Anth E445/E645: Advanced Seminar in Medical Anthropology

Spring 2012

Meets: Ballantine Hall 018
Monday 11:15am - 1:30pm
Instructor: Prof. Sarah D. Phillips
Office Hours: Mon. 1:30-3:30pm, and by appt.
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Course Description
The meanings of “health” and disease, and the experience of one’s body, are often taken for granted. However, our ideas about and experiences of health, “dis-ease,” and medicine are profoundly shaped by culture, transnational flows of people, ideas, and resources, histories of colonialism and structural inequalities, and the development of new technologies. In the course we will focus on some of the most salient trends in current medical anthropological research. Topics to be covered include the following, and more: cultural contexts of illness, health, and ideologies of the body; the politics and poetics of different healing practices; medical knowledge production and the advantages and drawbacks of contemporary, high-tech biomedicine; gendered aspects of health, illness, and medicine; political and moral economies of health in the global context; the deep meanings that motivate contemporary discourses on various “new disorders;” and intersections between disability and citizenship. Additionally, the seminar includes a particular focus on health and medicine in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe as case studies of global transformations in health care delivery, use of new medical technologies, and changing discourses on the body and illness.

Learning Objectives
After taking this course, students should be able to
1) talk about how the methods and theories of anthropology can be applied to issues of health, illness, disease, and medicine in cross-cultural contexts;
2) think and write about health, illness, and disease utilizing anthropological principles and modes of analysis;
3) question accepted knowledge about mind-body dualism, medical authority, and the ‘straight-forward’ effects of new medical technologies;
4) recognize and challenge social inequalities of health within the U.S. and other societies, and in students’ own communities

Assignments and activities:
Students will write two essays and complete an extensive semester paper. Students will also be assessed on active class participation, including seminar leadership (described below). Graduate students will turn in longer essays, and are especially encouraged to do some of the “Optional” readings.

Essays:
Two essays (4-6 pages for undergrads, 6-8 pages for grads) will be due during the semester. Due dates are February 6 and March 26.
Seminar leadership:
Students will be responsible for leading the seminar (with a partner) once or twice during the semester. During these classes students are expected to read especially carefully, and to conduct class discussions. The seminar leaders should submit a SHORT list of discussion questions or a similar think-piece via e-mail or Oncourse by 5pm the day before class.

Seminar paper:
The research paper gives students a chance, in close consultation with the professor, to do library research and/or original research on a topic of their choice relevant to medical anthropology. The seminar paper is a major component of the course and will be completed in stages. We will not hold class after March 26, but all students should be prepared to consult with me about their developing papers EVERY MONDAY sometime between 11:15 and 3:30 from April 2 to April 23. Specific guidelines will be handed out later in the semester. The paper is due Friday, April 27.

Grading:
The following is the grading formula for this course:
Seminar leadership: 10%
Essays (2): 20% (10% each)
Research paper: 35%
Attendance: 10%
Class participation: 25%

Grading Scale:
This course will use a 10-point grading scale, with pluses and minuses.
A+ 100  B  83-86  C-  70-72  F  0-59
A  93-99  B-  80-82  D+  67-69
A-  90-92  C+  77-79  D  63-66
B+  87-89  C  73-76  D-  60-62

Special Needs:
If any student will require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact the instructor after class, during office hours or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disabled Student Services in Franklin Hall 096, 855-7578.

Other Important Information:
In your Schedule of Classes bulletin (also available online), there is important information on academic freedom, academic misconduct policies, the Code of Academic Ethics, and the campus calendar. Please read through these sections and any others that may concern you personally.

The instructor reserves the right to revise this syllabus during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class.
Required readings
Required readings consist of six ethnographies and other articles and book chapters that will be available on Oncourse in folders under the “Resources” tab. (Some of the readings are also available on E-Reserves—the course password is “medical.”) The following books (all are available at Boxcar Books, 408 E. Sixth St.) will be required reading:

3. “HIV is God’s Blessing:” Rehabilitating Morality in Neoliberal Russia, by Jarrett Zigon
4. *White Saris and Sweet Mangoes: Aging, Gender, and Body in North India*, By Sarah Lamb

I also recommend the following medical anthropology readers for those who would like more background in the discipline:


*A Reader in Medical Anthropology: Theoretical Trajectories, Emergent Realities* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), Edited by Byron J. Good, Michael M.J. Fischer, Sarah S. Willen, and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good

*Introducing Medical Anthropology: A Discipline in Action* (Alta Mira Press, 2007), By Merrill Singer and Hans Baer


**Course Schedule**

**Week 1 (January 9)**

*Introductions*

**The scope of medical anthropology**

Meet and greet
Introduction to the course: syllabus overview, and begin discussion about the scope of medical anthropology

Brown, Barrett, Padilla, and Finley “Medical Anthropology: An Introduction to the Fields” (pp. 3-15 in Brown and Barrett, eds).
Explore the Somatosphere weblog. Here is a good place to start:

**Week 2 (January 16) NO CLASS, but..... (stay tuned)**

*Why the body is good to think with*


Nancy Schepers Hughes and Margaret Lock, “A Critical-Interpretive Approach in Medical Anthropology: Rituals and Routines of Discipline and Dissent.”


**Optional articles:**


**Week 3 (January 23)**

*Embodiment*

*Surface Tensions: Surgery, Bodily Boundaries, and the Social Self*, by Leonore Manderson

**Optional articles:**


Emily Martin. 1996. “The Language of Science and Medicine, The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles,” *Gender and Health: An International Perspective*, eds. Sargent and Brettel, Ch. 2.


**Week 4 (January 30)**
**Anthropology and/or Disability**

Sarah D. Phillips, Disability and Mobile Citizenship in Postsocialist Ukraine

**Optional readings:**


Public Culture Vol. 13, Issue 3 (special issue on disability ed. by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp)

**Week 5 (February 6)**

*Essay 1 due in class*

**Biomedicine as a cultural system, and learning medicine**

Rhodes, “Studying Biomedicine as a Cultural System.” Sargent and Johnson, Ch. 9.


Pearl Katz, The Scalpel’s Edge (selection)


**Optional readings:**


**Week 6 (February 13)**

*Rehab in Medical Anth Perspective(s)*

“HIV is God’s Blessing:” Rehabilitating Morality in Neoliberal Russia, by Jarrett Zigon

**Week 7 (February 20)**

*Anthropology of Pharmaceuticals*


See also Eugene Raikhel, “Give me the fear!”: [http://somatosphere.net/2011/03/give-me-fear.html](http://somatosphere.net/2011/03/give-me-fear.html)


*Optional:*


**Week 8 (February 27)**

**Anthropology of Aging**

*White Saris and Sweet Mangoes: Aging, Gender, and Body in North India*, By Sarah Lamb

**Week 9 (March 5)**

**How We Die**


Mary Jo Delvecchio-Good et al., 2004. “Narrative nuances on good and bad deaths: internists’ tales from high-technology work places.” Social Science and Medicine 58:939-953.


**Week 10 (March 12) SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS**

**Week 11 (March 19)**

**Reproduction and Risk**


**Week 12 (March 26)***

*Essay 2 due in class*

*Medical Anth in/of the Military*
Fields of Combat: Understanding PTSD among Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, by Erin P. Finley

See also Seth Messinger, “Medical Anthropology in a Military Treatment Facility:“

And Terry Gross’s interview with David Wood:

Seminar Papers due Friday, April 27