

Anthropology 740: Biocultural Synthesis

Dr. Tina Moffat

Term 2, 2019, CNH 307

Wednesdays, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm (1st class: Wednesday Jan 9th – please come to first class prepared to discuss assigned readings)

Themes and Goals

In 1998, with their book entitled "Building a New Biocultural Synthesis", Alan Goodman and Thomas Leatherman challenged Biological Anthropology to broaden its theoretical scope to include political economy and political ecology – in short to become a more critical sub-discipline within Anthropology – reflexively analyzing the historical and cultural influences on our theory and methodology.

In this seminar, we begin by critically examining the roots of the biocultural approach by exploring various theoretical frameworks from biological and medical anthropology that address the interplay between biology, culture, and health. We will then continue to explore emerging themes and uses of biocultural frameworks in health studies and biological anthropology. We cover a wide variety of the following theoretical approaches and topics including: critical perspectives in medical anthropology, the environment, bodies and embodiment, race and racism, life history and life course theory, and the developmental origins of health and disease.

Class Organization

The course is organized as a seminar. There will be no formal lecture; participants will be expected to have done the appropriate readings, set the agenda and contribute to the discussion. On the final day of class we will hold a mini-research symposium.

Evaluation

Evaluations will be based on four components: 1) class participation (15%); 2) facilitation of one seminar (10%); 3) reflection on 3 course articles (15%); 4) paper proposal (5%); 5) a class presentation of your final paper (part of mini-symposium) (20%); 5) a final paper (35%).

Participants are to develop a research term paper around one or more of the themes in the course. This can be related to your own research interests and may even take the form of a research proposal if it is useful to you. The course articles reflection paper (3 pages, double-spaced max) is due on February 13, 2019. The paper proposal will be due by February, 27 2019. I expect it to be a formal proposal (2 pages, double-space max.) that will give me an opportunity to give you feedback on your proposed paper/research proposal as well as on your writing style.

The final presentation will be based on your research paper. The symposium will be held on the last class. It will be presented in conference style (total length 20 minutes with 15 minutes for

presentation and 5 minutes for questions). The final paper will be due after receiving feedback on the oral presentation. Final papers will be due in April (date TBA).

Readings (Please note that this is a provisional list - some readings and seminar topics may change depending on class interest.)

Articles and book chapters not available online from Mills library will be available as pdfs.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Jan 9 - What is biocultural anthropology and how does it fit into Anthropology?

Zuckerman, MK and Martin, DL. (2016) *New Directions in Biocultural Anthropology*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. Introduction, pp. 7-28. Book Available as an ebook in Mills Library.

Goodman, AH (2013) Bringing culture into human biology and biology back into anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 115(3): 359-373.

Wiley, AS and Cullin, JM (2016) What do anthropologists mean when they use the term biocultural? *American Anthropologist* 118(3): 554-569.

Jan 16 – Biology and its intersection with political economy and power

Farmer, P. (2004) An Anthropology of Structural Violence. *Current Anthropology* 45(3): 305-325.

Singer, M. (2004) Critical Medical Anthropology. In *Encyclopedia of Medical Anthropology: Health and Illness in the World's Cultures*. Vol. 1:23-30. Carol Ember and Melvin Ember, (eds). New York: Kluwer.

Mendenhall, E. (2017) Non-communicable disease syndemics: poverty, depression, and diabetes among low-income populations. *The Lancet*, March 4, 389: 951-963.

Jan 23 – The body and embodiment

Krieger, N (2004) Embodiment: A conceptual glossary for epidemiology. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 59: 350-355.

Scheper-Hughes, N and Lock, M (1987) The mindful body: A prolegomenon to future work. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1 (1): 6-41.

Sofaer, JR (2006) Chapter 4. Material Bodies. In *The Body as Material Culture. A Theoretical Osteoarchaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jan 30 – Sex and gender

Geller, PL (2008) Conceiving Sex. Fomenting a feminist bioarchaeology. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8(1): 113-138.

Fausto-Sterling (2005) The Bare Bones of Sex: Part 1 – Sex and Gender. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(2): 1481-1526.

Stone, PK (2016) Biocultural perspectives on maternal mortality and obstetrical death from past to present. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 159: S150–S171.

Feb 6 – Biocultural approaches to examining health issues related to socioeconomic status and identity in the past

Blakey, ML and Rankin-Hill, LM (2016) Chapter 6. Political economy of African forced migration and enslavement in colonial New York: an historical biology perspective, pp. 107-132. In *New Directions in Biocultural Anthropology*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. Book Available as an ebook in Mills Library.

Brickley, M.B., Moffat, T, Watamaniuk, L. (2014) Biocultural perspectives of vitamin D deficiency in the past. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 36: 48-59.

Widmer, RJ and Storey, R (2016) The cuisine of prehispanic Central Mexico reconsidered: the “omnivore’s dilemma” revisited, pp. 259-276. In *New Directions in Biocultural Anthropology*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. Book Available as an ebook in Mills Library.

Feb 13 – Article reflections paper due Chronic and Infectious Disease

Creary, M.S. (2018) Biocultural citizenship and embodying exceptionalism: Biopolitics for sickle cell disease in Brazil. *Social Science and Medicine* 199: 123-131.

Zuckerman, MK, Belanich, JR, and Armelagos, GJ (2016) The hygiene hypothesis and the second epidemiologic transition: using biocultural, epidemiological, and evolutionary theory to inform practice in clinical medicine and public health. In: *New Directions in Biocultural Anthropology*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. Book Available as an ebook in Mills Library.

Marciniak, S., Prowse, TL, Herring, DA, Klunk, J, Kuch, M, Duggan, AT, Bondioli, L, Holmes, EC, and Poinar, HN (2016) Plasmodium falciparum malaria in 1st-2nd century CE southern Italy. *Current Biology* 26(23): R1205-R1225.

Feb 20 – Mid-term Recess – no class!

Feb 27 – Final paper proposals due

Local biologies and life course approaches

Niewohner, J. and Lock, M (2018) Situating local biologies: Anthropological perspectives on environment/human entanglements. *BioSocieties* 13: 681-697.

Prowse, T. (2010) Diet and dental health through the life course in Roman Italy. In, SC Agarwal and B Glencross (eds.): *The Handbook of Social Bioarchaeology*. Wiley-Blackwell Press.

Yoav, B, and Kuh, D (2002) A life course approach to chronic disease epidemiology: conceptual models, empirical challenges and interdisciplinary perspectives. *International journal of epidemiology* 31: 285-293.

Mar 6 – Developmental Origins of Health and Disease and epigenetics

Kuzawa, CW and EA Quinn (2009). Developmental origins of Adult Function and Health: Evolutionary Hypotheses. *Annual Reviews of Anthropology* 38: 131-147.

Lock, M (2015) Comprehending the Body in the Era of the Epigenome. *Current Anthropology* Volume 56(2): 151-176.

Gowland, RL (2015) Entangled Lives: Implications of the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease Hypothesis for Bioarchaeology and the Life Course. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 158:530–540.

Mar 13 – Nutritional Anthropology

Turner, BL and Thompson, AL (2013) Beyond the Paleolithic prescription: incorporating diversity and flexibility in the study of human diet evolution. *Nutrition Reviews* 71(8):501–510.

Wiley, AS (2007) The globalization of cow's milk production and consumption: biocultural perspectives. *Ecology of food and nutrition* 46: 281-312.

Moffat, T. and Thrasher, D. (2016) School Meal Programs and their Potential to Operate as School-Based Obesity Prevention and Nutrition Interventions: Case Studies from France and Japan. *Critical Public Health* 26(2): 133-146

Mar 20 – Biocultural Views on Race, racism, and health

Kuzawa. CW and Gravlee, CC (2016) Chapter 5. Beyond genetic race: biocultural insights into the causes of racial health disparities, pp. 89-105. In *New Directions in Biocultural Anthropology*. Hoboken New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. Book Available as an ebook in Mills Library.

Creary, MS (2017) Biocultural citizenship and embodying exceptionalism: Biopolitics for sickle cell disease in Brazil. *Social Science and Medicine*. Article in press. 1-9.

Mar 27 – Your topic choice!

Apr 3 – Mini-symposium – paper presentations