

**ANTH 3306: Introduction to Medical Anthropology  
Fall 2016**



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Class Location: Hyer 100  
Class Meeting Time: Tues/Th 930-1050  
Professor Office Hours: Tues, 11-1 PM  
Professor Email: [namyers@smu.edu](mailto:namyers@smu.edu)

TA: Brenna Raney; [braney@smu.edu](mailto:braney@smu.edu)  
TA Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2-3  
TA Office: Heroy 429

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course provides undergraduates with an overview of methods and topics in medical anthropology, an interdisciplinary field that explores health, illness, and systems of healing through holistic and cross-cultural study. Students will be introduced to the major theoretical paradigms and perspectives of the field of medical anthropology, including evolutionary, psychosocial, and biocultural approaches. They will also be introduced to its methods of research. To illustrate the approaches and methods, students will examine a variety of cases that illustrate how notions, treatments, and experiences of health, illness, and healing are culturally patterned across diverse human societies. We will challenge the assumptions of our own ways of understanding the healthy and sick body, particularly Western assumptions inherent to biomedical practice, biomedical enhancement and medical humanitarianism. We will also broaden our knowledge of non-Western healing systems, including the use of alternative and complementary medicines and preventive medicine. Students will be asked for regular, well-informed debate within class meetings, and to prepare written arguments on several topics. Oral presentations will allow students to present materials in greater depth to their professor and

classmates. In addition, this course offers several University Curriculum components and addresses many of the Foundational Concepts on the MCAT.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To introduce the major theoretical paradigms and perspectives, standard methods of research, and exemplary case studies in the field of medical anthropology. These will include evolutionary, psychosocial and biocultural approaches to the understanding of medicine. Case studies will be from a variety of cultural contexts.
2. To promote student examination of Western assumptions inherent to biomedical practice, and to broaden their knowledge of non-Western healing systems as well as pluralism in the healing practices of peoples all over the world.
3. To elicit regular, well-informed debate, and written and oral arguments from students.

**University Curriculum SLO's:**

FOR PILLAR: Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures; LEVEL: 2

Students will be able to analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individuals, institutions, and cultures that shape economic, political and social experiences.

1. Students will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes, theory, and/or theoretical applications in the study of individuals, institutions, and cultures that shape economic, political and social experiences

FOR PROFICIENCY: Human Diversity

1. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

FOR PROFICIENCY: Information Literacy

1. Students will be able to select and use the appropriate research methods and search tools for needed information.
2. Students will be able to evaluate sources for quality of information for a given information need.

FOR PROFICIENCY: Oral Competency

1. Students will be able to select, organize and use appropriate evidence or information to suit a specific or targeted audience.
2. Students will be able to use appropriate vocal and visual cues to deliver a presentation to a specific or targeted audience.

## COURSE TEXTS

All of the texts are available at the bookstore. Books with an \* are also on Course Reserve at Fondren Library. Your TA has an extra copy of Katz that can be borrowed first-come, first-served.

\*John Berger, 2011, *A Fortunate Man*. New York: Vintage.

Richard Katz, Megan Biesele, and Verna St. Denis, *Healing Makes Our Hearts Happy: Spirituality & Cultural Transformation among the Kalahari Ju/'hoansi*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1997.

\* Melvin Konner, 1987, *Becoming a Doctor: A Journey of Initiation in Medical School*. New York: Penguin Books.

## COURSE EVALUATION

Attendance, Participation, In-Class Activities	15%
Reading Pop Quizzes	10%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Information Literacy Bibliography	10%
Oral Powerpoint Presentation	20%
Cumulative Final Exam	20%
Required Lecture	5%

**Attendance, Participation, In-Class Activities:** Class participation grades will be based on the frequency, pertinence, creativity, and clarity of contributions in class. Comments must reflect critical thinking. Students who have great difficulty speaking out in class are encouraged to come up with other ways to meet this requirement (e.g., creating handouts, visiting office hours). In-Class Activities will also periodically occur.

**Reading Pop Quizzes:** The professor reserves the right to announce a reading pop quiz at the beginning of any class based on readings assigned for class that day. The professor anticipates offering 3 pop quizzes this semester, but depending on performance, this number may increase.

**Mid-Term Exam:** The mid-term may be comprised of matching, true/false, short answer items, and essays. Answers must draw not only from the theoretical frameworks within medical anthropology (e.g., biocultural, interpretive, psychosocial) but specific case data from course materials (readings, class discussion and activities, films). Essays will be graded on the degree to which they offer creative, detailed, critical responses with appropriate references to course materials. Students will be allowed to use **one side of one 4 x 6 index card** (or smaller) to take notes for the in-class midterm. Please put your name on the back and turn it in with your exam. Cards will be checked and collected during the exam to ensure only one side has been used. Phones and laptops are not permitted during the exam and if seen in use by the person proctoring the exam will result in an automatic "0" for that exam.

**Information Literacy Bibliography:** Your final slide should be a list of 10 references pertaining to your topic. Each reference is worth one point on your final grade, so please choose carefully. All references should be from an academic source, such as academic journal articles, reputable news sources (e.g., Reuters), references books, or books published by a university press. If you need help, please ask Evelyn Day, the SMU social sciences research

librarian. You can schedule a consultation with her here:

<https://sites.smu.edu/libraries/librarians/>

Your bibliography should be in the American Anthropological Association format, which follow the Chicago Manual of Style. More information is available here:

<http://www.americananthro.org/StayInformed/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2044>.

This is how we will determine your information literacy grade, so please take the bibliography seriously. You may submit an initial draft of your bibliography to the TA one week before your presentation due date but reference lists produced after 9 AM one week in advance of your presentation will not be reviewed.

**Oral Presentation:** Students will offer an oral presentation of a topic in medical anthropology of their choice from the list of options presented on the first day of class. There are 5 dates for the presentations on the syllabus, and your date corresponds with the group number you will be assigned on the third day of class. Students are welcome to trade dates among themselves as long as the TA has been informed of the new dates in writing (email is fine) by **Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>**. A grading rubric for the presentation will be posted on Canvas.

**We will do the dates lottery and sign up for topics on the first day of class with Group 1 choosing first, etc. Students can propose their own topic in writing BEFORE CLASS to the TA by Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> ONLY.**

Presentations will be exactly 8 minutes each, no more, no less. We will have 75 minutes to get through ~8 presentations per day, including switching presenters, so please time yourself ahead of time. We will stop you at 8 minutes regardless of whether or not you are finished. You will lose points for not finishing on time. Each student will have a Powerpoint to present that has been uploaded to the course website by **9 PM the night before the presentation**. Please confirm that your presentation has uploaded and looks the way you expected it to BEFORE 9 PM. No changes can be made to your Powerpoint after this time, so please plan ahead. Presentations that are emailed late will receive 10 points off of the final presentation grade—no exceptions! Powerpoints can include 1-2 minutes of video or sound clips to illustrate one's point, but at least 6 minutes should be an oral presentation.

All Presentations should Include:

Cultural and Historical Context of healing modality

Description of who performs procedure and cultural rules around this (gender, age, class, genealogical)

Overview of healing procedure

Scientific Research related to healing modality

Any class terms that help us understand the healing process?

**Final Cumulative Exam:** The final cumulative exam will demonstrate your competency in this class. It will be handed out during the last class. The questions will be broad and offer you the chance to summarize perspectives in the field and how those perspectives shed light on a specific set of readings or issues discussed in class. This will be due NO LATER THAN at the end of the final exam period for this class, which is from 3-6 PM 9<sup>th</sup>. Grades are due promptly after this and no late essays will receive a grade.

**Required Health and Society Lectures:** There is only one Health and Society lecture this Autumn, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5 PM (location TBA), which I expect you all to attend. Attendance will be taken and accounted for in your attendance grade. If you cannot attend this lecture, AND you let the TA know BEFORE the lecture, you can make it up by watching Doctor's Diaries, a 2-

hour NOVA special, available for free at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/doctors-diaries.html> AND submitting a one-page, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font (with normal margins) response to Doctor's Diaries.

**Library Reserves and Canvas:** Course texts with an asterisk are books that are on reserve in Fondren Library. Other readings (that are not required course texts), the syllabus, and class powerpoint slides will be posted on Canvas.

**Grade Information:** Grades will be posted regularly on the course website. Please allow up to 3 class periods to pass before expecting a grade on any exam or presentation, etc.

**Absences/Missed Assignments:** Absences are excused for a debilitating illness or death in the family and religious holidays. Please notify the professor or TA *before* you are absent. *Written documentation* (i.e., by healthcare provider or funeral director) must be presented to the professor or TA upon your return in order to make up any missed work or in-class exam, etc. If you fail to notify us and provide the necessary documentation, you will not be allowed to make up the work. Extensions on homework deadlines can be offered only by the Professor, not a TA. Missed assignments or tests receive a 0 (zero).

**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

**Campus Carry:** "In accordance with Texas Senate Bill 11, also known as the "campus carry" law, following consultation with entire University community SMU determined to remain a weapons-free campus. Specifically, SMU prohibits possession of weapons (either openly or in a concealed manner) on campus. For more information, please see: [http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons\\_Policy](http://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/Police/Weapons_Policy)."

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism, cheating, inappropriate consultation of peers or their work, any other form of academic misconduct, and failing to report evidence of others' misconduct are all Honor Code violations. Penalties are outlined in the Honor Code and may include anything from a zero for the assignment to dismissal from school. Students are expected to prepare work independently, cite any work (quotes or ideas) that is not their own, submit original work (i.e., not already submitted for any other class), and to neither give nor

receive assistance in examinations. If you are uncertain about whether an activity or piece of work compromises your academic integrity, please speak to the professor before turning it in!

**Computers and Cell Phones:** Computers may only be used in class for note-taking and viewing slides. All online connections must be OFF and cell phones silenced AND put away for class. Students using the internet or reading their cell phones during class may be ejected and all attendance points for the day forfeited.

**Extra Credit.** If you have perfect attendance (no missed lectures for ANY REASON except official university activities, including sickness and flat tires), I will add 1 point to your final grade. If you walk in 20 minutes late, you will not receive credit. No exceptions!

**Tips for academic excellence in this course:**

☀ Keep up with the readings and attend class so that you can see the relevant films and benefit from the discussion that surrounds them.

☀ If you miss a class, be sure to get class notes from a friend or from the TA (Thursday classes only). You cannot depend on simply looking over the posted Powerpoint slides as classes will include discussions in small groups, film screenings, and other opportunities for learning.

☀ Oral presentations are “testable material” and may be useful in writing up your exams. Pay attention and take notes!

☀ If you have reason to worry about your writing skills, get help from the SMU Writing Center. See more at: <https://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/WritingCenter>

☀ Exams must be taken on the day scheduled. Please enter these dates in your calendar now. Make-up exams will be given to students only with serious health/personal problems that are documented in writing by a professional.

☀ If you wish to go beyond course requirements and learn more about medical anthropology, visit the website of the Medical Anthropology section of the American Anthropological Association: [medanthro.net](http://medanthro.net) and read articles in major scholarly journals such as *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* and *Social Science and Medicine*. Somatosphere and PLOS Neuroanthropology are also 2 exciting blogs run by medical anthropologists working at the intersections of culture and medicine.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Week	Date	Lecture Topic and Readings	Student Assignments (to be read for date shown)
<b>I. Introduction</b>			
1	Aug 22	What is Medical Anthropology?	
	Aug 24	What is an Illness? What Is Disease? <i>In-Class Film: Joan of Arc clips (Youtube)</i>	Kleinman, Illness Narratives, pp. 1-30
2	Aug 29	How is medical knowledge produced? What is an explanatory model? <i>In-Class Film: Witchcraft among the Azande clips (Youtube)</i>	Kleinman, Illness Narratives, 121-136 Evans-Pritchard, The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events
	Aug 31	How does medical knowledge impact the self? What is the sick role? <i>In-Class Film clips: Dr. Drew and Anderson Cooper</i>	Hunt, Strategic Suffering in the Illness Narratives of Mexican Patients
3	Sep 5	How does the mind influence the body? <i>In-Class Film clips: Placebo: Cracking the Code</i>	Cannon, 1942, Voodoo Death  Kaptchuk, 2002, The Placebo Effect in Alternative Medicine: Can the Performance of a Healing Ritual Have Clinical Significance?
	Sep 7	What are the social determinants of health? <i>In-Class Film: In Sickness and In Wealth</i>	Marmot, Social Determinants of Health Inequalities
4	Sep 12	How does race and gender impact health? <i>In-Class Film: When the Bough Breaks</i>	Farmer, Pathologies of Power, On Suffering and Structural Violence, pp. 23-50
	Sep 14	What is Cultural Competence and is it adequate?	Kleinman & Benson, Anthropology in the Clinic Mattingly, Paradox of Hope, CH 3
<b>II. HEALERS AND HEALING ACROSS CULTURES</b>			
5	Sep 19	Healing Dance: Introduction to the !Kung <i>In-Class Film: N um Tchai (20 minutes, Amazon)</i>	Katz, p. xviii-62
	Sep 21	What is special about the dance? In-Class Film Clips	Katz, p. 103-144
6	Sep 26	<b>Oral Presentations, Group 1</b>	
	Sept 28	What happened to the dance? Colonial Medicine and Public Health	Katz, p. 65-95

7	Oct 3	Healing Substances <i>In-class Film: Taboo, "Drugs"</i>	Fotiou. Working with La Medicine: Ayahuasca Healing Rituals
	Oct 5	Mind-Body Healing: Meditation In-Class Experiential Learning	Lewis, Flexible Minds in Tibet
8	Oct 10	<b>NO CLASS. FALL BREAK.</b>	
	Oct 12	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	
<b>III. Patients and Healers in Western Biomedicine</b>			
9	Oct 17	What do we want from a doctor-patient relationship?	Berger, 1-84
	Oct 19	How does the culture of medicine shape the doctor-patient relationship?	Berger, 84-166
	Oct 23	<b>**Required Lecture: Dr. Clarence Gravlee, "Sick of Race: How Racism Harms Health and Misleads Medicine," 5-6 PM, Room TBA**</b>	
10	Oct 24	<b>Oral Presentations, Group 2</b>	
	Oct 26	Capitalist Medicine, Part I	Konner, 1-40
11	Oct 31	<b>Oral Presentation, Group 3</b>	
	Nov 2	Capitalist Medicine, Part II	Konner, pick two chapters that interest you out of 4 through 11
12	Nov 7	<b>Oral Presentations, Group 4</b>	
<b>IV. Critical Medical Anthropology &amp; Global Health</b>			
	Nov 9	Critical Global Health: Stigma, Agency & Health Outcomes <i>In-Class Film: The Bird Dancer</i>	Biehl, Vita, 101-107, 192-206
13	Nov 14	Critical Global Health Case Study: Female Circumcision & Women's Health in Tanzania <i>In-Class Film: Maasai Women</i>	Winterbottom, et al. 2009. Female Genital Cutting: Cultural Rights and Rites of Defiance in Northern Tanzania
	Nov 16	Critical Global Mental Health Case Study: Women's Mental Health in Tanzania	Watters, The Americanization of Mental Illness
14	Nov 21	<b>Oral Presentations, Group 5</b>	Final Take-Home Exam Handed Out in Class
	Nov 23	<b>NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING DAY.</b>	
15	Nov 28	<b>NO CLASS. REVIEW SESSION w/TA Monday, December 4, time TBA</b>	
	Nov 30	<b>NO CLASS. AAA CONFERENCE</b>	
	Dec. 4	<b>Review Session w/TA</b>	
	Dec 5-6	<b>Reading Days.</b>	
	Dec. 8	<b>Take-home CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM DUE 11 AM</b>	