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Virtual Course Link available under Zoom on course website

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays, 130-230 or by appointment

ANTH 4343: Culture, Biomedicine and Power

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3-420



Course Description

In this advanced seminar in medical anthropology we will explore how the ways we conceptualize and manage illness, healing and the human body are shaped and constrained by aspects of culture, relationships of power and shifting moral and ethical concerns. We will pay careful attention to how concepts of race, gender, class, ethnicity and sociopolitical status shape the politics of living, healing and dying. We will explore these questions primarily within biomedical contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Critically discuss biomedicine as a cultural system with specific ways of framing and thinking about health, illness and the body
- 2) Critique biomedical practices and power relationships that work to medicalize core aspects of human experience
- 3) Analyze the building blocks of medical education and public health and its roots on colonial (and at times racist) ideals
- 4) Identify and explain various debates around culture, race and racism in medicine
- 5) Critique the values and limits of medical pluralism in everyday life

Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the traditional territory of the Apache, Caddo, Comanche, Coushatta, Tonkawa, Wichita and Affiliated Keechi, Waco, and Tawakonie. This is land upon which SMU was built. I honor them as the indigenous land stewards of this place, as we honor their ancestral and ongoing connections to it. I express my gratitude to all Native peoples, past, present, and future, and hope this land acknowledgment can serve as an opening for reflection as well as a way for each of us to contemplate how we can join in decolonizing and Indigenous movements.

Statement of Alliance

I would also like to acknowledge that I stand with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the fight against racialized injustice and inequality. As a socially conscious scholar, I condemn all acts of racism, xenophobia, and police brutality which have profound consequences for communities of color. I recognize that the field of Anthropology emerged from racist colonial origins and legacies, and though it was also the first discipline with practitioners who recognized the meaninglessness and insidious nature of the race concept (which we will learn about), I still must and will strive to do more to combat historical, systemic, and institutionalized oppression. Given this, I affirm a commitment to use my academic and applied efforts to examine critically and transform the deeply entrenched institutional sources of race-based inequality. Through my work and within my department and university, I commit to examining the imbalances of power in society that lead to racialized violence; to promoting actively anti-racist practices; to elevating the voices of scholars and communities of color; and to conduct my work in more just and equitable ways.

I also stand with and look do my best to be an ally for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Required Readings

Efforts are being made by the academy to recognize the need to amplify and promote work by scholars who identify black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) in order to broaden the perspectives being offered in any given class. Hearing about everyday experience from a variety of perspective is an important part of learning to live responsibly and make decisions in a diverse world.

In an attempt to help students reduce costs, the following books are available for purchase at the SMU bookstore but have also been made available as e-books through Fondren library. All books except Wendland's are on reserve as an e-book with unlimited simultaneous users this semester. I recommend you purchase Wendland, Heart for the Work through Amazon of the bookstore since it is only single user.

All other readings and films (marked with an *) are on the Canvas site under Modules under Readings or Films.

Davis, Da'naAin, Reproductive Injustice

https://smu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01SMU_INST/6ctoa/alma9952457293903716

Fein, Elizabeth, Living on the Spectrum

https://smu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01SMU_INST/6ctoa/alma9952828802103716

Wendland, Claire, A Heart for the Work: Journey through African Medical School– single-user e-book, so can only have it one day at a time and may conflict with other students

https://smu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01SMU_INST/6ctoa/alma9952828800703716

MY COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Please note that professors were offered some flexibility this Spring in how we plan classes this semester with 3 possible days off to make up for the absence of a Spring Break. I scheduled two of these during the semester to give us all a break. I am offering the third as an excused, no questions asked Mental Health Day to be taken at your discretion. You will not receive any credit for participation on this day and you will also not receive no-credit. It will simply not count. No makeup assignments needed unless a major assignment was due (e.g., facilitation, paper proposal, paper presentation).

Please do your best to attend class. Given that the class is remote, I hope this will enable many more of you to attend in a steady way. Please plan to have your camera and sound on at any given point during the class. If you are absent, please review the Zoom recording for that day or any other materials. These will be uploaded on Canvas.

If you are absent on a non-Mental Health Day, you have the following options, all of which affect your participation grade:

- 1) Submit a doctor's note for your absence. Receive a 2/2 for participation on those days. Talk to the professor about how to make up work missed.
- 2) No doctor's note needed up to two times IF you submit a make up review of the readings within two weeks of your absence. Receive a 2/2 for participation on those days. Please discuss this plan with Dr. Myers as soon as is possible after your absence.
- 3) If you have no doctor's note and #2 is no longer an option, you will receive a 0/2 for participation on the days you are absent. This will negatively impact your final grade.
- 4) If you miss more than three days of class and cannot provide a doctor's note and do not turn in a discussion post, I will attempt to reach out to you to understand the situation, but it is very likely that you will be asked to withdraw from the class.

Late Assignments

Please ask permission for an extension at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. I am always happy to work with you but appreciate advance notice. If you do not ask in advance, please expect to lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every 12 hours that the assignment is late. (e.g., A to A-). Reach out to me as soon as possible to discuss a plan of action to get you back on track.

Statement on Communication

You may contact me via email or the Canvas inbox. I will respond to your question or email within 48 hours during the regular week (not Saturday and Sunday).

Assignments will be graded within 7-10 business days of the assignment due date. My grading timeline might be delayed, especially if I or my family become sick this semester. We will all need to be patient with each other.

Academic Plagiarism

The general principles for all honest writing can be summarized briefly.

Acknowledge indebtedness/use a citation:

1. Whenever you quote another person's actual words.
2. Whenever you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory, even if it is completely paraphrased in your own words.
3. Whenever you borrow facts, statistics, or other illustrative material - unless the information is common knowledge.

Plagiarism also encompasses the notions of citing quotations and materials from secondary sources that were not directly consulted in the preparation of the student's work, and copying the organizational and argumentation structure of a work without acknowledging its author.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Attendance (10%): This is a discussion-based seminar. Therefore, it is crucial that you not only attend but that you actively participate in the Zoom discussions. This means keeping your camera on and paying attention and participating regularly. Late students will be marked late in Canvas, which reduces your credit for the day to 80%.

Class Participation (10%): A participation grade will be recorded after each class based on your engagement with the class discussion and readings. You will receive a 0 (present but did not participate); 1 (present with partial participation); or 2 (present, actively listening, engaged in conversation). This can make a difference between you receiving an A and a B. One way to participate is the following: for each class, I ask that you look for popular examples of what you have read in the recent news to share with the class at the beginning of class. We will share using screen sharing in Zoom. Please limit your "sharing" item to 2-3 minutes at the most. Film clips, etc., should be limited to 2-3 minutes. Sharing will be an important part of your participation grade. If you don't like talking, please come to my office hours so we can discuss alternative strategies.

Response Papers (30%): Due each week via Canvas by 3 PM on Wednesdays (when dates appear in bold), UNLESS you are facilitating that week or you have a major assignment due or we are not having class that week. Responses should be one page, double-spaced--no more, no less-- and draw on at least one of the readings for each day that week. Responses will be graded as follows: 0-no response; 1-does not incorporate a response to readings or is poorly written or organized; 2- incorporates a response to the readings, is written well and organized.

Final Research Paper (25%): Deadlines are listed on the syllabus. This is a major research paper where you use key concepts from the course to examine a health-related issue or body of literature pertinent to the course. You must submit a proposal to me (see syllabus for deadline) and obtain my approval. Undergraduates: 12-15 pages. Please use a standard citation and bibliographic format, 1-inch margins all around, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font. We will meet to discuss your topic in late October. You will workshop your rough drafts with your peers. The draft should represent a substantial amount of the work to be done on the paper. The stronger your paper is at that point, the better the commentary of your peers will be, and the stronger it will be in the end.

Facilitation (20%) You will sign up to facilitate the class discussion with a partner **two times** during the semester. Your preparation for these presentations is absolutely crucial to the richness of our discussion for the day. You will want to prepare with your co-facilitators, likely by reading in advance and meeting together to discuss your strategy. You will need to synthesize (but not summarize) key points you found across the readings, discuss points of connection and disconnection you found across the readings, and bring provocative questions to the table to stimulate discussion about the readings. Your main goal is to help foment discussion. Creativity is encouraged: feel free to prompt discussion with relevant information and questions via images, PowerPoint, film clips, etc. Please plan to facilitate for 45-60 minutes total as a team, and be prepared to be flexible if the timing shifts. We will sign up for dates on the first day of class. Also, note that there is a rubric on Canvas to help you plan your facilitation.

Final Presentation (5%) You will present your research paper at the end of the semester on one of the last days of class. Your presentation will include a brief PowerPoint and an overview of your argument and findings. Your presentation should be 8-10 minutes leaving 4-5 minutes for questions. We have to stick to time to make sure everyone has a chance to present during class time.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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/SASP/DASS> to begin the process. Once approved and registered, students will submit a DASS Accommodation letter to faculty through the electronic portal *DASS Link* and then communicate directly with each instructor to 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. (<https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/ChaplainandReligiousLife/ReligiousHolidays>).

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. (See [2020-2021 SMU Undergraduate Catalog](#) under "Enrollment and Academic Records/Enrollment Policies/Excused Absences.")

Student Academic Success Programs: Students needing assistance with writing assignments for SMU courses may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center through Canvas. Students wanting support with subject-specific tutoring or success strategies should contact SASP, Loyd All Sports Center, Suite 202; 214-768-3648; <https://www.smu.edu/sasp>.

Caring Community Connections (CCC) program: This is a resource for anyone in the SMU community to refer students of concern to the Office of the Dean of Students. Faculty play a

critical role in identifying students who are experiencing challenges, as you may be the first to notice a change in behavior such as class attendance or performance. The online referral form can be found at smu.edu/deanofstudentsccc. After a referral is submitted, students will be contacted to discuss the concern, strategize options, and be connected to appropriate resources. Additionally, should you have concerns about students and are unclear about what to do, please see the [CCC Reference Guide](#), or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 214-768-4564.

Pregnant and Parenting Students: Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students: Under Title IX students who are pregnant or parenting may request academic adjustments by contacting Elsie Johnson (elsiej@smu.edu) in the Office of the Dean of Students, or by calling 214-768-4564. Students seeking assistance must schedule an appointment with their professors as early as possible, present a letter from the Office of the Dean of Students, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that academic adjustments are not retroactive and, when feasible, require advance notice to implement.

Covid-19 Attendance Statement: Students who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who have been notified through contact tracing of potential exposure and need to self-quarantine or isolate must follow the protocols laid out in [SMU's Contact Tracing Protocol](#). To ensure academic continuity, students in these situations will not be penalized and will be provided appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and testing. To ensure these necessary accommodations, affected students must:

- o Provide as much advance notification as possible to the instructor about a change in circumstances. Please notify me about a potential absence as well as plans for a return to class. For cases in which students test positive for COVID-19, they should fill out a [CCC form at this link](#)
- o Communicate promptly with me to establish, as necessary, alternative assignments and/or changes to deadlines and exams. Students are then responsible for meeting the expectations laid out in these alternative arrangements.
- o Continue participation in class via Zoom, as health circumstances permit.
- o Students facing multiple or extended COVID-19-related absences or illness can work with the Office of the Dean of Students to consider options such as fully remote learning or medical withdrawal.

Sexual Harassment: All forms of sexual harassment including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking are violations of SMU's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or receive more information about the grievance process may contact Samantha Thomas, SMU's Title IX Coordinator, at accessequity@smu.edu or 214-768-3601. Please note that faculty are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty of sexual harassment, they must report it to the Title IX Coordinator. For more information about sexual harassment including resources available to assist students, please visit www.smu.edu/sexualmisconduct.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Wk	Date	Topic	Before Class	In Class	Facilitators
1	1/25	Introduction	Review my website, people.smu.edu/nmyers & bring 3 questions for me Bring one photo, piece of art, etc. to share about yourself	Introductions	x
	1/27	What is biomedicine?	Lock and Nguyen, CH 1, 1-28*		x
2	2/1	Medical Imaginary	DelVecchio-Good, 2001. Medical Imaginary and Biotechnical Embrace*	Lecture and Discussion	x
	2/3		Watch: Extremis (24 min) on Netflix and/or bring examples of biotechnical embrace	Film Discussion	x
3	2/8	Capitalism & Cancer	Jainn, Cancer Butch*	Lecture and Discussion	x
	2/10	The Normal Body	Lock and Nguyen, CH 2* Bring current news items about "normal bodies" to class	Discussion	x
4	2/15	NO CLASS 1	**May want to watch Gattaca early** Watch: Gattaca (104 min)*	NO CLASS	x
	2/17	Genes and Embodied Risk	Lock and Nguyen, CH 11* Bring examples of embodied risk to class	Discussion	x
5	2/22	Neurodiversity and Autism	Fein, CH 1, 2, 3* (introduction not required)	Book Discussion	1
	2/24	Neurodiversity and Autism	Fein, CH 4, 5, 6*	Book Discussion	2
6	3/1	Guest Discussant, Elizabeth Fein	Fein, CH 7, 8, Conclusion*	Book Discussion	x
	3/3	COVID-19	Bring COVID-related news to class	Discussion	x
7	3/8	Medical Education in the U.S.	Paper Topics Due before Class	Watch and discuss 1/2 Doctor's Diaries (66 min)*	x

	3/10	Medical Education in the U.S.	Watch second 1/2 Doctor's Diaries (66 min)*	Paper Meetings, 3-430 (15 min each)	x
8	3/15	Class Cancelled for Guest Lecture, Rebecca Lester	Start reading Wendland	No Class	x
	3/17	NO CLASS 2	Start reading Wendland	No Class	x
9	3/22	Medical Education & Postcolonial Medicine	Wendland, Heart for the Work, 1-66	Book Discussion	3
	3/24	Medical Education & Postcolonial Medicine	Wendland, Heart for the Work, pgs. 67-154	Book Discussion	4
10	3/29	Medical Education & Postcolonial Medicine	Wendland, Heart for the Work, pgs. 155-224	Book Discussion	5
	3/31	Race and Medicine	Davis, Reproductive Injustice, Beginning to 58	Book Discussion	6
11	4/5	Race and Medicine	Work on rough drafts	Watch and Discuss: When the Bough Breaks (50 min)	x
	4/7	Workshop Rough Drafts with peers	Bring rough draft to class		x
12	4/12	Race and Medicine	Davis, Reproductive Injustice, 59 to 120		7
	4/14	Race and Medicine	Davis, Reproductive Injustice, 121-206		8
13	4/19	Failed Care	Famished, excerpts*		x
	4/21	Failed Care	Watch: Thin (100 minutes, Youtube)		x
14	4/26	Paper Presentations			x
	4/28	Paper Presentations			x
Final Papers DUE Thursday, May 6, by 6 PM (end of Exam Period)					