

ANTHROPOLOGY 4S03

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Fall 2020



16th century Aztec drawing, from Oldstone 2009 (*Viruses, Plagues, and History: Past, Present and Future*, Oxford University Press)

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Lecture: Fridays (recorded), Mondays (live)

Office: Virtual

Office Hours: Thursdays 2-3 PM
(Live WebEx sessions)

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Course Description

**“It is far more important to know what person the disease has
than what disease the person has.”**

Hippocrates (460-370 BCE)

In making this statement, it's clear that Hippocrates, the ancient “father of medicine”, understood the cultural and behavioural influences behind human health and illness. This quote reflects the times in which he lived, when health and healing were viewed more holistically than the modern biomedical perspective. This statement forces us to recognize the agency and personal circumstances of sufferers of disease, rather than focus on disease pathogenesis. It's a principle that is ingrained in the practice of medical anthropology. And it's the perspective we'll embrace throughout this course.

Adopting cultural, evolutionary, and ecological principles, this course will examine the origins, antiquity, and impact of infectious diseases on human societies. We will emphasize a *critical medical anthropological* perspective to deconstruct infectious diseases in the past and present. Thus, inequality and structural violence will be highlighted as significant factors in the human disease experience. Across different eras and geographies, we'll examine the myriad ways infectious disease is linked with human behaviours and beliefs. We'll recognize that infectious diseases have marked our shared humanity for millennia, and that they're a major force of our biocultural evolution.

Topics to be covered include disease ecology, epidemiological transitions, human-animal interactions, the role of climate change and ecological degradation, and the paramount role of anthropogenic factors in disease emergence, persistence and evolution. (Pre)historic, contemporary, and newly emergent infections will be addressed, including malaria, TB, HIV, Ebola, SARS, COVID-19, nosocomial infections, and the interaction of infectious and non-infectious diseases, among others.

The format of the course includes weekly recorded lectures, weekly instructor-led virtual seminars, as well as student-led virtual seminars (see below). As a fourth-year anthropology course, students are expected to demonstrate an advanced comprehension of medical and biocultural anthropology, as well as enhanced critical thinking skills.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should demonstrate competence in understanding:

- ❖ Infectious disease processes
- ❖ Epidemiological principles and goals
- ❖ Ecological, biocultural, and evolutionary perspectives of disease
- ❖ The role of climate, ecological & anthropogenic factors in infectious disease processes & disease experiences
- ❖ Biocultural consequences of infectious disease
- ❖ Climate and ecological change in infectious disease occurrence
- ❖ Medical anthropological methodology & research skills
- ❖ Effective critical thinking and writing

Required Materials and Texts

- *Anthropology of Infectious Disease*, Singer, M. (2015). New York: Routledge. Available as an e-book at McMaster University Library:
https://discovery.mcmaster.ca/iii/encore/record/C_Rb3986863_S%E2%80%A2%09Anthropology%20of%20Infectious%20Disease_Orighresult_U_X6?lang=eng&suite=def Just click on **Access this e-book. *McMaster only**, and login via your McMaster ID
- The e-book / hard copy can also be purchased at:
<https://www.kobo.com/ca/en/ebook/anthropology-of-infectious-disease>
<https://www.amazon.ca/Anthropology-Infectious-Disease-Merrill-Singer/dp/1629580449>
- Readings and article links posted on the course website on Avenue to Learn (A2L)

Some Useful Resources:

- Anthropological Journals: *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Annual Reviews in Anthropology*, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, etc.
- *Current Opinion in Infectious Diseases* – Electronic Resource (McMaster Library)

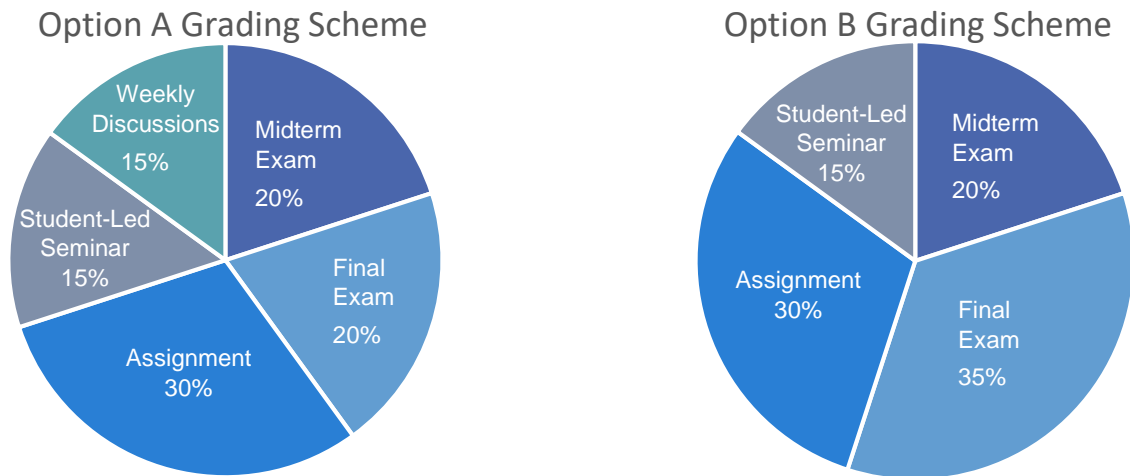
- *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History*, J.N. Hays, 2005
- Harvard Univ. Library Open Collections Program: *Contagion: Historical Views of Diseases and Epidemics* (<https://library.harvard.edu/collections/contagion-historical-views-diseases-and-epidemics>)
- *Journal of Infectious Diseases; Social Science and Medicine (journal)*
- [Open Anthropology \(A Public Journal of the American Anthropological Association\), Pandemic Perspectives](https://www.americananthro.org/StayInformed/OAissueTOC.aspx?ItemNumber=25609). Volume 8, Issue 1, April 2020
<https://www.americananthro.org/StayInformed/OAissueTOC.aspx?ItemNumber=25609>

Class Format

- **Lectures:** in Weeks 1-5, two weekly 40-60 minute recorded presentations (to view at your own convenience); uploaded on Fridays, starting Sept. 4. Please go to *A2L: Echo360 Lecture Recordings* or *Weekly Content modules*.
- **Weekly Live Instructor-Led Virtual Seminars / Discussions, optional** (*WebEx or Zoom, TBA*), *Mondays, 7 PM EST*: In Weeks 1-5, there will be a 60-90 minute instructor-led virtual seminar and discussion of the week's reading and lecture material. Students are expected to participate, with 15% of the final grade allocated for attendance and participation in these live sessions. Instructions for attending the sessions will be posted at the start of the semester. See further details below.
- **Student-Led Virtual Seminars & Discussions** (*WebEx or Zoom, TBA*): In Weeks 7-12 (*Mondays, 7 PM EST*), student groups will lead virtual seminars on topics related to infectious disease (see Course Schedule below). Students will be responsible for assigning topic readings, reading review questions, and moderating class discussions. Further instructions, including how to attend the videoconferences, will be posted at the start of the semester. This component is worth 15% of your final grade.
- **Weekly WebEx virtual "office hours"**: These will take place on Thursdays, 2-3 PM EST. Students can also schedule private appointments via email request at: songr17@mcmaster.ca. Instructions for attending office hour sessions will be posted at the start of the semester.

Course Evaluation – Overview

Two grading schemes are possible, with the main difference being optional participation in weekly Live Virtual Seminars = 15% (Weeks 1-5), and different weighting of the final exam (35% instead of 20%), if you opt out of these Live Virtual Seminar Sessions. See below for more details.



Exams (20% and 20% or 35%)

There will be two exams: a **Midterm Exam worth 20%**, and a **Final Exam worth 20%, or 35%** if students opt out of attending weekly Live WebEx Sessions on lecture and reading material. Both exams will take place online, with submission to *Turnitin* on A2L. More details will be provided before the exams.

Assignment (30%)

This mandatory assignment will address the current COVID-19 pandemic. The assignment will consist of two components: a) devising a medical anthropology questionnaire on health and well-being; and b) critical analysis of the pandemic. The deadline is Friday, November 27, 2020, 5 PM EST. Assignment instructions and guidelines will be available on the course site on A2L, as well as in an Announcement at the start of the semester.

Weekly Live Instructor-Led Virtual Seminars & Discussions (15%)

In **Weeks 1-5**, there will be a 60 to 90-minute virtual instructor-led session every **Monday at 7 PM EST** to discuss the reading and lecture material from that week. Review questions will be provided prior to each week to help students prepare. Each week's virtual session will be worth 3%, which accounts for attendance (2%) and participation (up to 1%) for each of the five weeks.

Since some students may not be able to attend due to other commitments, or tech-related limitations, this component is **optional**. If you cannot attend the virtual sessions, the 15% will be re-weighted to your final exam (worth 35% instead of 20%).

However, if possible, please attend these live sessions. They are the only interactive component in the first five weeks, and they will be meaningful opportunities to discuss the material in a seminar format and engage with your peers. As a seminar course, these live interactions are integral to your academic development.

Further instructions will be provided at the start of the semester.

Student-Led Virtual Seminars & Discussions (15%)

In **Weeks 7-12**, student groups will lead two 60-minute virtual seminars and moderate the class discussions. Topics are listed in the Weekly Course Schedule below. The seminars will take place on **Mondays at 7 PM EST in Weeks 7-12**.

In these virtual seminars, groups of two students will be responsible for: a) assigning the required reading list at least one week in advance (and communicating that list with me so I can upload the readings to A2L for student access); b) devising reading review questions; c) presenting a summary of the topic, i.e., via Powerpoint slides and videoconferencing technology; and d) moderating class discussions. Grading guidelines will be discussed at the start of the semester.

Course Evaluation

Component	Format	% of Final Grade
Midterm Exam October 9, 2020	“Open-book”, timed, online submission (<i>Turnitin</i> on A2L) Includes material from Weeks 1-5	20%
Writing Assignment Nov. 27, 2020, 5 PM	Document submission online (<i>Turnitin</i> on A2L)	30%
Final Exam TBA (after Dec. 9, 2020)	“Open-book”, timed, online submission (<i>Turnitin</i> on A2L) Includes material from Weeks 7-13	20% (or 35% if weekly discussions in Weeks 1-5 are not attended)
Weekly Live Virtual Seminar / Discussions Mondays, 7 PM Weeks 1-5	Attendance and participation in 5 weekly live discussions (60-90 minutes) of the lecture and reading material. Review questions will be provided ahead of time. 3% per session (2% attendance, 1% participation)	15% (optional)
Student-Led Seminars & Discussions Mondays, 7 PM Weeks 7-12	Responsibility for assigning readings, reading review questions, presenting the topic (i.e., via Powerpoint & verbal WebEx session), and moderating class discussions	15%

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week	Topic	Readings
Week 1 Sept. 8-13	<i>Introduction / Course Objectives</i>	Brown et al. 2011 Singer 2015: Intro, Chapter 1
Week 2 Sept. 14-20	<i>Infectious Disease Epidemiology</i>	Kramer et al. 2010 Sattenspiel & Slonim 2012 Singer 2015: Chapters 2-3
Week 3 Sept. 21-27	<i>Ecological and Evolutionary Perspectives</i> <i>Critical Medical Anthropology & Disease</i>	Leatherman & Goodman 2011 McElroy 2004 Singer 2015: Chapter 4 Witeska-Mlynarczyk 2015
Week 4 Sept. 28-Oct. 4	<i>Epidemiological Transitions</i> <i>Emergent & Re-Emergent Infections</i>	Barrett and Armelagos 2014 Harper and Armelagos 2010 Singer 2015: Chapter 5
Week 5 Oct. 5-11	<i>Syndemics, Political Ecology</i> MIDTERM EXAM, Oct. 9, 2020	Singer 2015: Chapters 6-7 Singer and Clair 2003
Week 6 Oct. 12-18	<i>Mid-Semester Recess</i>	
Week 7 Oct. 19-25	<i>Student-Led Seminars (2 groups)</i> TOPIC: Paleoepidemiology / Paleopathology	Readings TBA (students responsible for this week's topics need to assign the required readings at least one week before)
Week 8 Oct. 26-Nov. 1	<i>Student-Led Seminars (2 groups)</i> TOPIC: Zoonoses / Ebola	Readings TBA (students responsible for this week's topics need to assign the required readings at least one week before)

<p>Week 9 Nov. 2-8</p>	<p><i>Student-Led Seminars (2 groups)</i> TOPIC: Nosocomial Infections / SARS</p>	<p>Readings TBA (students responsible for this week's topics need to assign the required readings at least one week before)</p>
<p>Week 10 Nov. 9-15</p>	<p><i>Student-Led Seminars (2 groups)</i> TOPIC: Climate Change & Infectious Disease</p>	<p>Readings TBA (students responsible for this week's topics need to assign the required readings at least one week before)</p>
<p>Week 11 Nov. 16-22</p>	<p><i>Student-Led Seminars (2 groups)</i> TOPIC: Infectious & Non-Infectious Diseases</p>	<p>Readings TBA (students responsible for this week's topics need to assign the required readings at least one week before)</p>
<p>Week 12 Nov. 23-29</p>	<p><i>Student-Led Seminars (2 groups)</i> TOPIC: Global Health (Inequality & I.D.) WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE, Nov. 27, 2020</p>	<p>Readings TBA (students responsible for this week's topics need to assign the required readings at least one week before)</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov. 30-Dec. 6</p>	<p><i>Life in the Time of COVID-19</i> <i>Health Survey Discussion</i></p>	<p>Readings TBA</p>

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments / Exams

All exams and assignments must be submitted online via A2L. Detailed instructions will be posted ahead of time via A2L announcement, and with each assignment or exam.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments / Exams

The writing assignment is due online via *Turnitin* on A2L by **Friday, November 27, 2020, 5 PM**. Extensions will not be considered. Late submissions are subject to a deduction of 10% *each day* after 5 PM of November 27, 2020, with no acceptance after Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020 (thereafter, a grade of “0” will be given).

Except for SAS accommodations, exams that are not submitted on time will only be accepted for medical reasons, provided official documentation is submitted. In the event of late exams due to illness, since exams are a “take-home” format that allows students to complete them at their convenience, any late submission is subject to a deduction of 25% per day after **Oct. 9, 2020, 5PM**.

If, however, you are ill prior to the exam and anticipate not being able to complete it on time remotely, please contact me directly to schedule an alternative exam deadline (with a different exam).

Please treat the online exam deadlines as seriously as you would a sit-down exam at the University.....if you were still writing and didn't hand in your exam at the end of the scheduled time, your exam would not be accepted.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

In the event of absence due to illness that results in a late exam or assignment, please see above (“late assignments”). Deductions will apply.

MSAF (McMaster Student Absence Form)

The MSAF can be used for limited medical and non-medical (personal) situations where students seek relief for missed academic work. Approval of the MSAF is automatic, i.e. no documentation is required. Rules governing the MSAF are as follows: The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid is up to 3 days. The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted is ‘less than 25%’ of the course weight, i.e., the assignment for which a student seeks relief must be worth less than 25% of their final grade. There is a ‘one MSAF per term’ limit. 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 instructor. Failure to do so may negate their relief.

The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work, or click here: <https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn (A2L). Students should be aware that, when you access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (*Turnitin.com*) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior 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 types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

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.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

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.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Course Modification

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.