

Anthropology 3H13 – Health, Healing, and Illness
Winter 2019
Thursdays 7:00 – 10:00
CNH B107

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Plett

Email: plettra@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays 5:30 – 6:30 p.m., CNH 515

Overview and Objectives:

This course will examine the fundamental themes, theories, and debates in the field of medical anthropology. By examining a variety of topics related to these concepts through readings, digital resources, and discussion of particular case studies, students will have the opportunity to gain a critical awareness of the social meanings of illness, anthropologies of the body, and how illness is understood, experienced, and treated across cultural contexts. We will examine the literature in medical anthropology over four units; over the course of the semester, students will become familiar with the antecedents of the anthropological study of medicine and healing, and its broad theories of the body; the rich ethnographic literature on life events; how technology and narratives shape understandings of health; and how anthropologists engage with globalization and post-colonial realities and their impacts on illness, bodies, and health.

Required texts:

All course materials can either be downloaded from McMaster library (articles) or, as indicated in the course schedule, found on Avenue (book chapters).

Learning Assessments:

Your grade will be evaluated based on the following:

Online Discussion Forum (3)	30% (Each forum worth 10%)
Final Exam (Date TBD)	30% OR 40%
Unit Syntheses (either 3 OR 4)	30% OR 40% at 10% each

- For the online discussion forum, the class will be divided into groups of 6-8. For each of the three forums held throughout the semester (see course schedule for dates), a discussion question based on the films and media watched in lecture will be posed. Students will have the opportunity to respond to the question directly, as well as to the

responses provided by fellow group members. Grading will be based on the detailed rubric posted on Avenue, and all forums will take place on Avenue.

- The Final Exam will be 90 minutes in length, and multiple-choice and true/false format. It will cover material from the entire semester - lectures, readings, and films.
- Unit Syntheses: For each of the four units, you will write a 3-4 page synthesis of the materials covered, looking for themes across the readings and lecture materials. A detailed description of how to write a synthesis will be provided on Avenue and discussed in the first class.

You also have the option of shifting 10% of the weight of your final grade between the syntheses and the final exam – if you feel like you are stronger at writing exams, you may choose to write only THREE unit syntheses (whichever units you prefer for a total of 30% at 10% each) and having the Final worth 40%; OR you can write FOUR syntheses (worth 40% at 10% each) and having the Final only worth 30%.

All papers are to be submitted on DropBox by 7:00 p.m. (the beginning of class) the day they are due. **Late papers without acceptable documentation** (see below) **will not be accepted**. Papers submitted via the Avenue to Learn dropbox will be evaluated for originality using Turnitin.com.

Topic and Reading Schedule

UNIT 1: ANTHROPOLOGIES OF MEDICINE

January 10: Introduction and Antecedents

Read: Byron J. Good 1994 “Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief” in *Medicine, Rationality, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (ON AVENUE)

January 17: Ethnomedical Systems

Read: George Foster 1976 “Disease etiologies in non-Western medical systems.” *American Anthropologist* 78(4): 773-782.

January 24: The Construction of the Body

Read: Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock 1987 “The mindful body: a prolegomenon for future work in anthropology” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(1).

Emily Martin 1990 “Toward an anthropology of immunology: the body as nation state” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4(4): 410-426

UNIT 2: EMBODIMENT AND THE LIFE COURSE

January 31: Birth

Synthesis 1 Due

Read: Robbie Davis-Floyd 1987 "The technological model of birth" *Journal of American Folklore* 100(398): 479-495.

Patricia Kaufert and John O'Neil "Analysis of a dialogue on risks in childbirth: clinicians, epidemiologists, and Inuit women" In *Knowledge, Power, and Practice* edited by Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock 1993 Berkeley: University of California Press. (ON AVENUE)

February 7: Institutions and Boundaries

Discussion Forum 1

Read: Lesley Sharp 2001 "Commodified kin: death, mourning, and competing claims on the bodies of organ donors in the United States" *American Anthropologist* 103(1): 112-133.

Jean Jackson 2005 "Stigma, liminality, and chronic pain: mind-body borderlands" *American Ethnologist* 32(3): 332-353.

February 14: Death

Read: Nancy Scheper-Hughes 1985 "Culture, scarcity, and maternal thinking: maternal detachment and infant survival in a Brazilian shantytown" *Ethos* 13(4): 291-317.

Margaret Lock 1996 "Death in Technological Time: Locating the End of Meaningful Life" In *Medical Anthropological Quarterly* 10(4): 575-600.

February 21: ~~ READING WEEK ~~

UNIT 3: ILLNESS NARRATIVES AND HEALING TECHNOLOGIES

February 28: Healers

Synthesis 2 Due

Read: Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo and David Welchman Gegeo 2011 “Divergent discourses: the epistemology of healing in an American medical clinic and a Kwara’ae village” *Anthropology of Consciousness* 22(2): 209-233.

March 7: Narratives of Illness

Discussion Forum 2

Read: Linda M. Garro 1994 “Narrative representations of chronic illness experience: cultural models of illness, mind, and body in stories concerning the temporo-mandibular joint” *Social Science and Medicine* 38: 775-788.

Cheryl Mattingly 2008 “Pocahontas goes to the clinic: popular culture as lingua franca in a cultural borderland” *American Anthropologist* 108(3): 494-501.

March 14: Technologies

Read: Marcia Inhorn “He Won’t Be My Son” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 20(1): 94-120.

Rayna Rapp 2011 “Chasing science: children’s brains, scientific inquiries, and family labours” *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 36(5): 662-684.

UNIT 4: GLOBAL CONTEXTS OF HEALTH

March 21: Globalization

Synthesis 3 Due

Read: Paul Farmer 2003 “An anthropology of structural violence” *Current Anthropology* 45: 305-317.

Merrill Singer and Scott Clair 2003 “Syndemics and public health: reconceptualizing disease in bio-social context” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 17: 423-441.

March 28: Local Biologies and Culture Bound Syndromes

Read: Margaret Lock and Vinh-Kim Nguyen 2010 “Local Biologies and Human Difference” in *An Anthropology of Biomedicine*. (ON AVENUE)

Rebecca Lester 2007 “Critical therapeutics: cultural politics and clinical reality in two eating disorder treatment centres” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 21(4): 369-387.

April 4: Post-Colonial Disorders

Discussion Forum 3

Read: Jean Comaroff 1993 “The Diseased Heart of Africa” In *Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press. (ON AVENUE)

Joao Biehl 2008 “Life of the Mind: The Interface of Psychopharmaceuticals, Domestic Economies, and Social Abandonment” In *American Ethnologist* 31(4): 475-496.

April 11: Synthesis 4 Due on Avenue

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Course guidelines

1. Late policy:

Please **contact me** if you are unable to submit an assignment on time. I am generally willing to negotiate assignment deadlines in extenuating circumstances. However, based on the due date of the assignment, **if you do not contact me in advance, late assignments will not be graded.**

2. Email:

Please ask detailed questions about course material and assignments in person. Please contact me through McMaster mail with matters pertaining to class.

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It

is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html> *Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

3. Laptop Policy:

My suggestion is that you hand-write class notes, rather than reading and taking notes on your computer.

If you strongly prefer to use a computer in class, this will be allowed. However, **please be respectful of the instructor and your classmates, and do not engage in non-class-related activities on your computer.**

You will be asked to cease laptop use if it is apparent that your computer is a source of distraction.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own for which other credit has been obtained. (*Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide*)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (*Insert specific course information*)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

(*If applicable*) In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

MSAF

- The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:

- The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
 - The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight.
 - The 'one MSAF per term' limit is retained.
 - As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.
- Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here: [http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work)

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

AODA

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Marcia Furtado at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email furtam1@mcmaster.ca