 7: What is the Meaning Response in Medicine?

- Kaptchuck, The Placebo Effect in Alternative Medicine: Can the Performance of a Healing Ritual Have Clinical Significance?
- Marchant, Cure. Read the entire book (it's good!), and definitely at least xii through 111.
- Cannon, Voodoo Death* (13 pages)
- Bring in one example of this from popular media and one from scholarly literature and be prepared to present/discuss with the class.
- No film this week—lots of reading!
- *Facilitation Leaders*: What do Marchant and Kaptchuk have to teach us about the interaction between the mind, body and medicine? What kinds of medicine? And what does Cannon's narrative add to this conversation?

Week 8: Wednesday, October 14: Medical Pluralism, Part II--Making Health: Case Study of Cancer Treatment in Botswana

- Kleinman, Arthur. 1988. *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing, and the Human Condition*. Basic Books. Ch. 14: "The Healers: Varieties of Experience in Doctoring"*
- Julie Livingston, *Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic*, pgs. 1-92
- **View-at-Home Film for Class: The Legacy of Menla (link forthcoming)**
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Compare and contrast some of the methods for making people healthy described in Kleinman, Livingston, and the film *Legacy of Menla*.

Week 9: Wednesday, October 21: No Class. Mental Health Day.

FINAL PAPER PROPOSALS DUE at 5 PM, October 21st.

Please include:

- **Main research question(s)**
- **Why are these questions important in medical anthropology?**
- **How will you answer these questions?**
- **What scholarly and other materials will you draw from to answer your questions?**
- **Articulate clearly your hypothesis/hypotheses.**

***Dr. Myers will provide you with feedback at this stage. You will have individual meetings with her that can be scheduled starting October 26th.**

Week 10: Wednesday, October 28: Global Health and the Limits of Biomedicine

- Livingston, *Improvising Medicine*, pgs. 93-181
- **View-at-home Film: In the Shadow of Ebola**
https://fod-infobase-com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=94223&tScript=0

- *Facilitation Leaders*: Discuss the rest of Langwick's book, keeping in mind what you have learned so far about medical pluralism. What might some of the lessons be for public health and global health efforts? Compare the cancer epidemic to ebola and consider what they might learn from each other.

Week 11: Wednesday, November 4. Structural Violence and Health Inequities: A Case Study from Venezuela

- Virchow, Rudolf "The Charity Physician" Ch. 5 **READER**
- Farmer, Pathologies of Power, pp.25-50
- **View-at-Home Film: A Clearing in the Jungle**
https://fod-infobase-com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=49221&tScript=0
- Briggs and Mantini-Briggs, 2019. *Tell Me Why My Children Died*. Discuss first ½ book.
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Concepts and ideas introduced in Farmer and Virchow, as well as our earlier discussions of medical pluralism, will help you discuss the first half of this book showing how medical anthropology can play a valuable role in epidemiological investigations.

Week 12: Wednesday, November 11. Structural Violence and Health Inequalities: A Case Study from Venezuela

- Briggs and Mantini-Briggs, 2019. *Tell Me Why My Children Died*. Discuss second ½ book.
- **View-at-Home Film: TBA**
- *Facilitation Leaders*: Continue to discuss the role of medical anthropology in modern public health and epidemiology.

Week 13: Wednesday, November 18: Research Writing Workshop

****Rough draft of final paper due is due at 9 AM on Wednesday, November 18th.****

Send to Professor Myers via email as well as to your assigned classmates by this time. Use in-class time to review your assigned classmates' drafts and give substantive comments. Post your comments on others' papers to Professor Myers as your weekly response. During class time, you should also discuss your comments with your classmates. Professor Myers will not be attending this class nor providing comments at this time.

Week 14: Wednesday, November 25: NO CLASS. Thanksgiving Break.

Week 15: Wednesday, December 2: LAST CLASS.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS

10-minutes of presentation with 5 minutes of Q and A per student

****FINAL PAPER DUE: December 11, 2020, at 5 PM.****