ANTH 215E Health, Healing and Culture: An Introduction to Medical Anthropology

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:
This English-language course is an introduction to medical anthropology, emphasizing the literature on health and healing in different cultures. The objectives of the course are to understand health and healing in social and cultural context, to compare health, illness and healing in different cultures, and to introduce the theoretical orientations and basic concepts of medical anthropology. Readings illustrate the different theoretical orientations used by medical anthropologists and explore topics such as mental health and illness, healers and healing, disease etiologies, health seeking behavior, child birth across cultures and practical uses for medical anthropology in health care settings. Case studies from Italy, North America, Africa, Europe and Latin America illustrate key concepts.

CLASS FORMAT:
Classes will be held twice a week for 80 minutes. Coursework is comprised of lectures, videos, outside readings and short written assignments, as well as a number of in-class discussions exploring the role of culture in health and healing.

GRADING:
Students will be evaluated on their ability to articulate and critically apply the terms, concepts and theories from class and readings verbally, during class discussions, as well as in writing, on exams and in written assignments. The final grade for the course is comprised of the following:
- Participation 20%
- Focus Essays 20%
- Midterm Exam 30%
- Final Exam 30%

Participation: As many students learn best through interacting with peers and discussing information from class and readings, this course includes a number of class sessions devoted to discussion. Students will be expected to listen attentively to others’ views, respectfully express their own and make meaningful and active contributions to class discussions and lectures. Your participation is scored during each discussion; as such, being absent from class on a day in which a discussion is scheduled will incur a 0 for that day’s discussion. Sessions in which a discussion has been scheduled have been shaded.
In Focus Discussions (10%): These short discussions are designed to help students think critically about, and articulate, key concepts.

Discussion Sessions (10%): These longer discussions (there are two) are structured around the book “The Spirit Catches you and you Fall Down”. Students are given a list of discussion questions beforehand that they should reflect upon before arriving to class on the day that a discussion is held and should be prepared to contribute meaningfully.

Focus Essays: These four short, formal analytical essays provide students the opportunity to articulate and apply, through writing, key terms and concepts from the course. Focus Essays are 3-5 pages in length, 1.5 spaced, with 12pt Times New Roman font. Each essay should contain a Bibliography of academic source materials. Essays will be evaluated not only by the student’s ability to critically apply terms and concepts from the course, but also by the tenets and principles of formal academic writing and Standard English usage.

Each essay must be submitted electronically prior to the start of class on the day that it is due. Late assignments will receive a .50 penalty (e.g., from 9.0 to 8.5) on the first day and another .50 penalty on the second. Assignments will not be accepted after 2 days.

Midterm and Final Exams: The exams will include a mixture of multiple choice, True/False, short answer and short essay questions. Students must demonstrate that they have mastered the theories, concepts and terms from lecture, class discussions, videos and readings.

COURSE MATERIALS:
Required textbook(s):

Other resources:

COURSE CONTENT:

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<td>3</td>
<td>Culture</td>
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| 4 | **Culture**  
  • As hegemony  
  • *In Focus discussion: Cultural relativism* | **Due today: Focus Essay #1**  
Read for today:  
• Majumder, *Why rural sexual violence remains rife in India.* |
| 5 | **Medical Anthropology**  
  • Historical development | Read for today:  
| 6 | **Theoretical Perspectives**  
  • Biocultural approaches to health and healing in Anthropology | Read for today:  
| 7 | **Theoretical Perspectives**  
  • Cultural approaches to health and healing in Anthropology | Read for today:  
| 8 | **Case study: Anthropological perspectives on cholera**  
  • *In Focus discussion: Comparing and contrasting critical and ecological perspectives* | Read for today:  
| 9 | **Ethnomedical systems**  
  • Traditional and non-Western medical systems | Read for today:  
| 10 | **Ethnomedical systems**  
  • Biomedicine  
  • Partially professionalized medical systems  
  • Folk and alternative medicine in the U.S. | Read for today:  
• Good and DelVecchi Good, *“Learning Medicine”: The constructing of medical knowledge at Harvard Medical School,* Pp. 81-107.  
| 11 | **Non-Western Disease etiologies**  
  • Cultural models and schemata  
  • Personalistic and naturalistic etiologies | Read for today:  
• Foster, *Disease Etiologies in Non-Western Medical Systems,* Pp. 110-117. |
| 12 | **Discussion Session**  
  • The Spirit Catches you and you Fall Down | **Due today: Focus Essay #2**  
Read for today:  
| 13 | **Non-Western Disease etiologies**  
  • Navajo Medicine |   |
| 14 | **Midterm Exam** |   |
| 15 | Healers and Healing Professions  
|    | • What is healing?  
|    | • Illness, disease and the role of the medical practitioner  
|    | • Authority and healers  
|    | Read for today:  
| 16 | Health Seeking Behavior in Context  
|    | • Hierarchies of resort  
|    | • Case study: The cultural context of malaria in the United Republic of Tanzania  
|    | Read for today:  
| 17 | Reproductive Health  
|    | • Childbirth cultures: Exploring childbirth cross-culturally  
|    | Read for today:  
| 18 | Reproductive Health  
|    | • The body politic: Women’s bodies in biomedicine  
|    | • Case study: Childbirth in Spain and Sweden  
|    | Read for today:  
| 19 | Culture, Illness and Mental Health  
|    | • Case study: Susto in Latin America  
|    | Read for today:  
| 20 | Culture, Illness and Mental Health  
|    | • Video: “When Medicine Got it Wrong”  
|    | • In Focus discussion: Social and political contexts of biomedicine  
|    | Read for today:  
| 21 | Communication in Clinical Settings  
|    | • Physician and patient roles  
|    | • Cross-cultural miscommunication  
|    | Read for today:  
|    | • Fadima, *The Spirit Catches you and you Fall Down*, Pp. 251-258  |
| 22 | Medical Practitioners, Anthropology and the Western System of Care  
|    | • Cultural competency in health care  
|    | • Problems with ethnic classifications in the U.S.  
|    | Due today: Focus Essay #3  
|    | Read for today:  
| 23 | Medical Practitioners, Anthropology and the Western System of Care  
|    | • The LEARN model  
|    | • Patient-centered care versus medicalization of ethnicity  
|    | • In Focus discussion: Cultural competency, the LEARN model and the case of Lia Lee  
|    | Read for today:  
| 24 | Discussion Session  
|    | • The Spirit Catches you and you Fall Down  
|    | Read for today:  
<p>|    | • Fadima, <em>The Spirit Catches you</em>  |</p>
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<td>25</td>
<td><strong>Applied Medical Anthropology</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Framing illness and disease: Deviance, risk or context?&lt;br&gt;• Case study: Project PHRESH.comm</td>
<td>Read for today:&lt;br&gt;• Taylor, <em>The Story Catches you and you Fall Down</em>, Pp. 159-181.</td>
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<td><strong>Applied Medical Anthropology</strong>&lt;br&gt;• International and Public Health&lt;br&gt;• In Focus discussion: Medical Anthropology and medical school curriculum</td>
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