

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
Fordham

Anthropology of Health and Healing

M/T/W/TH DE 308 6-9om

Instructor: Kate Griffiths

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Course Description:

If Medicine is a social science, it's also true that anthropology, the "human" science addresses a range of aspects of human life and society that intersect with the health and healing: birth & biological reproduction, disease, death & dying, care and public health. This course will explore key themes in the study of health and healing, structured around the life cycle.

Course Goals:

- 1) Learn about anthropological approaches to healing, health and social life by reading the work of anthropologists and other social scientists with an aim toward identifying the interpretive approach and the author's argument.
- 2) Use these frameworks to gain new perspectives on medicine, health and social life.
- 4) Be able to identify and understand key concepts in anthropology of health.
- 5) Develop an original ethnographic research project which demonstrates familiarity with course themes and advances a clear argument about an appropriate topic.

Required Readings:

- Course Articles and books listed on syllabus
Most are linked. Those not linked are available via university library databases.

Course Work:

10% Class participation: This includes attendance and class participation.

15% Midterm: We will co-design the midterm for this course, collaboratively developing a population of identification terms and essay questions from the course content. I will then narrow the selection to 25 identification terms, of which you will answer 20 and 2 essay questions, of which you will answer 1.

40%, Reading Response Papers: You must submit a minimum of 4 reading response papers of your choosing. (You have 9 to choose from)

Assignments are listed each week on the syllabus below. They will be graded on a scale from 0-3:

0= not submitted

1.0-1.5= the paper is unclear, inadequate or fails to deal with the question.

2.0-2.5= the response is clear and indicates understanding of the question and the assigned reading.

3= excellent paper, advances a clear argument in response to the question and deals convincingly with the assigned reading.

To receive full credit for this portion, you will need a total of 12 points. These papers will not be graded on length, but on content. You will likely need at least two double spaced pages to deal fully with the questions posed.

If you are not consistently being scored at the highest level, please email me as soon as you notice a problem to set up a time to discuss how you can improve your responses. To improve your grade, you may submit *more* than 5 weekly responses. Submitting fewer than 5 will result in your receiving a score 0 for the missing papers.

Tip If you treat this as a reading assignment from the beginning of the semester, you will quickly and easily complete the requirements for this part of the course leaving you lots of time for your other classes at the end of the semester. Remember, you do not have to directly answer every question in the assignment; instead use them to guide your thinking as you construct a clear argument in response to the readings.

35% Final Paper: Ethnography You will select an event, social group or social space to conduct an ethnographic investigation relevant to the themes of the course. Good examples include your/a neighbourhood, your/a church, a neighbourhood or political organization, or some aspect of life as a student that you are familiar with and have access to or your job. You will analyse this topic as a participant observer. Your paper will be approximately 8-10 pages long. You will be asked to submit a written proposal for the paper, and have the opportunity to meet with me 1-1 to further develop the proposal. Once you have completed an outline or draft, you may send it to me for review and comment up to 1 week before the day it is due.

0= Paper is not submitted

1(50% credit)= This paper is unclear and fails to deal with an appropriate topic, or is not written from the perspective of a participant-observer

2 (65% credit)= This paper is somewhat more clear in its style or reflects a more appropriate choice of topic, but has significant inadequacies in structure or relevance to the assignment.

3 (75% credit)= This paper reflects an appropriate topic choice but fails to offer a clear argument, or offers an argument unsupported by the data.

4 (85% credit)= This paper offers a clear argument about a well-chosen topic.

5 (95% credit)= This paper offers a significant insight about a well-chosen topic.

Late papers will be marked down 1 letter grade.

A note on reading and writing: Reading and writing are the main tasks for this class. Readings are all available on Blackboard or in the course text. Doing the reading will make life easy. You should also know that plagiarism is unacceptable in this class and likely to be detected, which will result in serious consequences ranging from a 0 score for that assignment to failure for the course, depending on the severity of the plagiarism.

On extra credit: At any time during the semester you may replace 1 missed writing assignment with a 2-3 page response to a relevant feature-length news or magazine article or scholarly article of your choosing, related to course themes or to your final project..

Academic Accommodations: Please alert me to necessary accommodation.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to adhere to the standard guidelines on academic integrity. Plagiarism in any form, intended or otherwise, will not be tolerated and will result in a consequences ranging from a failing grade for the assignment, the course and/or referral to the Dean for academic adjudication.

Changes to the Syllabus: As the course progresses, there may be times the syllabus is updated. New copies of the syllabus will be available on blackboard.

Contacting the Instructor: Please contact me via kategrif@gmail.com with at minimum lead time of 24 hrs for a response, and at my fordham email for matters which are less urgent. Please be certain to check your email regularly for messages from me.

Class and Reading Schedule:

Week 1: May 29

Wed:: Introduction

Reading: "Helping Students Read difficult Texts

https://case.edu/writing/pedsem/Bean_ReadingDifficultTexts.pdf

and

Thursday:: "Medical Anthropology and the Problem of Belief"

<https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/1363/anth45f10good1.pdf>

Reading Response #1: Based on your own experiences with reading academic texts, which techniques suggested by Bean are the most useful? How does his concept of "cognitive egocentrism" relate specifically to anthropological investigation of health and healing and matters of "Belief" versus "knowledge?"

Week 2:

Monday & Tuesday:

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 2010. "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events."

https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/sai/SOSANT1000/h11/Evans-Pritchard_Witchcraft_18-33.pdf

Witches, Midwives, and Nurses A History of Women Healers by Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English

<http://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Barbara-Ehrenreich-and-Deirdre-English-Witches-Midwives-and-Nurses-A-History-of-Women-Healers.-Introduction..pdf>

Reading Response 2: What is "witchcraft" and what is medicine? What does gender, and what does culture do to explain which is which? What work does anthropology as a discipline do to help us make sense of this relation, and

what part have we played in producing this distinction?

Thursday & Friday: Birth and Motherhood

Grandmother Hypothesis

<http://dujs.dartmouth.edu/2012/10/the-grandmother-hypothesis-an-explanation-for-human-development/#.Ws50FYgbPIU>

Analysis of a Dialogue on Risks in Childbirth: Clinicians, Epidemiologists, and Inuit Women Patricia A. Kaufen and John O'Neil

"Accounting for Amniocentesis" Rayna Rapp

Death Without weeping: Nancy Scheper-Hughes

<http://www3.gettysburg.edu/~dperry/Class%20Readings%20Scanned%20Documents/Intro/Scheper-huges.pdf>

Reading Response 3: Birth is an aspect of the life cycle that raises many of the fundamental questions of the anthropological investigation of health and healing: when does life begin? what is disease or illness? who and how do we know how to do birth and assist birth? Select two of the readings from this section to formulate your own question for further investigation about the anthropology of birth. What should we study and why?

Week 3: Families and Children

Monday: Midterm Prep

Reading Response 4: Project Proposals (explained in class)

Tuesday: Kinship & Families

Gayle Rubin the Traffic in Women

Excerpt from "The Families We Choose"

"Mammas Baby, Pappas Maybe" Spillers

https://people.ucsc.edu/~nmitchel/hortense_spillers_-_mamas_baby_papas_maybe.pdf

Reading Response 6: How do anthropologists understand the family? Use outside material--reading, podcast, or ethnographic experience to extend and deepen one fundamental insight introduced in one or more of this weeks assigned readings.

Wednesday: Midterm, Individual meetings assigned

Thursday: Families and Health

"The Sojourner Syndrome: Race, Class, and Gender in Health and Illness" Mullings

Excerpt from *The Anthropology of Childhood: Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings* David F. Lance

Reading Response 5: How does the social construction of childhood relate to what we already understand about health? How do different conceptions of childhood interact with birth, kinship/families and concepts of sickness, health and healing?

Week 4: Anthropology of the Body Sex and Society

Monday & Tuesday :

The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology, Margaret Lock and Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1987)

<http://anthropology.msu.edu/anp204-us14/files/2012/06/The-Mindful-Body.pdf>

<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3677-mindful-bodies-and-forces-of-nature>

Reading Response 6: Use the concepts of the social individual and political body to explain a current event related to health, the body, illness, healing, birth, death, childhood, or families.

Wednesday:

Comaroff, Jean 1993 The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body. In Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life. Shirley Lindenbaum and Margaret Lock, eds., pp. 305-329. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male Female Roles

Author(s): Emily Martin

Emily Martin ,: "Blood and the Brain"

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9655.12022/full>

<https://web.stanford.edu/~eckert/PDF/Martin1991.pdf>

Reading response 7: Select two readings about "the body" and compare their accounts. What does each illuminate and elide?

Thursday:

"The meanings of Symptoms and Disorders" Kleinman, *Illness Narratives*.

"What's the Trouble? How doctors think" Jerome Groopman

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/01/29/whats-the-trouble>

Ethnographic exercise

Reading Response 8: Health Narratives (assigned in Class)

Week 5:

Monday & Tuesday:: Death and Dying

Death: A Cross-Cultural Perspective Author(s): Phyllis Palgi and Henry Abramovitch

https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/sv/sai/SOSANT2555/PALGI_A_Cross-Cultural_Perspective_2155675.pdf

"What Does It Mean to Die" Rachel Aviv

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/05/what-does-it-mean-to-die>

"We Are All Going to Die": Kinship, Belonging, and the Morality of HIV/AIDS-Related Illnesses and Deaths in Rural Tanzania Hansjörg Dilger

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/235059>

Wed & Thursday: Project presentations:

Reading Response # 9: Relate one of our readings on death and dying to (1) previous text from the course (Emily Martin, Nancy Shepherd-Hughes, Comoroff might work well!) and discuss how death relates to other aspects of the life cycle, to understandings of health and illness, to birth or to the "three bodies."