

Culture, Health, and Healing: An Introduction to Medical Anthropology

Anthropology 411/511
Spring 2007
Office Hrs: Tues/Thur 3:30-5:00 or by appointment

Dr. Kathryn S. Oths
Office : 24D ten Hoor
Phone: 348-5947
Email: koths@as.ua.edu

n.b. This 3 credit hour course satisfies a W requirement. As such, enrollment will be limited to 20 students. W courses should be taken in a student's own major when possible, and must be completely on this campus.

Course Description

Prerequisites for this course are 12 hours of anthropology, graduate status, or permission of the professor. This course will provide a cross-cultural overview of medical systems. We will explore the various responses human groups have developed to cope with disease and illness events. Topics include an introduction to paleopathology, ethnomedical systems, patients, healers, etiology, help seeking, diagnosis and treatment. There is an emphasis on the contrasts between western and non-western perspectives. The medical systems considered include Western and Eastern variants of biomedicine, as well as Asian, Indian, and Arabic professional ethnomedicines. Also, folk medicines from Africa, Europe, and Native, Latin and Urban America will be examined. By means of assigned articles, ethnographies, films and lectures, the course provides an exploration of the breadth of the field of the anthropology of health. *For the undergraduates*, student writing itself, in the form of two individual written assignments, will be graded and commented upon and become part of the final grade. A student who does not write with the skill normally required of an upper division student in the discipline will not be given a passing grade, no matter how well the student performs other course requirements. *For the graduate students*, basic questions will be highlighted which both organize research and direct activity in the application of medical anthropology in clinical and non-clinical settings.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Goal 1: Enhance appreciation of the great diversity of medical systems in existence worldwide.
- Goal 2: Build capacity to critically examine and compare different systems of thought and behavior.
- Goal 3: Improve reading and comprehension skills.

Requirements and Grading

Class participation is expected from all students, especially during seminar sessions. Students should endeavor to limit their contributions to discussion to a maximum of three to four comments per class in order to allow all students the chance to participate. If students are not preparing for and participating in seminar discussions, in-class essays may be given upon a one-week advance notice. These will be graded Pass/Fail. There is no mandatory attendance policy; however, each absence will lower the final grade by 1%. With a legitimate excuse, partial make-up for missed classes can be arranged on an individual basis with the professor. A validly excused missed midterm must be made-up within 1 week of the original exam date. A missed final will result in an incomplete, which can be taken within the first 2 weeks of the following semester.

Undergraduates: Two midterms (worth 20% each) and a final exam (worth 30%) will be given for a total of 70% of the grade. Exams will consist primarily of brief and long essay questions. Class discussion will constitute 20% of the grade. Two 2-page review papers on a student's choice of ethnographies will be due during the semester and will each count as 5% of the grade. The first paper is due, and will be graded and returned, prior to mid-term. The second is due before the last class. Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course. Written assignments will require coherent, logical, and carefully edited prose (see Writing Guide at end of syllabus). The instructor will be available and willing to instruct in writing skills as needed to assist students in meeting the writing requirements of the course. Services are available at the Writing Center for students who may need additional tutoring.

Graduate Students: A twenty-page research paper on a subject approved by the instructor will be due at the end of the semester and will be worth 40% of the grade. Two brief essay exam midterms will be given, worth 10% each. The remaining 40% of the grade will be based on the quantity and quality of participation in class discussion.

Students with Disabilities

To request disability accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (348-4285). After initial arrangements are made with that office, contact your professor.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

All acts of dishonesty in any work constitute academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information, misrepresentations, and abetting of any of the above. A thorough definition of plagiarism can be found at www.georgetown.edu/honor/plagiarism.html. The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event that misconduct occurs. Students should refer to the Student Affairs Handbook, obtainable in the Office of Student Life and Services.

Required Texts

Available through Alabama Bookstore or University Supply Store.

1. Joralemon, D., 2005, Exploring Medical Anthropology, 2nd Ed.
2. Lewis, G., 2000 Failure of Treatment.
3. Rodlach, A. 2006 Witches, Westerners, and HIV.
4. Jones, D. 1984, Sanapia Comanche Medicine Woman.
5. Payer, 1996, Medicine and Culture: Varieties of Treatment in the US, England, Germany & France.
6. *GRAD STUDENTS ONLY:* Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 1934, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (be careful to get abridged version; not available in print).

Required Articles

All required articles are on-line through the Gorgas Library E-Reserves. The professor reserves the right to change, delete or add articles to the reading list as necessary.

A copy of the syllabus can be found online at: <http://www.as.ua.edu/ant> under Course Materials>Syllabi

WEEK TOPIC & READINGS

1: Jan. 11

Introduction

Joralemon text Chapter 1, 2
GRADS: Sharp Commodified Kin

2: Jan. 16, 18

History and Overview of the Field

Glick, L.. Medicine as an ethnographic category (New Guinea)
Dressler and Oths Cultural determinants of health behavior
Landy, D. Medical anthropology: A critical appraisal (skim)
GRADS: Dressler Epidemiology

3: Jan. 23, 25 **Disease through the Ages**

- Armelagos, G. Human evolution and the evolution of disease
Ackerknecht, E. Paleopathology
Dubos, R. Determinants of health and disease
Comaroff, J. The diseased heart of Africa: Medicine, colonialism, and the Black body
GRADS: Bogin, B. Evolution of Human Nutrition

4: Jan. 30, Feb 1 **Fundamental Approaches to the Study of Medical Anthropology**

- Joralemon text Chapters 3, 4, 5
GRADS: Nations "I'm not dog, no!": Cries of resistance against cholera control campaigns (Brazil)

5: Feb. 6, 8 **Fundamental Approaches, cont.**

- Joralemon text Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9
UNDERGRADS: DUE: First 2-page book review on Joralemon text
GRADS: Whyte et al Treating AIDS: Dilemmas of unequal access in Uganda

Midterm I: Feb. 13 – subject to change

6: Feb. 15 **Etiology: Cultural Classifications of Disease and Illness**

- Lewis *ethnography*

7: Feb. 20, 22 **Etiology: cont.**

- Logan, M. Humoral medicine in Guatemala and peasant acceptance of modern medicine
Ingstad, B. The Cultural Construction of AIDS and Its Consequences for Prevention in Botswana
Dressler, W. Health in the African-American community: Accounting for health Inequalities

8: Feb. 27, Mar 1 **Etiology: cont.**

Rodlach *ethnography*

9. Mar. 6 **Etiology: cont.**

Cannon, W. Voodoo Death

Burkett, G. Culture, illness and the biopsychosocial model

Palinkas, L. Social, Cultural, and Psychological Impacts of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

Mar. 8 **Signs and Symptoms: Negotiating Sickness and Role Behavior Shifts**

film Evil Wind, Evil Air (Andes)

Crandon-Malamud Changing times and changing symptoms: Case of two Mestizo sisters (Bolivia)

GRADS: Traphagan Being a good Rojin: Senility, power and self-actualization in Japan

!!!!!!!!!! **March 12-16 -- Spring Break** !!!!!!!!!!

10: Mar. 20 **Signs and Symptoms: cont.**

Kliger Somatization: Social control and illness production in a religious cult (U.S.)

Rubel, A. The epidemiology of a folk illness: susto in Hispanic America

GRADS:

Gaines & Farmer Visible saints (France) – OR --

Nettleton Enigmatic illness: Narratives of patients w/ medically unexplained symptoms

Mar. 22 **Help Seeking: Lay consultation, Local Health Care Systems, and Treatment Choice**

Nichter, M. The social relations of therapy management (Philippines)

Oths, K. Health care decisions of households in economic stress (Peru)

Oths, K. The compondor's place in the pluralistic Andean health care system

11: Mar. 27, 29 **Help Seeking: cont.**

Undergrads Only:

Reynolds-Whyte, S. Anthropological Approaches to African Misfortune: From Religion to Medicine.

Grads Only:

E.E.Evans-Pritchard Witchcraft Oracles and Magic Among the Azande (*ethnography*) (Sudan)

film Witchcraft Among the Azande

Midterm II: April 3 – subject to change

12: Apr 5 **Help Seeking**

White, S. From “Barefoot Doctor” to “Village Doctor” in Tiger Springs Village (China)
film To Taste 100 Herbs (China)

13: April 10, 12 **Diagnosis and Treatment: Healers and Healing, Provider Patient Interaction, and Treatment Efficacy**

Levi-Strauss A sorcerer and his magic (Native American)
Lambo Psychotherapy in Africa
Adler Ethnomedical pathogenesis and Hmong immigrants sudden nocturnal deaths
Film Hmong shamans
GRADS: Etkin, N. The rational basis of “irrational” drug use: Pharmaceuticals in the context of development

14: April 17, 19 **Diagnosis and Treatment, cont.**

Jones, D. *ethnography*
film Eduardo the Healer (Peru)

15: April 24, 26 **Diagnosis and Treatment, cont.**

Kleinman, A. et al. Culture, illness and care (U.S.)
Good, BJ et al. “Learning medicine”: The constructing of medical knowledge at Harvard Medical School
Lewis, G. Double standards of treatment evaluation
GRADS: Moerman, D. Cultural Variations in the Placebo Effect: Ulcers, Anxiety and Blood Pressure

16: May 1, 3 **Diagnosis and Treatment, Conclusion**

Payer *ethnography*
GRADS:
Janes, C. The health transition, global modernity and the crisis of traditional medicine (Tibet)

Final Exam and Grad Term Papers due: Tuesday May 8, 8:00 - 10:30 a.m. -- not subject to change

GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

How to Approach the Writing of Papers for the Course

1. Use clear, direct terms in your writing. Employ technical terms where necessary, making certain their meaning has been communicated. Avoid unnecessary use of jargon or long, complicated language merely to sound impressive. A useful strategy is to imagine a person to "speak to" as you write. This should be an intelligent person (friend, teacher, relative) who does not know much about anthropology.
2. State your ideas clearly. Do not assume that "after all, the instructor knows what I mean". The instructor cannot assume to know what you know, nor can you assume that she knows. Take little for granted.
3. Where possible, avoid judgmental terms. For example, describing the beliefs of a culture as "superstitions" or a people as "primitive" not only constitutes a possibly unwarranted value-judgment, but indicates that you do not understand the basic perspective of anthropology.
4. Avoid sweeping generalizations. Support your judgments with evidence from your readings and lectures from this and other courses, as well as additional sources. An example of what you mean is far more persuasive as evidence than an unsupported opinion or inference.
5. There is a place for your judgments and opinions. Findings or facts should be stated first, devoid of judgments. Your analysis and opinions should be presented only after you have given the matter fair and accurate presentation.
6. Your paper should utilize some of the concepts and substantive knowledge of the course. Ignoring such ideas and data, especially when they directly pertain to the subject you are writing about, will detract from the quality of your paper.
7. Side issues related to the main themes of the assigned readings can be integrated into your papers if they are of sufficient interest or importance, but should not be given the major emphasis.
8. *For maximum results:* Write your paper, leave it alone for a day or two, then edit it with fresh eyes. It's a good idea to have a friend edit it also, or better yet, trade papers with someone else in the class and edit each other's.

Mechanics of Paper Composition

1. The paper should have a title page *separate* from the first page of text, i.e., no title should appear on the pages of your essay. USE YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER in place of your name on the title page. The number should be followed by a "U" for undergraduates, or a "G" for grad students.
2. Use standard size white bond paper.
3. Paper length can deviate a half page from the required length in either direction, if necessary. Papers shorter or longer than this will be penalized.
4. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced on 8½ x 11 paper.

5. Pages should be numbered consecutively starting on page two.
6. Margins should be at least 1 inch on all sides with a font size of 12.
7. Do not place your paper in a folder, cover, or binder.
8. Proof read and correct your paper carefully before submitting it. Errors of spelling, grammar, typing, etc. can lead to errors of interpretation on the part of the instructor. Typos and other errors are unpleasant to read and convey the impression of sloppy work and careless thinking.
9. Make a copy of the paper before you turn it in. This is for your own security in the unlikely event that the instructor loses the paper.
10. Your paper will receive comments liberally regarding style, logic, organization, sentence structure, grammar, syntax, spelling, neatness, and other matters.
11. References to supplemental sources of literature should be included within the text of your paper. (Assigned materials should not be cited, except for the page numbers of direct quotes.) This is done by typing the author's name, date of publication, and, if needed, page number. *Do not use the full title of the book or article you are citing.* For example:

The issue of change in traditional societies has long occupied cultural anthropologists (Foster 1972:52).

References cited in the body of the paper should be listed at the end using the following format:

books:

Foster, George M.

1972 *Traditional Societies and Technological Change*, 2nd Ed. New York: Harper and Row.

articles:

Foster, George M.

1972 The anatomy of envy: A study of symbolic behavior. *Current Anthropology* 13:165-186.

chapters in books:

Foster, George M.

1955 Relationships between theoretical and applied anthropology: A public health program analysis, *In Health, Culture and Community: Case Studies of Public Reactions to Health Projects*. Paul, Benjamin (ed.), New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Standards for the Documentation of Written Work

1. Honest documentation of the students written work is absolutely essential. The faculty expects each student's papers to derive from thoughtful and independent inquiry and to represent the work of the student whose name appears on it. The student who submits a paper which derives from unacknowledged sources plagiarizes by representing as his own the words and

ideas of others. Every student, therefore, has a serious obligation to himself/herself and to the University to acknowledge properly any work that is not his/her own. He/she must properly document his/her papers. He/she must be scrupulous in reporting data accurately and acknowledging any joint work. Ignorance does not excuse any violation of this basic principle: derived writing must be clearly acknowledged.

2. The student should strive to say what he/she has to say in his/her own words, and should carefully avoid repeating words and phrases taken from books and articles written by other people. The writer may summarize or paraphrase what someone else has written. But the student must put the summary or paraphrase in his/her own words. The student should not only put in smooth language what someone else has written but must also give full credit to the writer whose ideas he/she is summarizing. Phrases like "according to John Smith," and "Jane Smith says," should always accompany a summary or paraphrase from another writer's material. And the exact source must be given in the text.

In general, footnotes are unnecessary in papers dealing with a single work and not deriving from a variety of sources, for example, in a book analysis. Nor is it necessary to document specific facts which are common knowledge. But facts and opinions which are discoveries by the student's sources or debatable matters for which the student's is taking responsibility must always be documented.

3. Keep quotes to a bare minimum, if used at all. *On rare occasion* the student will find it helpful to use direct quotations. It is important to observe the following rules in quoting the words of others: The words quoted must be exactly as they appear in the original source. The reader must be informed, either in brackets or in a footnote, of even the slightest change made in a passage. The omission of words from a quoted passage must be indicated by three dots (...); but any punctuation contained in the original must be given in addition to the three dots (,...). Any words inserted by the student into a quoted passage by way of commentary, to correct misspelling or inaccuracy, or to supply omitted information, must be included in square brackets. The use of italics to emphasize words and phrases not italicized in the original quotation must also be indicated with square brackets: "[italics mine]". When a student is quoting from a source which is in turn quoting from another source, the student must make this fact clear to the reader. Basically the principle which governs the handling of quotations is that which governs documentation in general: the reader should know what material belongs to the author of the paper and what material belongs to his sources.

4. One source of confusion is the degree to which a student may be responsible for acknowledging those ideas which have developed through conversation or class discussions. Here good sense and honesty are the criteria. A student in doubt about the independence of what he/she is writing would be wise to indicate that the ideas are not his/her own. Phrases like "one of my classmates suggests," or "the conclusion reached in class was," are usually adequate for this purpose. The student may employ a typist to prepare a final copy of the paper, but the typist must do nothing whatever to materially change the paper as written by the student. Such papers deserve careful proof-reading—the same as if the student typed it him/herself—to insure that the paper represents the student's independent work and that the copy is free from mechanical errors.

5. The student must decide the frequency and extent of documentation. He/she has, therefore, a great responsibility. He/she should document when in doubt and make unequivocally clear the distinction between what belongs to himself/herself and what belongs to others. Plagiarism can take many forms: presenting passages from the works of others as work of one's own; the unacknowledged paraphrasing of ideas developed by another author; the creation of a patchwork

of phrases and ideas, often from several sources; and the uncredited use of a term resulting from another's ingenuity. All of these are dishonest.

6. Another kind of plagiarism, or cheating, is copying material from the work of another student, or having your material written for you by another student, friend, spouse, parent, sibling -- or anyone other than the student himself/herself.

7. Plagiarism, or cheating in any form, is a serious offense and will result in an automatic grade of "F" for the paper itself, a possible "F" for the course, and a consideration of a recommendation of expulsion from the University.

Adapted with permission from:

Guidelines and Standards for Book Analyses and Term Papers, 1986

By David Landy

Professor Emeritus

Department of Anthropology

University of Massachusetts-Boston

USEFUL DEFINITIONS

1. **anthropology** = the study of all aspects of human living
2. **culture** = a blueprint for living (Paul, 1955)
 - = the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret their world and generate social behavior (Spradley, 1989)
 - = a system of shared beliefs, behaviors, values, and customs used by members of a group which are cumulative and symbolic and are transmitted from generation to generation through learning
3. **health** = (50's) a state of *complete* physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity
 - = (60s) ~~complete~~ → optimal
 - = (80s) ~~optimal~~ → the highest possible level
4. **healing** = the alleviation of illness,
where disease vs. illness / curing vs. healing
5. **medical anthropology** = the formal anthropological activities concerned with health and disease, with a focus on beliefs, behaviors and practices

(theoretical):

= inquiry that (a) elucidates the factors, mechanisms, and processes that play a role in or influence the way in which individuals and groups are affected by and respond to illness and disease, and (b) examines these problems with an emphasis on patterns of behavior (Fabrega, 1972)

(theoretical and applied):

= 1. research whose goal is the comprehensive description and interpretation OF the biocultural interrelationships between human behavior, past and present, and health and disease levels, without primary regard to the practical utilization of this knowledge, or,
2. the professional participation IN programs whose goal is the improvement of health levels through increased understanding of the relationships between bio-socio-cultural phenomena and health, and through the changing of health behavior in directions believed to promote better health (Foster, 1978)

Important People and Works That Contributed to the Formation of the Field of Medical Anthropology

1849 Rudolph Virchow

--"medicine is a social science, and politics is nothing but medicine on a grand scale"

1924 WHR Rivers, *Medicine, Magic and Religion*

--first to see medicine as part of a culture system, as a social institution

1932 Forrest Clements, *Primitive Concepts of Disease*

--medicine an area worthy of study in it's own right

1937 EE Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*

--a people's medical practices follow logically from underlying beliefs

1942 Erwin Ackerknecht, *Primitive Medicine and Cultural Patterns*

- medical historian, paleopathologist. M.D.
- there are many primitive (sic) medicines
- first to argue for cultural construction of disease concepts

1951 Henry Sigerist, *A History of Medicine*

- medical historian
- first to bring together cross-cultural materials on medicine

1955 Benjamin Paul, *Health, Culture & Community*

--first applied work: attention to international aid programs;

1963 Steven Polgar, *Health Action in Cross Cultural Perspective* (article)

Four fallacies about other people's medical knowledge:

1. the empty vessel
2. the separate capsule
3. the single pyramid
4. the interchangeable faces